

Representing Genocide: The Holocaust as Paradigm?

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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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Abstract

This thesis addresses how far the Holocaust and its representation have influenced the representation of other genocides, focusing specifically on the Armenian, Cambodian, Bosnian, and Rwandan cases. At the same time, it also considers how western publics might interpret and respond to these representations, and with what effect. Using literature, film, photography, and memorialisation, the thesis argues that we can only understand the Holocaust's status as a 'benchmark' for other genocides if we look at the deeper, structural resonances which subtly shape many representations of genocide – thereby countering much of the existing literature, whose focus is on explicit references to the Holocaust and the surrounding identity politics. The thesis is divided into five sections, which explore: how genocides are recognised as such by western publics; the representation of the origins and perpetrators of genocide; how western witnesses represent genocide; representations of the aftermath of genocide; and western responses to genocide. Throughout, it distinguishes between 'mainstream' and other, more nuanced and engaged, representations of genocide. It argues that these mainstream representations – the majority – largely replicate the representational framework of the Holocaust, including the way in which mainstream Holocaust representations resist recognising the rationality, instrumentality and *normality* of genocide, preferring instead to present it as an aberrant, exceptional event in human society. By contrast, the more engaged representations – often, but not always, originating from those who experienced genocide – tend to revolve around precisely genocide's ordinariness, and the structures and situations common to human society which contribute to and become involved in the violence.

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Introduction

‘[T]he Holocaust has become the pre-eminent symbol of evil in the modern world, encouraging other groups to copy its vocabulary and imagery, while sometimes contesting its significance. ... Representation of the past and present can thus become a contest ... In so doing, they trivialise the Holocaust and the unique suffering of the group they represent.’
– David B. MacDonald¹

‘[F]ar from blocking other historical memories from view in a competitive struggle for recognition, the emergence of Holocaust memory on a global scale has contributed to the articulation of other histories ... Ultimately, memory is not a zero-sum game.’
– Michael Rothberg²

A decade into the twenty-first century, the Holocaust appears as a cornerstone of contemporary western culture: ubiquitously memorialised in stone, film, and print, it occupies a central place in our consciousness of the past. Whether or not one agrees with Alon Confino that we are reaching the end of a stage in Holocaust consciousness stretching from the mid-1970s to the present, he is surely correct to observe that the (often moralising) battles over Holocaust memory make sense only within a memory culture that has accepted and internalised the essential place of the extermination of the Jews in European history.³ Although Confino is largely referring to the memory battles fought *within* the arena of Holocaust memory (over the ‘dangers of forgetting’, and what might constitute ‘sufficient memorialisation’), as my two epigraphs show, battle is also being done over the place of Holocaust memory within wider memory cultures, between those who make reference to the Holocaust when articulating their own histories of oppression and suffering, and those who jealously guard against this sort of plagiarism. While various scholars have speculated as to whether the Holocaust’s ubiquity and prominence might somehow dampen our responses to other atrocities,⁴ others, such as David B. MacDonald, have inventoried instances of groups ‘cloaking’ or ‘framing’ their own suffering in the ‘vestments of the Holocaust’ in order to seek

¹ David B. MacDonald, *Identity Politics in the Age of Genocide: The Holocaust and Historical Representation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 15, 196.

² Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 6, 11.

³ Alon Confino, ‘A World Without Jews: Interpreting the Holocaust’, *German History* 27:4 (2009), 531–59, especially 531–4.

⁴ For example, Scott L. Montgomery, ‘What Kind of Memory? Reflections on Images of the Holocaust’, *Contention* 5:1 (1995), 71–104; Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera’s Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), especially chapters 6 & 7.

recognition or reparation – including Armenians, indigenous groups in Australia, America and New Zealand, and ethnic groups in the former Yugoslavia.⁵ Often implicit within these inventories is a form of border patrol, an indignation at the ‘appropriation’ of the Holocaust in what is seen as a strategy of identity politics.

Following the spirit of Michael Rothberg’s *Multidirectional Memory*, however, I instead want to operate a more open (and, *pace* Confino, less moralising) approach to the overlaps and intersections between representations of the Holocaust and of other genocides. While Rothberg’s book explores the interaction of memories of the Holocaust, decolonisation, and racism, I am primarily interested in representations of genocides other than the Holocaust. The last few decades have seen an outpouring of scholarly analyses of Holocaust memorialisation, literature, film, photography, graphic comics, and art, often with highly sophisticated analyses and theoretical considerations; few, though, have explored where and how these theories might also be applied to the representations of other genocides. Given the emotional charge attached to the word ‘genocide’, the similar representational difficulties often facing those attempting to represent other genocides, and that there often *are* congruences in representation, my aim is to explore how representations of other genocides have been constructed, and might be received, when the Holocaust is such a cultural benchmark.

This thesis focuses on representations of the Armenian, Cambodian, Bosnian and Rwandan genocides, in film, literature, photography, and memorialisation, and how they respond to the ‘central’ or ‘paradigmatic’ place of the Holocaust in contemporary society. The key questions are: how do representations of genocide engage with, or borrow from, representations of the Holocaust, and when do they show entirely different concerns? How might westerners respond to these representations, given that, as Confino argues, western memory cultures have largely internalised the Holocaust as an essential part of European history? Of course, to speak of ‘westerners’ and ‘the west’ here is to include a vast number of people, infinitely divisible by nation, cultural background, religion, generation, education, politics, and so on. The very range of this divisibility shows that the national is not the only prism through which to view culture

⁵ MacDonald, *Identity Politics*, 17. MacDonald suggests an overly slippery slope when he draws a straight line from ‘invocations of the Holocaust’s vocabulary’ to Holocaust denial (6-7). Another example, although more sophisticated, is Angi Buettner, *Holocaust Images and Picturing Catastrophe: The Cultural Politics of Seeing* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

and representation,⁶ even though national histories and (for example) cinematic or literary traditions do strongly inflect individual works. Representations are never produced in cultural isolation, and as Sharon Macdonald writes of the heritage industry, they are also refracted through concepts and debates from elsewhere, often ‘undertaken in awareness of a potential international – and judgmental – gaze’.⁷ While Holocaust memory may not exactly be ‘globalised’,⁸ then, westerners do largely share a basic internalisation of the Holocaust as a cornerstone in European and North American history, which surely informs responses to other genocides – and I am, in any case, not interested in making overly prescriptive declarations of how a set of people ‘will’ respond, or remember.⁹

Studying these types of representations gives insight into both the intentions of the artists and the dissemination of ideas within western society. Rather than the news media’s harried aspirations toward simultaneity, these representations are created after the event, and also remain in the public domain for much longer. Hoping to chime with the general public as events of importance, they respond to both genocide itself and to the cultural context in which they are situated. The thesis is structured around five thematic areas of interest, each undertaken in comparison with the Holocaust: how genocide is understood and ‘recognised’ by the western public; how the origins, perpetrators, and dynamic of genocide are represented; the frameworks through which western witnesses interpret and represent genocide; representations of the aftermath;

⁶ For similar arguments, see Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Sold Globally – Remembered Locally: Holocaust Cinema and the Construction of Collective Identities in Europe and the US’ in *Narrating the Nation: Representations in History, Media and the Arts*, eds. Stefan Berger, Linas Eriksonas, and Andrew Mycock (New York: Berghahn, 2008), especially 154-5; David Bathrick, ‘Whose Hi/story Is It? The U.S. Reception of Downfall’, *New German Critique* 34:3 (2007), 1-16; Sharon Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage: Negotiating the Nazi Past in Nuremberg and Beyond* (London: Routledge, 2009), 4-7.

⁷ Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*, 7.

⁸ This is a growing debate; see Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider’s ‘Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory’, *European Journal of Social Theory* 5:1 (2002), 87-106; Levy, ‘Changing Temporalities and the Internationalisation of Memory Cultures’ in *Memory and the Future: Transnational Politics, Ethics and Society*, eds. Yifat Gutman, Adam D. Brown and Amy Sodaro (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 15-30, and in the same volume Ross Poole, ‘Misremembering the Holocaust: Universal Symbol, Nationalist Icon Or Moral Kitsch?’, 31-49. See also Kansteiner, ‘Sold Globally – Remembered Locally’, and Duncan Bell, ed., *Memory, Trauma, and World Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁹ This is one of the strongest critiques of the concept of ‘collective memory’; memory theorists have pointed out the fallacy of assuming the homogeneity of the ‘remembering’ society, and the need to pay attention to the *reception* of representations, as well as the intentions of those representing or remembering. See Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies’, *History and Theory* [henceforth *H&T*] 41:2 (2002), 179-97; Kerwin Lee Klein, ‘On the Emergence of *Memory* in Historical Discourse’, *Representations* 69 (2000), 127-50; Alon Confino, ‘Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method’, *American Historical Review* 102:5 (1997), 1386-403.

and western responses to genocide. Clearly, I cannot (and would not wish or hope to) aspire to a comprehensive, somehow ‘total’ study and theory of ‘representing genocide’. Rather, I hope that approaching from these angles will permit a broad and inclusive exploration of the topic, whilst also offering some interesting and new ways of looking at the problem of representing genocide. I could easily have included the theme of gender, or representations of religion, or the trope of resistance; instead, I hope that these broader thematic explorations will open up genocide representations as a field of study, as well as offering new perspectives on Holocaust representations.

After the Holocaust, these four case studies are perhaps the best-known modern genocides, amongst both the scholarly community and the public; each now has an already large, and growing, analytical literature, and there are also a number of films, survivor testimonies and other literature, museums, and photographic monographs devoted to each (some, of course, more widely available than others). Their broad temporal and geographical scope, as well as their diversity, means that each brings something different to the discussion which might otherwise lie unnoticed. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses have recently, and quite rightly, pointed out that there has been an overconcentration on these four cases to the detriment of a broader and more inclusive study and public conception of genocide;¹⁰ my intention here is to decode how their representation has contributed to their canonisation, and at the same time to provide a critique of, and begin to defuse, this canonisation.

Certainly, the better-known cases are the 1994 attempt by the majority Hutu to eradicate the Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu of Rwanda, and the more drawn-out Serbian campaign of 1992-5 to ethnically cleanse land claimed as historically ‘Serbian’ of its Bosnian Muslim population (as only one strand of the extremely complex Yugoslav wars of secession). Apart from the obvious fact of their being the most recent, this has something to do with their coinciding with (and fuelling) a ‘peak’ in Holocaust awareness in the 1990s,¹¹ as well as the rise of a human rights culture, the globalised circulation of knowledge and the pervasive coverage of the media in the 1990s, and the perceived (and real) readiness of the popular market for books, films and survivor testimonies of these and other sufferings. Despite their simultaneity, there

¹⁰ Bloxham and Moses, ‘Editors’ Introduction: Changing Themes in the Study of Genocide’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies*, eds. Bloxham and Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 1-15: 4.

¹¹ ‘Holocaust consciousness’ will be discussed in chapter 1.

are nonetheless marked differences in the way these genocides were, and are, represented. While the Yugoslav wars never quite escaped the narratives of vicious ancient hatreds and ‘Balkan powder-kegs’, the fact of being ‘in Europe’s back yard’ produced both more concern for, and a greater need to distance, the conflict; however, attention was focused by the discovery of the Serb-run camps in the summer of 1992, and the image of emaciated prisoners behind barbed wire led to instant analogies between ‘Auschwitz’ and ‘Omarska’.¹² Coverage quickly slipped into well-worn and easily comprehensible narratives of innocent victims and murderous perpetrators, of attacks on democracy and civilisation (in the form of a heterogeneous Bosnia and, in microcosm, Sarajevo), and (largely unsatisfied) calls for intervention. The reporting of Rwanda in 1994 was marked by confusion as to exactly what was taking place, exacerbated in large part by the appearance of crowds of Hutu refugees on the border with Congo, who, it was assumed, were the innocent victims of Tutsi violence. Again, the tropes of ‘tribal hatreds’ obscured – and still do – the genocide’s origins in the contemporary (domestic and global) political and economic situation, and the legacies of colonialism. But the majority of films, books, and images of the Rwandan genocide are produced by western outsiders, and are characterised firstly by an intense focus on the world’s failure to act (despite UN General Roméo Dallaire’s efforts to expand and implement his UN mandate), and secondly by their felt need to explore and account for the participation of thousands of ordinary people in the killing of their neighbours.

Rather less is known about the killings during the period of Khmer Rouge rule in Cambodia (renamed Democratic Kampuchea (DK)) from 1975 to 1979, sometimes referred to as ‘politicide’ or ‘autogenocide’; indeed, many will only know of it through contemporary news reports, Roland Joffé’s immensely successful film *The Killing Fields* (1984), or exhibitions of some of the photographs from Tuol Sleng, the main interrogation centre in Phnom Penh.¹³ Nevertheless, the Cambodian case is interesting

¹² See Robert M. Hayden, ‘Mass Killings and Images of Genocide in Bosnia, 1941-5 and 1992-5’ in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 487-516; Alan E. Steinweis, ‘The Auschwitz Analogy: Holocaust Memory and American Debates over Intervention in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* [henceforth *HGS*] 19:2 (2005), 276-89; David Campbell, ‘Atrocity, Memory and Photography: Imagining the Concentration Camps of Bosnia – The Case of ITN Versus *Living Marxism*’, *Journal of Human Rights* 1:1 (2002), 1-33 (part I), and 1:2 (2002), 143-72 (part II). For analyses of ‘balkanising’ narratives, see Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, revised edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); Milica Bakić-Hayden and Robert M. Hayden, ‘Orientalist Variations on the Theme “Balkans”: Symbolic Geography in Recent Yugoslav Cultural Politics’, *Slavic Review* 51:1 (1992), 1-15.

¹³ Aside from Tuol Sleng, the most famous exhibition was held at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1997; they have since been displayed in many different locations (including London in 2009).

because it occurred at the beginning of the period generally associated with a ‘jump’ in Holocaust consciousness, and thus offers an interesting perspective on how the representations of both have developed in tandem and separately. The genocide of the Ottoman Armenian population at the hands of the Young Turks in 1915 offers a parallel in this respect; tracing the representational trajectory of this genocide proves interesting because while it predates the Holocaust, both contemporary reports and later representations show striking similarities. The last three decades have seen a flowering in the numbers of testimonies and films, many of which orient themselves in relation to the Holocaust; official Turkish denial has also deeply affected memory and representation, and can be seen as an important spur for these Holocaust references.

Admittedly, some important issues are obscured by my thus-far uncritical discussion of each as ‘genocide’. Rwanda is the only case uncompromisingly accepted as genocide by the public, scholarly and legal communities; the Turkish denial of the Armenian genocide, despite its overwhelming acceptance as genocide by scholars, means that others are more hesitant, often describing it as ‘alleged’ genocide; and while most academics will now unflinchingly ascribe ‘genocide’ to the Cambodian case, there has been some legal hesitation, because many of the victims do not fall under the UN Genocide Convention’s definition of a ‘national, ethnical, racial, or religious group’. On the other side of the coin, while the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is prosecuting Bosnian Serb leaders for war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in Bosnia, there has been some debate over the designation of the killings as genocide within the scholarly community.¹⁴ Yet the importance here is that in the west the killings *are perceived as*, and thus represented as, genocide.

Comparative Genocide Studies

As my brief discussion of MacDonald and others’ work above indicates, comparative studies of genocide can be fraught with accusations of trivialising, normalising, or denying the supposed ‘uniqueness’ of the Holocaust. This was nowhere more true than during the *Historikerstreit* of the late 1980s, but, as Moses has argued, by now the Holocaust can be studied alongside other genocides, in a non-competitive comparative history, ‘without the need for scholars to make pious gestures to establish their moral

¹⁴ See Hayden, ‘Mass Killings and Images of Genocide’.

credentials.’¹⁵ The comparative method has always been about illuminating differences as well as similarities, and although it can forfeit the deep immersion usual to historical research, nevertheless, properly done, it can highlight the specificity of events as well as common processes, and test the outer limits of a phenomenon.¹⁶ There are by now several comparative studies and collections of essays which view genocide from a variety of perspectives – gender and genocide, genocide and western complicity, communist genocides, genocide and colonialism, comparisons with the Holocaust, or broadly thematic approaches.¹⁷ Some of the more interesting comparative work has broken with the early mould of creating a taxonomy of recurrent origins, elements and features among established case studies (largely followed by those working in the social sciences),¹⁸ and has begun to look at the broad, world-historical context for genocide in the modern age;¹⁹ most recently, Bloxham and Moses have called for the adoption of a more historical approach to genocide, one

¹⁵ A. Dirk Moses, ‘The Holocaust and Genocide’ in *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 533-55: 548. For the *Historikerstreit*, see especially Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust and German National Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). Alan Rosenbaum, ed., *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide*, 3rd edition (Boulder: Westview Press, 2009) provides a cross-section of essays on this debate; the book’s three editions show not just the debate’s development but also its longevity.

¹⁶ One of the first explicit modern proponents of comparative history was Marc Bloch: see ‘Toward a Comparative History of European Societies’, trans. J.C. Riemersma, in *Enterprise and Secular Change: Readings in Economic History*, eds. Frederic C. Lane and Jelle C. Riemersma (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1953), 494-521. For more recent theoretical considerations, which also take into account the development of postcolonial studies, transnational history, and ‘histoire croisée’, see ‘AHR Conversation: On Transnational History’, *American Historical Review* 111:5 (2006), 1441-64; Chris Lorenz, ‘Comparative Historiography: Problems and Perspectives’, *H&T* 38:1 (1999), 25-39; Jürgen Kocka, ‘Comparison and Beyond’, *H&T* 42:1 (2003), 39-44.

¹⁷ E.g., Adam Jones, ed., *Gendercide and Genocide* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2004); idem., ed., *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity* (London/New York: Zed Books, 2004); Stéphane Courtois et al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Dirk Moses and Dan Stone, eds., *Colonialism and Genocide* (London: Routledge, 2006); Hans-Lucas Kieser and Dominick J. Schaller, eds., *Der Völkermord an der Armeniern und die Shoah* (Zürich: Chronos, 2002); Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, eds., *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

¹⁸ For historiographical and conceptual reviews of comparative genocide studies, see Bloxham and Moses, ‘Introduction’; Anton Weiss-Wendt, ‘Problems of Comparative Genocide Scholarship’ and David Moshman, ‘Conceptions of Genocide and Perceptions of History’, both in *Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Stone, 42-70 and 71-92. Examples of ‘categorising’ studies include Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); idem., *The Prevention of Genocide* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Helen Fein, *Accounting for Genocide* (London: Free Press, 1979); idem., *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective* (London: Sage, 1993); Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Manus I. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

¹⁹ For example, on the broader world-historical context, Mark Levene, *Genocide In the Age of the Nation-State, Vol. I: The Meaning of Genocide* and *Vol. II: The Rise of the West and the Coming of Genocide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005); James Kaye and Bo Stråth, *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2000).

which is more interested in the causes and contexts than the ‘outcomes’ of genocide, and which goes ‘beyond strictly comparative scholarship to something more consciously correlative and contextual’.²⁰ Others have challenged dominant research trends by focusing on cases which fall outside the standard conceptualisation of genocide, such as the recent explosion in the study of colonial genocides.²¹

This last trend, especially, sprang from important critiques by Dirk Moses, David Moshman, and Dan Stone, who have challenged the tendency to see the Holocaust as the prototypical case of genocide and pursue research according to its template, arguing that this restricts and distorts our understanding of other genocides.²² Rather, as Moses states, ‘the task is to relate each genocide to others in a way that allows them to retain their distinctive features.’²³ Nevertheless, a complicating factor has been the sophistication of Holocaust historiography in comparison with much of the wider field of genocide studies. Applying insights derived from Holocaust historiography has at times proved useful and innovative: Bloxham has borrowed Hans Mommsen’s concept of ‘cumulative radicalisation’ to illuminate the unfolding of the Armenian genocide, while Ben Kiernan finds that considering the Nazi fear of German territorial loss and annihilation can help illuminate the paranoia and radicalism of the Khmer Rouge.²⁴ Nevertheless, unproblematically grafting theoretical approaches to the Holocaust onto the study of other cases has had the tendency to distort scholarship and our understanding of both individual case studies and of the phenomenon in general.²⁵

²⁰ Bloxham and Moses, ‘Introduction’, 8; see also their ‘Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing’ in *Political Violence in Twentieth-Century Europe*, eds. Donald Bloxham and Robert Gerwarth (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 87-139.

²¹ See especially A. Dirk Moses, ed., *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008); Moses and Stone, *Colonialism and Genocide*; Jürgen Zimmerer, ‘Colonialism and the Holocaust: Towards an Archaeology of Genocide’ in *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York: Berghahn Books, 2004), 49-76.

²² A. Dirk Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the “Racial Century”’: Genocides of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 36:4 (2002), 7-36; David Moshman, ‘Conceptual Constraints on Thinking about Genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research* [henceforth *JGR*] 3:3 (2001), 431-50; Dan Stone, ‘The Historiography of Genocide: Beyond “Uniqueness” and Ethnic Competition’, *Rethinking History* 8:1 (2004), 127-42.

²³ Moses, ‘Conceptual Blockages’, 34.

²⁴ Moses, ‘The Holocaust and Genocide’, 547-8, referring to Donald Bloxham, ‘The Armenian Genocide of 1915-16: Cumulative Radicalisation and the Development of a Destruction Policy’, *Past and Present* 181 (2003), 141-92 and Ben Kiernan, ‘Myth, Nationalism and Genocide’, *JGR* 3:2 (2001), 187-206; 190.

²⁵ This is perhaps most evident in the historiography on the Armenian genocide, especially in the work of Vahakn Dadrian. See Donald Bloxham, *The Great Game of Genocide: Imperialism, Nationalism, and the Destruction of the Ottoman Armenians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), especially chapter 3, ‘Imperial Germany: A Case of Mistaken Identity’.

These insights have obvious implications for this thesis; whilst I, too, am attempting to subvert the tendency to see the Holocaust as the prototypical genocide, I am likewise indebted to the theoretical insights developed by those working on representations of the Holocaust. The particular methods of comparative empirical research do not, of course, translate perfectly across into a comparative study of *representations* of genocide, but the essence is the same: to understand how the problems of representing human suffering are refracted by the specificity of each case. The point is to remain sensitive to where these theories may be less applicable, as much as to where they are, and to bring to light areas which remain outside their reach. As some critics have pointed out, certain categories of analysis developed with primary reference to the Holocaust, but which claim universal applicability – such as that of trauma – may be less suited to the analysis of other periods, geographies, and experiences.²⁶ Accordingly, I make use of the insights of postcolonial and transnational studies and critical anthropology, and rather than pursuing the well-known tropes associated with the Holocaust in the representations of other genocides – absence, trauma, silence, or the ‘limits of representation’ – I begin instead from the opposite angle, with a view of the body of representations of genocide, including those of the Holocaust, as a whole.

Representations of the Holocaust: Historiography and Theory

Many of the extremely complex debates within the historiography of critical literature on Holocaust representations will thus be central to my project – whether serving as inspiration, forming the theoretical underpinnings of my analysis, or constituting an accepted argument to challenge. In a sense, what is most pertinent here is the degree to which the word ‘Holocaust’ is interchangeable with the word ‘genocide’ in these highly sophisticated discourses. There is, by now, an absolutely huge literature on Holocaust representations, accompanying the similarly huge number and variety of representations themselves, whether books, documentary or feature film, museums,

²⁶ Stef Craps and Gert Buelens, ‘Introduction: Postcolonial Trauma Novels’, *Studies in the Novel* 40:1&2 (2008), 1-12. For example, referencing Cathy Caruth’s ‘Trauma and Experience: Introduction’ in Caruth, ed., *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1995), they argue: ‘Remarkably, however, trauma studies’ stated commitment to the promotion of cross-cultural ethical engagement is not borne out by the founding texts of the field (including Caruth’s own work), which are almost exclusively concerned with traumatic experiences of white westerners and solely employ critical methodologies emanating from a Euro-American context’ (2). See also the rest of this special issue, similar comments in Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith, *Human Rights And Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 22-4, and also Jo Labanyi, ‘Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain: The Difficulty of Coming to Terms with the Spanish Civil War’, *Poetics Today* 28:1 (2007), 89-116.

memorials and commemorative days, theatre, art and photography, or graphic comics. The majority of the literature has tended to concentrate either on a single medium (testimony, for example, or memorialisation), or representations within a single nation-state framework (such as French Holocaust films, or discussions of the ‘Americanization of the Holocaust’). These studies are often also structured around in-depth case studies of a limited number of writers, artists, or sites, which has, overall, given us a very rich understanding and analysis of some of the most interesting reflections on the Holocaust and its legacies – but this approach is now beginning to get a little repetitive, and the concentration on a few ‘celebrity’ artists and high-quality representations occludes the breadth and diversity of responses in the cultural sphere.²⁷ More promising, perhaps, are the thematic studies which grapple with a range of mediums to discuss the more theoretical or philosophical issues of representing the Holocaust. Before discussing these in depth I will, however, first look at the major developments in the separate fields of testimony and literature, film, photography, and memorials and museums, outlining the major lines of debate and indicating how my project engages with them. There are, of course, overlaps and crossovers between these fields – the ‘limits of representation’ are not discipline-specific – and this is, therefore, one of the reasons for structuring this project thematically.

After fragmentary reflections on ‘Holocaust texts’ and works such as Lawrence Langer’s *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination* (1975) and Terrence Des Pres’ *The Survivor* (1976), which largely established the literature of the Holocaust as a canon and area of enquiry,²⁸ two broad areas of discussion developed which are of relevance to this project. The first concerns the form and structure of Holocaust testimony and literature: attentive to the difficulties of writing about such extreme experiences, scholars have considered the narratives, and narrative silences, through which survivors relate their experiences, focusing on concepts such as ‘unspeakability’ and trauma, as well as experimental forms of writing (Charlotte Delbo’s, for example) and gendered perspectives.²⁹ Of course, survivors of other atrocities will encounter

²⁷ Rothberg’s work, for example, delivers sophisticated analyses of intellectually stimulating literature and films, but very rarely touches upon more workaday, mainstream representations. Buettner’s *Holocaust Images* is entirely concerned with the latter, but her analysis fails to move on in other ways.

²⁸ For recent historiographical reviews, see Zoë Waxman, ‘Testimony and Representation’ in *Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Stone, 487-507, and Andrea Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust* (London: Continuum, 2000), ‘Introduction’.

²⁹ On unspeakability, see Naomi Mandel, ‘Rethinking “After Auschwitz”: Against a Rhetoric of the Unspeakable in Holocaust Writing’, *boundary 2* 28:2 (2002), 203-28, Heidrun Friese, ‘Silence – Voice – Representation’ in *Theoretical Interpretations of the Holocaust*, ed. Dan Stone (Amsterdam: Rodopi,

difficulty in trying to express their experiences; the question is whether survivors respond in similar ways to different events, whether dominant categories of analysis like ‘trauma’ are universally applicable, and whether they alone can account for the distinctiveness of the testimony arising from a particular time and place.³⁰

The second arena of discussion which interests me here has to do with cultural attitudes toward survivors and their testimony. Survivors are now venerated in western culture, and their testimony cherished – this has not always been the case³¹ – and is, after all, one of the reasons that other groups employ the ‘Holocaust frame’, seeking perhaps for themselves a share in the status of the ‘ultimate victimhood’. Their status as ‘authentic eyewitnesses’ is celebrated, and testimony is generally understood as giving a privileged access to the past. Some scholars, though, discern a tendency on society’s part to prefer ‘stock stories’, to listen to only what we already know, or want to know;³² thus, if the identity and speech of the survivor is, in part, structured and conditioned by the circumstances of giving and reception, we ought to ask how the identities of survivors of other genocides have been constructed and viewed, whether their testimony is given and presented to us in quite the same way, and how this has changed over the last few decades, perhaps mirroring or reflecting changes in the way that Holocaust survivors are regarded by western society.

2001), 159-78, and Peter Haidu, ‘The Dialectics of Unspeakability: Language, Silence, and the Narratives of Desubjectification’ in *Probing the Limits of Representation: Nazism and the Final Solution*, ed. Saul Friedländer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 277-99. On trauma, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub’s *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History* (New York: Routledge, 1992), and Cathy Caruth’s *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, remain the point of departure, alongside Dominick LaCapra’s more critical perspectives in, for example, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2001). See Zoë Waxman’s consideration of gender in *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³⁰ See Craps and Buelens, ‘Introduction’, and in the same issue Robert Eaglestone, “‘You Would Not Add To My Suffering If You Knew What I Had Seen’: Holocaust Testimony and Contemporary African Trauma Literature”, *Studies In The Novel* 40:1&2 (2008), 72-85; Nancy K. Miller and Jason Tougaw, eds., *Extremities: Trauma, Testimony, and Community* (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). One area of research which has critically engaged with Holocaust testimony theory is the study of Latin American *testimonio*. See Georg Gugelberger and Michael Kearney, ‘Voices for the Voiceless: Testimonial Literature in Latin America’, *Latin American Perspectives* 18:3 (1991), 3-14; and more recently Anne Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror: Testimony and the Cultural Politics of Human Rights* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005), especially chapter 4.

³¹ Henry Greenspan, ‘Imagining Survivors: Testimony and the Rise of Holocaust Consciousness’ in *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, ed. Hilene Flanzbaum (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1999), 45-67; Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

³² Greenspan, ‘Imagining Survivors’; Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror*, xii, 154; Wendy S. Hesford, ‘Rhetorical Witnessing and the Spectacle of Distant Suffering’, *Biography* 21:7 (2004), 104-44.

The study of museums and memorials was largely inaugurated by James E. Young, and his studies *The Texture of Memory* and *At Memory's Edge: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* have remained influential.³³ Young's very literary analysis focused on the interactions between artists, national memory cultures, and those commissioning memorials, as well as giving a sense of how the public might respond to these memorials. The literature has exploded since then, and now comprises extremely detailed historical studies of individual camps, memorials and museums (whether at a former 'site' of the Holocaust, or a public space far removed from the events), as well as comparative studies of memorialisation in specific cities, countries or (occasionally) across national borders, and even studies of memorials which were *not* made.³⁴ Key concepts have been the felt 'authenticity' of a former site or museum object (versus its mediation by renovation, alternation, or placement within the museum context), notions of 'the uncanny' and 'absence' (particularly within German memorialisation), and an acute awareness of the spatial aspect of architecture and how architectural techniques can affect the experience of museum and memorial visitors.³⁵ Within the broader arena of memory studies, a critique has responded to the proliferation of memorialisation, asking whether they represent something of a 'prosthetic memory',³⁶ and whether the 'official memories' promulgated by institutions or individuals involved in 'making memory' are, in fact, held or taken up by the population they claim to represent. The issue – or fear – is that museums and memorials create a superficial memory, an external remembrance harnessed to specific and official spaces, which then 'remember' on our behalf.

³³ James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

³⁴ The literature is extremely broad, but recent and exemplary are: Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau: The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933-2001* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Karen E. Till, *The New Berlin: Memory, Politics, Place* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005); Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1945* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Jennifer A. Jordan, *Structures of Memory: Understanding Urban Change in Berlin and Beyond* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).

³⁵ See Oren Baruch Stier's discussions of the way 'authentic objects' are used in his *Committed to Memory: Cultural Mediations of the Holocaust* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992); James E. Young, 'Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum in Berlin: The Uncanny Arts of Memorial Architecture' in *At Memory's Edge*, and his discussions of the architecture of Daniel Libeskind, James Ingo Freed, and Peter Eisenman in *The Texture of Memory* and *At Memory's Edge*.

³⁶ Alison Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

These lines of analysis are all broadly applicable to the memorials and museums in Rwanda, Bosnia, Cambodia and Armenia. What current theories of Holocaust memorialisation cannot account for, it seems to me, has to do with the interchange of both memorialisation techniques and tourists across cultural contexts.³⁷ One of the more interesting questions which has yet to be fully explored is whether there is now a specific *style* to Holocaust exhibitions and memorials, or even, slightly differently, a 'Holocaust architecture' to these buildings, exhibition spaces, and memorials. To what extent have these techniques of representing the Holocaust been adopted by memorial museums in Kigali, Srebrenica, Phnom Penh or Yerevan, and why, and how far do they have to be adapted to be locally resonant? Conversely, how might western tourists react when they visit starkly different memorials, such as those of Cambodia and Rwanda, where human remains are displayed? If the concern of many recent Holocaust memorials has been to render the Holocaust unfamiliar, through dislocating architecture and displays carefully crafted to give a jarring sense of loss – then one also has to engage with the question of familiarity in memorials to other genocides, for both local populations (since the memorials which exist often involve reinterpreting or entirely subverting traditional forms of burial and remembrance) and western tourists, who are perhaps more used to a form of memorialisation which, from this view, now seems far more homogenous.

Discussions of Holocaust photography are almost inseparable from the broader theories and debates about atrocity photography. The most commonly pursued debate concerns the ethics of viewing (indeed, taking) such atrocity photographs, or, as Susan Sontag famously put it, 'regarding the pain of others'.³⁸ Alongside critiques of the objectifying, voyeuristic gaze – and the fear that images render violence photogenic – are concerns that 'such photographs do not always bring the viewer to look, to really

³⁷ Both the Memorial Centre Camp Westerbork (Netherlands) and Susanne Bardgett, curator of the Holocaust Exhibition at the Imperial War Museum (IWM), London, were consultants for the planning and design of the Potočari Memorial Centre in Bosnia; Aegis Trust, a UK genocide charity and creator of the Beth Shalom Holocaust Museum in Nottinghamshire, fulfilled a similar function in the planning of the Kigali Memorial Centre at Gisozi and the Murambi Genocide Memorial Centre.

³⁸ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (London: Penguin, 2004); see also Judith Butler's discussion, 'Torture and the Ethics of Photography: Thinking with Sontag' in her *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London/New York: Verso, 1999), 63-100. Indeed, some have sought to impose limits on what we may see, such as Claude Lanzmann's blunt 'You may not look at this' (referring to (filmed) scenes of the gas chambers at work), and Susan A. Crane's more recent, though unconvincing, argument for 'choosing not to look', which proposes that photographs be 'repatriated' to archives and proper historical study. Claude Lanzmann, Ruth Larson, and David Rodowick, 'Seminar With Claude Lanzmann, 11 April 1990', *Yale French Studies* 79 (1991), 82-99; Crane, 'Choosing Not To Look: Representation, Repatriation and Holocaust Atrocity Photography', *H&T* 47:3 (2008), 309-30.

see, nor can they be counted on to create empathetic bonds between the contemporary subject and the person from the unimaginable past. The dilemma is that these photographs offer crucial information that cannot be discounted', as Andrea Liss neatly summarises it.³⁹ The moral fear is that a failure to empathise with the victim is tantamount to a second injury. With these insights underpinning their work, various scholars have analysed aspects of Holocaust photography: the dissemination of photographs of the ghettos and camps in visual culture, and the rise to the status of icon for some; their specific use in memorials and museums as both evidentiary and affective documents; the importance of proper attribution, in establishing the identity and intentions of the photographer; and the central role of photographs in what Marianne Hirsch terms 'postmemory'.⁴⁰ Likewise, a literature has sprung up around post-Holocaust photography – of former camp sites, or artistic uses of photography such as that of Christian Boltanski – which follows other fields of research in analysing these photographs in terms of absence, loss, trauma and memory.⁴¹

Directly arising from this literature, then, is the question of whether we really do 'see', and indeed whether, as Zelizer has asked, the iconic status of certain Holocaust photographs means we measure photographs of other horrors against them.⁴² Certainly, the *Living Marxism* controversy revolved in part around the visual similarity of the images of a skeletal Fikret Alić to some of the photographs of the liberation of the camps.⁴³ What, then, of 'ordinary' photographs of war and death? The contexts in which people view such photographs also need to come into consideration. While some commented that displaying the Tuol Sleng photographs in a gallery setting at MoMA gave them a disturbing beauty, galleries are not the only environments in which we may encounter such photographs. Photojournalists of contemporary horrors, including those in Rwanda and Bosnia, are often not averse to producing expensive,

³⁹ Andrea Liss, *Trespassing Through Shadows: Memory, Photography, and the Holocaust* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), xii.

⁴⁰ Janina Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust: Interpretations of the Evidence* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Liss, *Trespassing*; Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*; Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); idem., *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁴¹ E.g. Ulrich Baer, 'To Give Memory a Place: Holocaust Photography and the Landscape Tradition', *Representations* 69 (2000), 38-62, and Dora Apel's discussion of Jeffrey Wolin and James Freedman in her *Memory Effects: The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 93-107 and 109-132.

⁴² See Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, chapters 6&7.

⁴³ See Campbell, 'Atrocity, Memory and Photography', parts I and II. The images were actually stills taken from ITN's film rushes.

beautifully bound coffee-table books.⁴⁴ What does it mean to display such photographs in so informal a setting as one's home?

Studies of films about the Holocaust, unsurprisingly, draw from a similar pool of ideas and concerns as studies of Holocaust literature and photography. Debate, though, has until fairly recently been rather polarised, perhaps because it is felt that more is at stake: commercially-released feature films and TV documentaries often have a wider reach amongst the general public than other mediums of representation. Discussions tend to turn on the dichotomy between proponents of the medium's ability to convey meaning and affect to its audience, and opponents of what is seen as its false veneer of 'authenticity' – which, for a while, was reduced to a battle between enthusiastic advocates of Spielberg's popular *Schindler's List* (1993), and those who preferred the complexity and philosophy of Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985).⁴⁵ The latter are wary of what they see as the 'Hollywoodisation' of the Holocaust, the tendency of popular films to simplify and over-dramatise complex events, often opting to personalise the tragedy by focusing on fewer characters at the expense of a more balanced view of an infinitely wider catastrophe, as well as paradoxically imposing a lucid, narrative coherence (often turning on the well-worn narratives of heroism, sacrifice and redemption) on an event which, they argue, lacked precisely such lucidity and comprehensibility.⁴⁶ The former argue that such narrative devices are not "poor history" but rather an alternative form of history that informs us about the past through different means',⁴⁷ and that the power of the medium to 'make history come alive' and convey a very real sense of the catastrophe to a broader audience should not be underestimated. As Berel Lang points out, though, this is to hold awareness as an overriding value, ignoring the nature of the content (and context) that produces this 'awareness'.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ For example, Gilles Peress, *The Silence* (New York: Scalo, 1995); Peress, *Farewell to Bosnia* (New York: Scalo, 1994); James Nachtwey, *Inferno* (London: Phaidon, 1999); Simon Norfolk, *Bleed* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 2005).

⁴⁵ See Yosefa Loshitsky, ed., *Spielberg's Holocaust: Critical Perspectives on Schindler's List* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), and Stuart Liebman, ed., *Claude Lanzmann's Shoah: Key Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). For a recent historiography, see Lawrence Baron's introductory chapter in *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005). Other broad surveys include Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and Judith E. Doneson, *The Holocaust in American Film* (Sycaruse: Sycaruse University Press, 2002), and the relevant essays in David Bathrick et al, eds., *Visualizing the Holocaust: Documents, Aesthetics, Memory* (Rochester: Boydell and Brewer, 2008).

⁴⁶ Liss, *Trespassing Through Shadows*, xvi.

⁴⁷ Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust*, 6.

⁴⁸ Berel Lang, *Holocaust Representation: Art Within the Limits of History and Ethics* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 7.

These debates are almost directly transposable onto films about other genocides⁴⁹ – indeed, one discussion about Terry George’s *Hotel Rwanda* (2004) directly engaged with Spielberg’s legacy, as Paul Rusesabagina became hailed as the ‘African Schindler’⁵⁰ – although, as one scholar has remarked, films about the Holocaust do not have to contend with the same lack of basic awareness of the historical events that filmmakers who choose other genocides do.⁵¹ This, certainly, brings up the issue of the film’s intended audience; while some films have made the crossover into a wider viewing public (Danis Tanović’s *Ničija Zemlja* (*No Man’s Land*, 2001), Atom Egoyan’s *Ararat* (2002)), others make less sense outside of their intended domestic audience (Srđan Dragojević’s *Lepa sela, lepo gore* (*Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*, 1996) or Jasmila Zbanić’s *Grbavica* (2006)). Another debate within Holocaust studies which seems not to have quite the same impact upon films of other genocides has been that of taboo: there has been a fierce prohibition on the restaging of certain Holocaust scenes, most obviously those taking place within the gas chambers, echoing debates about the voyeuristic gaze within analyses of atrocity photography.⁵² Other, more recent directions in the literature may prove more useful, such as Libby Saxton’s authoritative and measured discussion of the issues of ethics, ‘unrepresentability’ and testimony, or Joshua Hirsch’s of ‘afterimages’, trauma and memory in Holocaust films,⁵³ but perhaps the most interesting for this project are those analyses interested in the way that Holocaust films often cut across wider genres and reference other well-known scenes. Films about other genocides need to be understood as engaging with and being situated within these wider genres of horror, of war films, and narratives of loss and redemption, I argue, as much as engaging with Holocaust films, issues of representability and, finally, each other.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ See Lawrence Baron, ed., ‘Holocaust and Genocide Cinema’, special issue of *Shofar* 28:4 (2010), 1-145, and Kristi M. Wilson and Tomás F. Crowder-Taraborrelli, *Film and Genocide* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012).

⁵⁰ Leshu Torchin offers a thoughtful discussion of this in her review of the film: ‘Hotel Rwanda’, *Cineaste* 30:2 (2005), 46-7.

⁵¹ Jonathan Markovitz, ‘Ararat and Collective Memories of the Armenian Genocide’, *HGS* 20:2 (2006), 235-55: 237.

⁵² See, for example, Barry Langford, “‘You Cannot Look At This’: Thresholds of Unrepresentability in Holocaust Film”, *Journal of Holocaust Education* 8:3 (1999), 23-40.

⁵³ Libby Saxton, *Haunted Images: Film, Ethics, Testimony and the Holocaust* (London: Wallflower Press, 2008); Joshua Hirsch, *Afterimage: Film, Trauma and the Holocaust* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004).

⁵⁴ One thinks particularly of Uwe Boll’s *Auschwitz* (2011) and Quentin Tarantino’s *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) with respect to the horror and war film genres: generally, see Langford, “‘You Cannot Look At This’” (for a consideration of *Schindler’s List*), and Caroline Joan (Kay) S. Picart and David A. Frank, *Frames of Evil: The Holocaust as Horror in American Film* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006). See also Axel Bangert, Robert S. C. Gordon and Libby Saxton, eds., *Holocaust Intersections: Genocide and Visual Culture at the New Millennium* (forthcoming).

As will have become obvious, even for those studies which remain firmly within their respective subfields outlined above, there are common concerns and significant overlaps in theory. In the last decade or so, a number of texts have taken a more interdisciplinary approach in drawing out themes or concepts across various forms of Holocaust representation. Ernst van Alphen's *Caught By History* discusses what he calls 'Holocaust effects' in art, literature and theory: he emphasises a contrast between Holocaust re-presentations (which are by necessity mediated) and 'Holocaust effects', which cause readers or viewers to 'experience directly a certain aspect of the Holocaust... it is made present as a performative effect. Those performative effects "do" the Holocaust, or rather, they "do" a specific aspect of it.'⁵⁵ Dora Apel's *Memory Effects* draws from van Alphen and adds to the growing body of texts on the so-called 'second-generation' in exploring how the sons and daughters of survivors have represented an intimate history they did not experience first-hand.⁵⁶ Young's aforementioned *At Memory's Edge* is similarly concerned with the 'after-images' of the Holocaust in contemporary art and architecture, and their exposure of the difficulties and vagaries of Holocaust memory.⁵⁷ And while Michael Rothberg pursues his concept of 'traumatic realism' – a representational strategy which exposes the intersection between the everyday and the extreme, and mediates between realist and antirealist positions in Holocaust studies⁵⁸ – largely in literary responses, his discussion is framed by a consideration of Art Spiegelman's *Maus*, and the concept could be applied more broadly to other mediums and other extreme events; his *Multidirectional Memory* explores the cross-referencing, borrowing and interaction between the memories of different sufferings, across a much wider variety of mediums.⁵⁹ Oren Baruch Stier's *Committed to Memory* likewise takes a broad view of Holocaust representations; his discussions of how the icons and symbols of the Holocaust appear within western memory cultures, and of tourism practices, are especially useful here.⁶⁰ In a slightly different vein, Brett Ashley Kaplan's *Unwanted*

⁵⁵ Ernst van Alphen, *Caught By History: Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 10. Andreas Huyssen forwarded the concept of 'mimetic approximation' before van Alphen and Apel, as 'a mnemonic strategy which recognises the event in its otherness and beyond identification or therapeutic empathy, but which bodily innervates some of the horror and the pain in the slow and persistent labour of remembrance.' Huyssen, 'Monument and Memory in an Unmediated Age', *Yale Journal of Criticism* 6:2 (1993), 249-61: 259.

⁵⁶ Apel, *Memory Effects*.

⁵⁷ Young, *At Memory's Edge*.

⁵⁸ Michael Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism: The Demands of Holocaust Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 9.

⁵⁹ Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*.

⁶⁰ Stier, *Committed to Memory*.

Beauty discusses the taboo of deriving beauty and aesthetic pleasure from literary and artistic representations, arguing instead that beauty was and is a coping strategy, and exploring contemporary fears of replicating a ‘fascist aesthetics’ in art and architecture; in her more recent *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, she combines reflections on spaces, photography, and the novels of J.M. Coetzee to explore some of the diverse shapes Holocaust memory is taking on today.⁶¹

Each of these contributions crosses disciplinary boundaries to trace common threads in Holocaust representations, and explore the challenges of how post-Holocaust generations can approach (or be approached by) such representations. They are not comparative in the classic sense of finding and evaluating both differences and similarities between various representations; rather, they tend to select a theme or concept and choose the work of engaging artists which permit their exploration of that theme. This, though, means that most studies devote each of their chapters to only one particular artist, which allows enough space to contextualise and analyse their work effectively, but also sometimes means that the study can become disjointed, with primacy given to the artist rather than how their work exemplifies or complicates the book’s unifying concept. The more thematic approaches of Kaplan’s *Unwanted Beauty* and especially Stier’s *Committed to Memory*, which bring together different artists and cultural artefacts in each chapter, are more effective in this regard; the strong thematic division of the topic, and wide-ranging analysis of the contours of representation in each division, permits a more nuanced analysis of how representations work as only examples of much broader representational trends in the public sphere. My aim is therefore to go beyond the merely ‘affirmative readings’⁶² of engaging artists, and instead to consider a wide range of representations, sophisticated or not, under each of my aforementioned thematic areas of interest – and thereby shift the focus away from well-known and high-brow examples onto how congruences across the entire corpus might help generate the western public’s understanding of genocide. My emphasis throughout is therefore less on formal analyses of the films, testimonies, museums, and

⁶¹ Brett Ashley Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty: Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007); Kaplan, *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory* (London: Routledge, 2011).

⁶² Chloe Paver, *Refractions of the Third Reich in German and Austrian Fiction and Film* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 28. Paver sees many of the same shortfalls in the current literature on Holocaust representations.

so on, although I occasionally include close readings of one or another as a ‘representative anecdote’⁶³ illustrative of a larger pattern.

Relatively few scholars have studied representations of other genocides, whether in literature, film, photography, or memorials and museums, and certainly not comparatively.⁶⁴ The secondary literature, such as it is, is disjointed, uneven and isolated, and tends to analyse case studies from within a discipline, or approach from an area studies perspective. This is invaluable, in that the analysis is generally culturally sensitive and sophisticated in its application, and so part of my aim here is to build upon these studies and open up a dialogue between them. At present, for example, there is a relatively lively literature on Balkan films, and a few analyses of films about Rwanda and Atom Egoyan’s cinematography, but very little on the clutch of films about the Cambodian genocide.⁶⁵ On the other side of the coin, there have been various thoughtful analyses of Cambodian memorialisation, and some interesting reflections on Rwandan memorials, but the literature on memorialisation in Bosnia and Armenia (and its diaspora) is very much in its infancy.⁶⁶ The ground shifts again with

⁶³ Picart and Frank, *Frames of Evil*, 22.

⁶⁴ The only properly comparative publications I have found are the late Stephen C. Feinstein’s ‘Art of the Holocaust and Genocide: Some Points of Convergence’, *JGR* 1:2 (1999), 233-55, and two on memorialisation: Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums: The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities* (Oxford/New York: Berg, 2007), and Louis Bickford and Amy Sodaro, ‘Remembering Yesterday to Protect Tomorrow: The Internationalization of a New Commemorative Paradigm’ in *Memory and the Future*, eds. Gutman et al., 66-86.

⁶⁵ Dina Iordanova’s *Cinema in Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media* (London: BFI, 2001) remains an excellent introduction, although Milena Michalski and James Gow’s *War, Image and Legitimacy: Viewing Contemporary Conflict* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) is more up-to-date; see also Andrew Horton’s works, including *The Celluloid Tinderbox: Yugoslav Screen Reflections of a Turbulent Decade* (Telford: Central Europe Review, 2000), and Saša Vojković, ed., ‘Re-Imagining the Balkans’, special issue of *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 6:1 (2008), 1-95. On Rwanda, see especially Madelaine Hron, ‘Genres of “Yet An Other Genocide”: Cinematic Representations of Rwanda’ in *Film and Genocide*, eds. Wilson and Crowder-Taraborrelli, 133-53. On Armenia, Emma Wilson, *Atom Egoyan* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009); Monique Tschofen and Jennifer Burwell, eds., *Image and Territory: Essays on Atom Egoyan* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2007); and compare Markovitz’s ‘Ararat and Collective Memories’ with Asli Daldal’s ‘Ararat and the politics of “preserving” denial’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 41:5 (2007), 407-34.

⁶⁶ On Cambodian memorialisation, see Rachel Hughes, ‘Memory and Sovereignty in Post-1979 Cambodia: Choeung Ek and Local Genocide Memorials’ in *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda: New Perspectives*, ed. Susan E. Cook (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2006), 269-92; Paul Williams, ‘Witnessing Genocide: Vigilance and Remembrance at Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek’, *HGS* 18:2 (2004), 234-54; and more generally on museum practices in Cambodia, Ingrid Muan, ‘Musings on Museums from Phnom Penh’ in *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, eds. Ivan Karp et al (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 257-85. On Rwanda, see especially Jens Meierhenrich’s acute ‘Topographies of Remembering and Forgetting: The Transformation of *Lieux de Mémoire* in Rwanda’ in *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights After Mass Violence*, eds. Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 283-96; Sara Guyer’s thought-provoking ‘Rwanda’s Bones’, *boundary 2* 36:2 (2009), 155-75; Pat Caplan, “‘Never Again’: Genocide Memorials in Rwanda”, *Anthropology Today* 23:1 (2007), 20-22; Susan E. Cook, ‘The Politics of Preservation in Rwanda’ in *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda*, ed. Cook, 293-311. On Armenia, Tsypylma Darieva’s

analysis of literature: there is a fairly healthy body on Armenian literary responses to the genocide, and studies are emerging on literary responses to the Rwanda genocide (most of which are, in fact, not written by Rwandans), but there is very little about the Cambodian or Bosnian experiences.⁶⁷ There is, however, almost nothing written on photography, barring isolated reviews in photography magazines and the aforementioned analyses of the Tuol Sleng photographs.⁶⁸ My aim is to draw these otherwise fairly isolated literatures together in order to make a broader argument about developments in cultural responses to genocide.

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With this project I seek to engage with the theories and literatures outlined above – which are, of course, much more detailed and nuanced than I have had space to show here – by considering them critically in relation to a new set of sources. It is, of necessity, broad in scope and conception, and interdisciplinary; an understanding of the place of the Holocaust in our contemporary culture, and how it figures in responses

“‘The Road to Golgotha’: Representing Loss in Postsocialist Armenia’, *Focaal – European Journal of Anthropology* 52 (2008), 92-108, and her ‘From Silenced to Voiced: Changing Politics of Memory of Loss in Armenia’ in *Representations on the Margins of Europe: Politics and Identities in the Baltic and South Caucasian States*, eds. Tsypylma Darieva and Wolfgang Kaschuba (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2007), 65-88, are the only pieces. There are a few on Srebrenica: Sarah E. Wagner, *To Know Where He Lies: DNA Technology and the Search for Srebrenica’s Missing* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); idem., ‘Tabulating Loss, Entombing Memory: The Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Centre’ in *Memory, Mourning, Landscape: Interdisciplinary Essays*, eds. Elizabeth Anderson, Kate McLoughlin and Alana Vincent (Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2010), 61-78; Susanne Bardgett, ‘Remembering Srebrenica’, *History Today* 57 (2007), 52-3.

⁶⁷ Marc Nichanian, *Writers of Disaster: Armenian Literature in the Twentieth Century, Vol. I: The National Revolution* (Reading: Taderon Press, 2002); idem., ‘Testimony: From Document to Monument’ in *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2007), 41-64; Rubina Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe: A Comparison of the Armenian and the Jewish Experience* (California: Scholars Press, 1993); idem., ‘New Directions in Literary Responses to the Armenian Genocide’ in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2003), 157-80. On Cambodia: Teri Shaffer Yamada, ‘Cambodian American Autobiography: Testimonial Discourse’ in *Form and Transformation in Asian American literature*, eds. Zhou Xiaojing and Samina Najmi (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2005), 144-67; on Rwanda, Paul Kerstens, “‘Voice and give voice’: dialectics between fiction and history in narratives on the Rwandan genocide’, *International Journal of Francophone Studies* 9:1 (2006), 93-110, and Piotr A. Cieplak and Emma Wilson, eds., special issue of *French Cultural Studies* 20:2 (2009), 107-208. Stevan Weine makes some reflections on Bosnian literature in his *Testimony After Catastrophe: Narrating the Traumas of Political Violence* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2006), chapter 3; Cubilié devotes a chapter to two writers from the former Yugoslavia in her *Women Witnessing Terror*; Cynthia Simmons’ *Women Engaged/Engaged Art in Postwar Bosnia: Reconciliation, Recovery, and Civil Society* (Carl Beck Papers, 2005: available at <http://carlbeckpapers.pitt.edu/ojs/index.php/cbp/article/view/150>) is insightful.

⁶⁸ See Frank Möller, ‘Rwanda Revisualised: Genocide, Photography, and the Era of the Witness’, *Alternatives* 35:2 (2010), 113-36; Abraham Der Krikorian and Eugene Taylor, ‘Achieving Ever-Greater Precision in Attestation and Attribution of Genocide Photographs’ in *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks*, eds. Tessa Hofmann, Matthias Bjørnlund and Vasileios Meichanetsidis (Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas, 2012), 389-434.

to other genocides, would feel partial and incomplete if I were to restrict it to a single medium or one or two case studies. Throughout, I draw upon relevant publications situated within a number of disciplines: history, anthropology, political science, philosophy, literary studies, tourism studies, museum studies, reception studies, and others working on the edges and overlaps of each. Discipline specialists, along with specialists in one case study or medium, will of course read this study through the intimate knowledge of their own field, but my hope is that my forays into other disciplines has deepened the theoretical underpinnings of my own analysis, whilst opening up fresh perspectives for those working within other disciplines and cases.

At its core, this thesis is concerned with how far, and in what ways, the Holocaust and its representation have influenced the representation of other genocides – and the implications for western understandings of genocide, including the Holocaust itself. It diverges from much of the current literature in its less moralising and more truly comparative approach, but more importantly in its argument that the Holocaust's influence is not really to be found at the level of explicit references to or comparisons with it, but in the deeper, structural congruences which define and shape many representations of genocide, and thus also western understandings. Throughout the thesis, I distinguish between what I will broadly discuss as 'mainstream' representations of genocide, and other, more engaged and nuanced representations; these mainstream genocide representations appeal to (and have appeal for) a wide popular audience, and, I argue, largely replicate the Holocaust's representational framework. They also follow mainstream Holocaust representations in being characterised by a fundamental resistance to recognising the *normality* of genocide: far from indicating that it is a process which arises from the conjunction of ordinary factors common to, or possible in, any society – social conflict, economic difficulties, exclusivist politics, real or perceived crisis and tensions – these representations shore up the western self-deception that genocide is an aberrant and 'inhuman' event. In contrast, the other, more engaged representations I discuss – often originating in the countries which experienced genocide, but sometimes the west – offer alternatives to this self-serving perspective, precisely by engaging with genocide's ordinariness, and thereby decentring the Holocaust as the paradigm genocide. Throughout, then, this thesis is also concerned with the ways in which genocide is distanced from – even as it is made knowable to – 'normal', western society.

Chapter 1, 'Recognising Genocide', introduces many of the themes and representations which will be discussed throughout, whilst arguing that the similarities between representations of the Holocaust and other genocides go far deeper than superficial comparisons. Asking 'What makes an event recognisable as genocide?', it engages with and complicates what others condemn as the cynical use of a Holocaust 'lens' to forward group claims for recognition, arguing instead that the (often unconscious) depiction of genocide according to the Holocaust's 'script' – a particular representation of the perpetrators, victims, genocidal dynamic, and outcome – are more powerful in ensuring recognition as genocide. This also provokes questions over the limitations imposed by these 'criteria for recognition'. Chapter 2, 'Explaining Genocide', develops my analysis of how the perpetrators and causes of genocide are represented, arguing that mainstream representations present both the Holocaust and other genocides through 'closed narratives', which 'explain' genocide by demonising the perpetrators and their politics, and occlude the broader (and more recognisably generic) domestic and international factors. Distancing genocide in this fashion precludes the sort of understanding which might permit a more self-critical perspective on the west's role in fomenting and facilitating conflicts around the world. Chapter 3, 'Witnessing Genocide', turns to the writings by, and films about, the foreign witnesses of genocide, whom I term 'western protagonists' – figures almost entirely absent in representations of the Holocaust, but dominant in genocide representations. Analysing the frameworks through which they interpret and present genocide – often Holocaust-derived – it argues that the emphasis on these figures as *witnesses* gives them an authority which rarely befits their analyses, and obscures the real agency and impact they can have upon the genocidal dynamic. Chapter 4, 'Resolving Genocide', analyses the representation of genocide's aftermath: first considering how the processes of justice and reconciliation are portrayed, it argues that the 'judicial romanticism' of Nuremberg – the idea that society is cleansed and redeemed by the incarceration of the genocidal leadership – remains current within contemporary 'transitional justice' mechanisms. The chapter then turns to genocide's remnants, again, finding many congruences with Holocaust representations, but noting a greater focus on violence against the *human* than against physical culture and community – a point reinforced by the final section's argument, that representations only rarely confront the less visible structures of violence which often persist in genocide's aftermath. Finally, Chapter 5, 'Responding to Genocide', discusses the 'attitudes and platitudes' with which most

westerners respond to the Holocaust and other genocides, arguing that the representations themselves create both the distance and the affect which determines the curiously emotional but often unengaged responses, of the ilk of ‘never again’. Insisting upon the need to analyse these responses sociologically as well as discursively, I argue that while these ‘attitudes and platitudes’ may deeply inform audiences’ experiences of a representation, they foreclose critical intellectual engagement, thus short-circuiting the possibility of ‘never again’; in that sense, the chapter stands as a culmination of the thesis’ key arguments.

Together, these chapters map the key areas of overlap in representations of the Holocaust and other genocides. Threaded throughout are several further interlocking themes and arguments which speak to both long-standing and more recent issues and debates within Holocaust and genocide studies. The first is the distinction between universal and particular, which is of course especially under the spotlight in a thesis concerned with the ‘paradigmatic’. Mindful of the contradictions in the arguments of those who condemn the Holocaust’s ‘universalisation’ but still want it to be of concern globally, I argue that in fact drawing attention to the commonalities between different genocides can prove quite productive, if anchored in sufficiently nuanced depictions of the particular. The second theme is the representation of the human and the structural elements of genocide, which turns around issues of agency, victimhood, and visible and less visible patterns of violence: I show that the structural causes and effects of genocide are quite consistently overridden by a focus on the perpetrators and victims, overlooking the ways in which human actors are enabled and constrained by much deeper structural causes. Closely linked is the third theme, which considers how audiences are asked to relate to the perpetrators and victims, and how they function, or are thought to function, in these representations. While encouraging sympathy with the victims is a crucial part of engaging with genocide, I argue, this cannot by itself achieve many of the things representations set out to do, or what some commentators would like it to do⁶⁹ – such as help audiences understand why genocide occurs, or

⁶⁹ A new ‘debate’ has recently started coalescing, given momentum by Friedländer’s ‘integrated history’, which revolves around the roles of the perpetrators and victims in the explanatory narratives of historians (and which seems to retain some of the features of the old ‘uniqueness’ argument). Some scholars have recently attacked historians such as Bloxham and Stone for failing to include the voices of the victims in their analyses – for example, Omer Bartov, whose core argument is that this is ‘crucial to the kind of empathy that brings with it a modicum of understanding’ (he means more than ‘modicum’) and that it is ‘disturbing’ that these voices should be excluded (see his contribution to the review forum of Bloxham’s *The Final Solution: A Genocide*, *JGR* 13:1-2 (2011), 107-52: 128), or Alexandra Garbarini: ‘Why assume that the most effective and thus most meaningful historical lessons people can

prevent it in the future. Rather, I see a complementary engagement with the *perpetrators* and *structural roots* of genocide as more hopeful in this respect. Finally, again closely linked is my exploration of the concepts of boundaries and transgression. Familiarity and expectation, along with the highly moralised discourses surrounding the Holocaust and genocide, have helped canonise and solidify certain interpretations of genocide, I argue; this moralisation also brings a fear of transgression.

There are, of course, other ways in which this project could have been structured – most obviously a chronological or case-by-case approach. Apart from being rather unimaginative, though, dividing the representations in that way could have implied a broad chronological development in examples of ‘borrowing from the Holocaust’, or a ‘rise in genocide consciousness’, which I simply do not think is there. The various representations of the Armenian, Cambodian, Bosnian and Rwandan genocides which do exist are too few and far between, and too marginal, to analyse as a ‘body’ of representations which a public could be wholly familiar with, in the way that is far more feasible with Holocaust representations and ‘consciousness’. Rather, I see westerners’ ‘encounters’ with these representations as much more contingent, unpredictable and isolated events; all the more important, then, to explore the overlaps and intersections with Holocaust representations in order to ask how westerners might make sense of genocide.

derive from past genocides stem from understanding the perpetrators of genocide? What about understanding how people muster their individual and collective resources in different historical contexts to withstand, cope with, adapt to, resist, and die as a result of persecution and genocide?... Activism does not necessarily follow from people getting in touch with their own ability to violate others’ human rights’ (‘Reflections on the Holocaust and Jewish History’, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 102:1 (2012), 81-90: 89-90). The problem, as I see it, is that this criticism is taking (creating) a new orthodoxy and running with it, regardless of whether a victim-centred approach is wholly appropriate to a particular representation’s conception and aims; and more deeply, that this imparts powers onto the victims’ voices which are by no means certain. Focusing on the victims as a site of activism presupposes a fair prior understanding of how such events happen (in order to be able to intervene effectively), and also falls into the trap of seeing perpetration/response as the most effective site of intervention, which comes in rather too late in the process – these roles are symptoms of much broader and earlier structural forces, not their causes, which is precisely what Bloxham and Stone are concerned with.

Chapter 1

Recognising Genocide: The ‘Genocidal Imaginary’

‘To have created this symbol of sacred-evil [the Holocaust] in contemporary time, then, is to have so enlarged the human imagination that it is capable, for the first time in human history, of identifying, understanding, and judging the kinds of genocidal mass killings in which national, ethnic, and ideological groupings continue to engage today.’
– Jeffrey C. Alexander¹

‘Does our present understanding of genocide permit us to recognise the numerous forms, institutions and socio-cultural practices, many cast as benevolent interventions, through which it might be practised? ... Various other forms of genocide have gone wholly or largely unnoticed, and there is little prospect that we will even recognize the holocausts unfolding before our eyes until we understand the oppression of categories that have come to exercise a tyrannical sway over our lives.’
– Vinay Lal²

Introduction

Given the geopolitical repercussions it entails, the official recognition of genocide is a symbolically loaded, highly contested, carefully calculated, and also rather infrequent event.³ Consider, for example, Turkey’s strong (and largely successful) opposition to the recognition of the Armenian genocide; the international community’s refusal to apply the word ‘genocide’ to Rwanda in 1994; or the whole host of current petitions to the UN and world governments to recognise the violence against various groups as genocide – the Kurds of Iraq, the Tamils in Sri Lanka, or groups in Ukraine. In this chapter, though, I want to consider ‘recognition’ slightly differently: my focus instead is on how the western *public* recognises genocide. What is the basic cultural understanding of genocide, I ask – how do we envisage it, conceive of it, what images and themes are conjured by it – and how far is the genocidal imaginary based upon the Holocaust imaginary? What relation does it bear to the definition of the UN Genocide Convention? I am concerned here with the cultural understandings of genocide – which I discuss as the ‘genocidal imaginary’ – by which westerners recognise the events depicted in film, literature, museums, and photography *as* genocide.⁴

¹ Jeffrey C. Alexander, ‘On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The “Holocaust” from War Crime to Trauma Drama’, *European Journal of Social Theory* 5:1 (2002), 5-85: 32.

² Vinay Lal, ‘The Concentration Camp and Development: The Pasts and Future of Genocide’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 39:2 (2005), 220-43: 231, 241.

³ After much wrangling, the US officially recognised Darfur as genocide in 2004; the term nevertheless did not provoke any meaningful intervention (as activists hoped).

⁴ That said, because it goes to the heart of western understandings of genocide, my argument also has something to say about the process of official recognition.

Of course, the Holocaust has routinely been described as ‘unimaginable’, as well as unspeakable, unrepresentable, and incomprehensible – these claims are made far less often within genocide studies – but, nevertheless, the Holocaust *is* imagined, through an ‘aura of ideas’ about the event and its unfolding.⁵ My use of ‘the imaginary’ and ‘imagination’ is obviously not to suggest that the Holocaust, or any other genocide, are purely ‘imagined’ (i.e. fictive) events. Rather, I wish to point towards the ways in which history is later remembered and interpreted, absorbed into the cultural consciousness as a web of facts, images, associations, narratives and meanings, and then later re-narrated or drawn upon to make sense of other events which appear analogous. The limits that such terms as ‘unimaginable’ seek to impose are perhaps closer to what anthropologist Vincent Crapanzano would call the ‘borders’ or ‘boundaries’ of the imagination, rather than its ‘frontiers’: whilst borders can be crossed, and boundaries transgressed, the frontiers mark the limit of what literally *cannot* be imagined, ‘a beyond that is, by its very nature, unreachable in fact and representation.’⁶ This chapter is about the interaction between the Holocaust imaginary and the genocidal imaginary, and also the ways in which the cultural understandings of the Holocaust are, sometimes, stretched and redefined by genocide representations.

Thus, by the ‘genocidal imaginary’ I mean to suggest the mental creativeness and fluidity necessary to envisage and conceive of a genocide (as with any historical event), but equally to emphasise that this imagination is derived from, and a composite of, the images and narratives which form the various representations of genocide circulating within the public sphere. In a sense, each new representation contributes to a memory bank or reservoir of representations: some are more widely circulated than others, some will influence or inspire new representations, and certainly not all will be seen by every member of the public. Each is an example of a particular imagining of genocide, but the ‘genocidal imaginary’ itself is more of a free-floating, abstract cultural conception of what genocide is, and how it happens – an amalgamation of the

⁵ For critical discussions see especially Mandel, ‘Rethinking “After Auschwitz”’, and Berel Lang, *Post-Holocaust: Interpretation, Misinterpretation, and the Claims of History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), chapter 6. As I noted in the Introduction, most genocide studies scholars are sceptical of Holocaust exceptionalism and the concomitant, somewhat mystical discourses of unrepresentability, hence why one sees it less often. ‘Aura of ideas’ is Andrew Strathern and Pamela J. Stewart’s, ‘Introduction’ in *Terror and Violence: Imagination and the Unimaginable*, eds. Andrew Strathern, Pamela J. Stewart, and Neil L. Whitehead (London: Pluto, 2006), 1-39: 6.

⁶ Crapanzano, *Imaginative Horizons: An Essay in Literary Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 14. The Holocaust (like any other historical event) is indeed unimaginable, in that we cannot imagine the exact historical experience of those involved (survivors themselves often find it ‘unimaginable’). But declarations of unimaginability often seek to impose a limit, not articulate it.

information and narratives encountered in various films, books, exhibitions and images, into a 'basic script' of genocide.⁷ These representations and the genocidal imaginary thus exist in a relationship based on reciprocal exchange.

This concept of a 'genocidal imaginary' has also been discussed by Leshu Torchin in an article about Armenian activists who draw on the Holocaust's 'iconographic archive' to represent their own genocide.⁸ For her, the genocidal imaginary is dominated by the Holocaust:

the images of emaciated bodies, mounds of corpses, barbed wire and box cars – images that saturated the public, political and juridical arenas – have crystallised into a set of universalised symbols for the Holocaust, functioning as a kind of genocidal imaginary. These images provide an interpretative frame through which other genocides are produced and understood.⁹

As she and others note, there is now an 'established memory of images' and set of 'conventions of representation' regarding the Holocaust; in this way, the Holocaust imaginary has solidified into a familiar and relatively standardised web of images, narratives and associations,¹⁰ and 'we now know the Holocaust, intimately, as a repertoire of expected scenes or scenery.'¹¹ The concepts of familiarity and expectation are particularly important to this chapter: my concern here is how far the Holocaust imaginary structures, overlaps with, and limits the imagination of other genocides, and how far other genocides might only be recognisable through recourse to the expected scenes and imagery of the Holocaust. What must a representation include to make it culturally legible and recognisable as genocide? What might render it something other than genocide? How do we negotiate with the borders and boundaries of the Holocaust imaginary in order to imagine genocide?

⁷ In the same way that 'collective memories' are not homogenously shared by every individual in a collective, then, the 'genocidal imaginary' is both shared and personal. Any individual's imaginary will depend upon the understandings and meanings they have derived from films, books, and so on, but these books and films interact with the culturally-shared 'memory bank', as indeed does the individual.

⁸ Leshu Torchin, 'Since We Forgot: Remembrance and Recognition of the Armenian Genocide in Virtual Archives' in Frances Guerin and Roger Hallas, eds., *The Image and the Witness: Trauma, Memory and Visual Culture* (London: Wallflower Press, 2007), 82-97. The concept of a 'Holocaust imaginary' is not uncommon; Torchin is the only one to use 'genocidal imaginary' in this way, although Kevin Lewis O'Neill and Alexander Hinton have used it to refer to the perpetrators' violent reimagining of community and belonging: 'Genocide, Truth, Memory, and Representation: An Introduction' in *Genocide: Truth, Memory and Representation*, eds. Hinton and O'Neill (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 1-26: 11.

⁹ Torchin, 'Since We Forgot', 91.

¹⁰ Christoph Classen, 'Balanced Truth: Steven Spielberg's *Schindler's List* Among History, Memory, and Popular Culture', *H&T* 48:2 (2009), 77-102: 90, 88.

¹¹ Montgomery, 'What Kind of Memory?', 87.

The first section of this chapter illustrates my use of ‘the imaginary’ by describing the scenes and script by which the Holocaust is recognised. Amongst the infinite personal and national variations, a common understanding of the Holocaust’s ‘basic scenario’ has emerged, with relatively set ideas about the perpetrators, victims, process and aftermath of genocide: this imaginary is prevalent and familiar to most throughout the western world. The second section engages with those who argue that references to the Holocaust in representations of other genocides are invoking a ‘Holocaust lens’ – here, the Holocaust imaginary – to draw attention and further their claims for recognition. To be sure, this does happen, but I question the overly moralised approach of scholars like David MacDonald, and demonstrate that the imagination also works in more subtle ways: scenes and descriptions can easily resonate with our Holocaust imaginaries without use of the Holocaust’s vocabulary or imagery, and for other victim communities, the Holocaust can provide a way of thinking through the contours of their own experiences. The third section shows how representations of genocide generally follow the Holocaust’s ‘script’, presenting the perpetrators, victims, process and aftermath of genocide in broadly similar terms. The most powerful correlations are not in the vocabulary and images used to present genocide, I argue, but rather in the connotations and interpretations found therein. The specific histories and contexts of each genocide are thus incorporated into a more general ‘genocide script’, allowing for inflections and additional tropes; but, like the Holocaust imaginary, the genocidal imaginary also has established borders and limits. These are explored more fully in the fourth and final section, where I discuss certain works which challenge these hegemonic boundaries by reconfiguring prior knowledge, and presenting genocide in ways which are unforeseen, but not unimaginable.

Recognising the Holocaust

The public understanding of the Holocaust has, of course, evolved over the postwar period – not least because the mass killings were first subsumed under the heading of ‘wartime atrocities’, before they came to be conceived of as a separate event, ‘the Holocaust’. Narrative accounts of the ‘rise of Holocaust consciousness’¹² generally

¹² I am uneasy with the (ubiquitous) use of the word ‘rise’ to describe this phenomenon, since it does not fully encapsulate the nature of this process – which is both the *spread* of awareness, and (crucially) also a *development* or evolution in how the Holocaust is understood, closely connected with changes in the socio-cultural sphere. These two elements are, in fact, mutually constitutive, as Alexander argues (‘Social Construction’). Alexander himself does not use ‘rise’, speaking instead of ‘transformation’,

describe it as arising from an entanglement of three main factors: first, successive ‘memory waves’ or ‘peaks of interest’ provoked by the release of successful films or books, museum openings, and events (or ‘media events’) like the Eichmann trial and the commemorative ceremonies held on anniversaries; second, the influence of successive generations in questioning the accepted narratives of their parents’ and grandparents’ generations and driving new memory work, a process which has been given renewed urgency by the dwindling numbers of survivors; and third, the various social, political, and cultural changes over the postwar period, each of which has renegotiated the meaning and relevance of this past to society – particularly the social and political movements of the sixties and seventies, which fostered an increasing concern for minority rights and addressing the historical injustices of the past,¹³ and the end of the cold war, which brought a loosening of the rigid interpretive prisms and an ensuing reassessment of recent ‘history’, and which has seemed (in Europe at least) to focus on the wartime experience in order to negotiate new identities, meanings, and international relationships.¹⁴ There has, of course, also been some reciprocity from other genocides; the violence in Bosnia and Rwanda gave new meaning and relevance to the Holocaust in the 1990s, as Elie Wiesel’s speech at the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM) indicated. Notably, these accounts of the rise and nature of Holocaust consciousness all foreground the role of representations – especially the various versions of Anne Frank’s *Diary* (originally 1947), Elie Wiesel’s *Night*, the NBC miniseries *Holocaust* (1979), *Schindler’s List*, and the USHMM – in both raising and shaping the awareness of the Holocaust. This imaginary is (in some way) now ‘globalised’, in that there is a transnational archive of images and narratives about the Holocaust which circulate in an increasingly

‘redefinicion’, ‘the social creation of a cultural fact’ (6). ‘Rise’ perhaps also implies a journey towards some kind of perfect endpoint, which is equally dubious.

¹³ See especially Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

¹⁴ This is a huge field. However, alongside Alexander’s ‘Social Construction’, see Gavriel D. Rosenfeld, ‘A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory “Industry”’, *Journal of Modern History* 81 (2009), 122-58; Claudio Fogu and Wulf Kansteiner, ‘The Politics of Memory and the Poetics of History’ in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, eds. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner, and Claudio Fogu (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 284-310; Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); Peter Fritzsche, ‘Review Essay: Genocide and Global Discourse’, *German History* 23:1 (2005), 96-111, especially 98-9; Maria Mälksoo, ‘The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe’, *European Journal of International Relations* 15:4 (2009), 653-80; Andy Pearce, ‘The Development of Holocaust Consciousness in Contemporary Britain, 1979-2001’, *Holocaust Studies* 14:2 (2008), 71-94; Dan Stone, ‘Memory Wars in the “New Europe”’ in *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, ed. Stone (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 714-31.

globalised marketplace.¹⁵ Naturally, the trajectories and contours of Holocaust memories and meanings have always varied widely across national and personal contexts, depending in large part upon the nature of wartime experiences and how those experiences are subsequently understood, narrated, or mythologised; equally, it is obvious that the descendants of perpetrators, collaborators, victims and ‘bystanders’ will imagine the Holocaust very differently. Despite the fears (or accusations) of the ‘Americanization’, ‘Europeanisation’, ‘universalisation’, or ‘globalisation’ of the Holocaust – the ‘Americanization of the Holocaust’, particularly, is described with value-laden terms like relativisation, simplification, or even ‘colonisation’ – perhaps what these terms really describe are the processes by which groups negotiate the relevance of the Holocaust for themselves.¹⁶ Thus, if there is a ‘globalised’, transcultural memory of the Holocaust, its meanings are always ‘indigenized’, as William Miles puts it in his discussion of Third World views on the Holocaust.¹⁷ As Wulf Kansteiner’s discussion of NBC’s *Holocaust* and other Holocaust films with worldwide distribution suggests, these memorial products and transcultural memories simultaneously establish a common frame of reference whilst intersecting in different ways with different national memorial trajectories.¹⁸

Scholars describing the public’s basic idea of the Holocaust often equate it with the portrayal in *Schindler’s List* – not without good reason, given the film’s phenomenal popularity – but while there certainly are congruences, the imagination of the Holocaust is not reducible to *Schindler’s List*.¹⁹ Viewers are aware that this story is not the entirety of the Holocaust, even if the deportations, ghettoisation and hellish landscape of Auschwitz, which loom around the edges of the Schindler Jews’

¹⁵ As I noted in the introduction (n.8), there is significant disagreement over how far one can speak of Holocaust memory being truly ‘globalised’.

¹⁶ ‘Colonised’ is Yosefa Loshitsky’s designation in her ‘Introduction’, *Spielberg’s Holocaust*, 4. On ‘Americanization’, see Hilene Flanzbaum, ed., *The Americanization of the Holocaust*, Oren Baruch Stier, ‘Holocaust, American Style (Review)’, *Prooftexts* 22:3 (2002), 354-91, and Alvin H. Rosenfeld, ‘The Americanization of the Holocaust’, *Commentary* 99 (1995), 35-40; on Europeanization, Mälksoo, ‘Memory Politics of Becoming European’, and Claus Leggewie, ‘A Tour of the Battleground: The Seven Circles of Pan-European Memory’, *Social Research* 75:1 (2008), 217-34; on globalisation and universalisation, Alexander, ‘Social Construction’, and Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *The Holocaust and Memory in The Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ William F. S. Miles, ‘Third World Views on the Holocaust’, *JGR* 6:3 (2004), 371-93, and see also the papers presented at its eponymous 2001 conference, www.violence.neu.edu/projects_and_events/past_conferences/third_world_views/ [accessed 31.12.12].

¹⁸ Kansteiner, ‘Sold Globally – Remembered Locally’, especially 166-8.

¹⁹ Even if, as Loshitsky notes, ‘As the first studio film to deal directly with the enormity of the Holocaust, one made by the most commercially successful director in movie history, *Schindler’s List* attempts to provide the popular imagination with a master narrative about the Holocaust.’ ‘Introduction’, 2.

experiences, do seem to narrate a ‘typical’ Holocaust story (which is, of course, one of the aims and achievements of the film). As Christoph Classen (amongst others) has argued, part of the film’s success is due to the way it invokes our imagination of the Holocaust. Its ‘documentary’ aesthetic and, importantly, the inclusion of various scenes and stereotypes of ‘haggling Jews’, Germans mockingly shearing the locks and beards of orthodox Jews, or piles of bodies – which do not necessarily fit seamlessly into the logic of the narrative – create an ‘atmosphere of familiarity’:

these stereotypes in aesthetics and content trigger effects of recognition; at the same time they are recombined, and their associations are put into the context of the narrative, thus helping to stage those images of the film that could not be made available by documentary material that had been passed down. In doing so the film uses the collective memory (of images) that it helps to consolidate and rewrite at the same time.²⁰

As with all other postwar representations of the Holocaust, then, *Schindler’s List* is in conversation with the Holocaust imaginary, rather than constituting it. As Classen notes, the iconic scenes and images which Spielberg deploys so effectively do in fact ‘recall associations, myths, and metanarratives that relate to the extermination of the Jews in the broadest sense.’²¹

In these scenes and images, the perpetrators are typically crisply uniformed and efficient Nazis, displaying either the cold detachment of a committed ideologue, or the brutality of thuggish murderers – or both; Spielberg’s Goeth does indeed personify both stereotypes. As Scott Montgomery remarks, as the ‘embodiment of evil’, these perpetrators are somehow faceless²² – infinitely interchangeable, which is part of the horror, but this phrase also nicely encapsulates how Nazis are often presented as ‘stock characters’: necessary within the context of the narrative, but rarely portrayed in any real depth as agents with motives and psychologies. This ‘facelessness’ contrasts with the humanising representation of the victims: we are shown individuals’ histories and fates, and encouraged to identify with their suffering as a way of understanding the impact of genocide.²³ These victims are also imagined as a largely helpless, innocent,

²⁰ Classen, ‘Balanced Truth’, 91. See also Miriam B. Hansen, ‘*Schindler’s List* is not *Shoah*: The Second Commandment, Popular Modernism, and Public Memory’, *Critical Inquiry* 22:2 (1996), 292-312: 299.

²¹ Classen, ‘Balanced Truth’, 90.

²² Montgomery, ‘What Kind of Memory?’, 81

²³ This individualising approach has become a major trend in the last few decades; see my discussions in chapters 4 and 5. As so many note, the victims of the Holocaust are primarily understood to be six million Jews: the five million or so ‘others’ – political opponents, homosexuals, gypsies, the handicapped, ‘asocials’, Jehovah’s Witnesses – form a far less significant part of the Holocaust

and passive community, swept up in the Nazis' plans for extermination. Alongside this basic imagination of the aggressors and victims of genocide, a string of extremely recognisable iconic scenes and scenery document the unfolding of the Holocaust: the Nazi rallies, propaganda posters showing 'racial types' and shop signs announcing that 'Jews are unwelcome here', synagogues looted on Kristallnacht, and the familiar depictions of the degradation and humiliation of the Jews, forced to scrub the streets and wear yellow stars; then the ghettos, with images of starving families begging on crowded streets, before the cattle cars and deportation trains and, inevitably and inexorably, the camps – the gates, barracks, barbed wire fences, SS officers, skeletal prisoners in their striped uniforms, and the gas chambers. Auschwitz, as the most infamous camp, is often used metonymically to refer to the entirety of the Holocaust, by scholars and public alike. But the most iconic images, those which have most shaped the postwar visualisation of the Holocaust, are the photographs of the mounds of bodies discovered by the Allied liberators of the camps, and the remnants of the camps – crumbling ruins of barracks, barbed wire and crematoria so familiar from Alain Resnais' *Nuit et Brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955), and the piles of shoes, suitcases, hair, and ashes.²⁴ These are perhaps the images which have stuck most in the imagination of the Holocaust.

The Holocaust's iconography, then, can be visual, textual, or artefactual – the deportation trains, for example, are familiar from many films and testimonies and can be encountered as authentic objects in some museums and memorials²⁵ – and it seems reasonable to suggest that this potent archive of images is then invoked by our imagination when we read diaries and testimonies.²⁶ However, while this iconography may provide the foundations of the Holocaust imaginary, it also encapsulates an understanding of how it unfolded as a process: we do, after all, tend to make sense of

imaginary, if they feature at all. This figure of 11 million – originally only an estimate by the USHMM, which is now taken as fact – is itself a good example of the functioning of the genocidal imaginary.

²⁴ Much of the Holocaust's iconography originates in contemporary photographs, whether those taken by the Nazis, or the Allied liberators. See especially Judith Keilbach, 'Photographs, Symbolic Images, and the Holocaust: On the (Im)possibility of Depicting Historical Truth', *H&T* 48:2 (2009), 54-76, especially 54-5; Cornelia Brink, 'Secular Icons: Looking at Photographs from Nazi Concentration Camps', *History and Memory* 12:2 (2000), 135-50; Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*; Stier, *Committed to Memory*; Classen, 'Balanced Truth'; and Jeffrey Shandler, *While America Watches: Televising the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²⁵ Stier, *Committed to Memory*, chapter 2.

²⁶ Of course, this iconography – and its interpretation – has changed over the postwar period, subject to many of the same influences as 'Holocaust consciousness'. For an acute case study with broader relevance, see Yasmin Doosry, ed., *Representations of Auschwitz: Fifty Years of Photographs, Paintings, and Graphics* (Oświęcim: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 1995).

events through their narration. In a way, if strung together, these iconic scenes do in fact narrate the Holocaust by themselves, charting a roughly chronological impression from discrimination to extermination.²⁷ These icons seem to function within the imaginary (and many representations) as familiar staging posts, anchoring narrations of the Holocaust within an expected pattern, and this pattern means that they can be recalled by association even if they do not appear in a particular representation.²⁸ In this retrospective view, the Holocaust appears as an inevitable progression through successive stages towards total annihilation, thus implying a preconceived plan for genocide, rather than encouraging reflection on the disparate origins and gradual escalation of violence; it also tends to 'explain' the Holocaust through reference to the Nazis' actions and the outcome of those actions, rather than their motives.

The prevalence of Holocaust representations, together with their tendency to recycle these familiar scenes and stories in established formats and conventions of representation, means that the Holocaust is instantly recognisable. In a way, this hegemonic imaginary is also quite self-limiting. Scholars working within reception studies emphasise that individuals do not passively receive the intended meanings of any representation, but rather actively negotiate with the information and interpretations they contain, deriving their own understandings and meanings depending upon their prior knowledge, personal and biographical proclivities, and socio-cultural context – and are apt to 'misread' and dismiss aspects of a representation which do not accord with their preconceptions or prior imaginings.²⁹ Nevertheless, conventions of genre, form and content give rise to certain 'horizons of expectation', which structure how audiences read and interpret cultural representations of the Holocaust.³⁰ Indeed, as Hans Kellner has noted, any representation of the Holocaust

²⁷ Other icons, like 'Auschwitz' or 'Anne Frank', are metonyms of the Holocaust as a whole, rather than those which are symbolic of aspects of it, like the ghettos or cattle cars.

²⁸ For an elucidation of this in the case of the Nazi Party Rally Grounds in Nuremberg, see Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*, 155.

²⁹ See Stuart Hall's seminal 'Encoding/Decoding' in *The Cultural Studies Reader*, ed. Simon During (London: Routledge, 2007), 507-17; Janet Staiger, *Media Reception Studies* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); James L. Machor and Philip Goldstein, eds., *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2001); John H. Falk, Lynn D. Dierking, and Marianna Adams, 'Living in a Learning Society: Museums and Free-Choice Theory' and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, 'Studying Visitors', both in *A Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Sharon MacDonald (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 323-39 and 362-76; on audiences dismissing interpretations which do not accord with their views, see the latter two and Sharon Macdonald, 'Museum Visitors' Cultural Imagining' in *The Educational Role of the Museum*, ed. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1999), 269-77.

³⁰ The phrase is Reinhart Koselleck's: *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004 [1979]).

will have an intended audience, who is expected to make sense of and grasp the author's intended meaning, but who will in turn have expectations: 'We expect to see perpetrators and victims differentiated, atrocities linked together, concepts defined and exemplified. We expect that certain events will not be made comic or absurd; we object when certain events are made tragic.'³¹ As he argues, for Holocaust representations to be accepted *as* Holocaust representations, they have to be presented according to prevailing social codes, protocols, and conventions of readability: 'Genre, *topoi*, and emplotment are the traditional formal devices of rhetoric that are supposed to secure the adherence of a reader to a vision of the subject. ... Use of the old, the expected, secures the creation of the new by making its novelty nevertheless recognizable as meaning.'³²

In this way, it can be said that the imagination of the Holocaust is quite free-flowing and fluid – imaginative associations and links between events, places and ideas are easily made – but also relatively circumscribed, and resistant to divergent interpretations. Both are, in some sense, due to the familiarity and cohesiveness of this imagination; in Crapanzano's terms, the borders and boundaries are well-defined and adhered to. The expected scenes and scenarios – of the perpetrators, victims, processes, and aftermath – are easily imagined, but are rarely imagined *differently*.

Invoking the Holocaust

According to the arguments and injunctions of MacDonald and others, it is this potent and well-established set of ideas and images about the Holocaust which other groups invoke to frame their own sufferings, in the service of forwarding group claims for recognition. By explicitly referring to the Holocaust and replicating its vocabulary and imagery, they argue, such groups tap into the Holocaust's imaginary in order to ask us to imaginatively transpose our understandings of one historical situation and set of actors onto another, along with the accompanying moral clarity and certitude. The many examples catalogued by MacDonald and others show that he has a point: this does happen.³³ Since in the west the Holocaust *is* the paradigmatic genocide, and since

³¹ Hans Kellner, "'Never Again' is Now", *H&T* 33:2 (1994), 127-44: 140.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ MacDonald, *Identity Politics*, and Buettner, *Holocaust Images*, are the two full-length studies of this 'borrowing'. Buettner largely avoids what she calls the 'lamentative' approach of those who bemoan these references, but cf. chapter 6, where she comes rather close to it.

most of these texts are ‘western-facing’,³⁴ the Holocaust is an effective choice of comparator for those seeking recognition; but as MacDonald suggests, and others have demonstrated, viewing other atrocities through the ‘Holocaust lens’ is a powerful, but very distorting, mechanism.³⁵ In his eagerness to condemn these references to the Holocaust as both imperialistic and trivialising, though, MacDonald tars every representation of genocide with the same brush: he does not discuss examples which do *not* invoke this lens, or which display a more subtle relationship with the Holocaust.³⁶ Indeed, extracting and listing each incriminating reference to Hitler, the Nazis or the Jews is neither useful nor indicative: it says nothing about their frequency, context, weight and *meaning* within a representation – what they signify for the author as well as the reader.

After a brief demonstration of how some representations of the Armenian, Cambodian, Rwandan and Bosnian genocides have copied the Holocaust’s representational strategies for rhetorical effect, I show that not every mention of the Holocaust is an equation. Instead, what can be seen is that other genocide survivors sometimes use their understandings and imaginaries of the Holocaust as a way to negotiate, comprehend, and establish differences within their own experiences of genocide: they identify links and commonalities between historical cases, but also divergences.³⁷ They engage with the Holocaust, rather than any other genocide, because of its status as the paradigm genocide in the west, but they also might just as easily be using the west’s familiarity with the Holocaust to help explain their own experiences, than be

³⁴ Eaglestone, “‘You Would Not Add’”, 76.

³⁵ See e.g. Hayden, ‘Mass Killings and Images of Genocide’. MacDonald is far more concerned about the distortion of the Holocaust than any other case.

³⁶ Indeed, MacDonald shows his logic to be circular when he states that ‘I have chosen my cases based on the extent to which the Holocaust has come to frame a group’s representation of its past. My methodology involves using qualitative discourse analysis to gauge how important the Holocaust has become in framing group history and identity’ (2). If one chooses one’s cases based on their repeated invocation of the Holocaust, one will indeed find that the Holocaust is important to them; one could question how far MacDonald is himself using a version of a ‘Holocaust lens’. It is also worth noting that there is little consistency across MacDonald’s case studies: he discusses, for example, the writings of Armenian historians and artists, and the pronouncements of Balkan politicians and Maori activists, equating these particular statements with the attitudes and memorial productions of the groups as a whole. He can thus claim that the use of the ‘Holocaust lens’ is a widespread phenomenon, but not much more.

³⁷ This argument extends those of Michael Rothberg and others, who stress the ‘multidirectional’ nature of memory and the interconnections made between historical events such as the Holocaust and the Algerian war (interestingly, French colonial experiences and memories seem to provide the most popular material for this kind of study). See Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*; Max Silverman, ‘Interconnected Histories: Holocaust and Empire in the Cultural Imaginary’, *French Studies* 62:4 (2008), 417-28; Eaglestone, “‘You Would Not Add’”, 72-5.

attempting an ‘equation’.³⁸ In fact, what is open to question is whether all of these ‘equations’ are intended or implied, and how far they are actually *inferred* by the sensitivities of MacDonald and other western scholars, and indeed more generally.³⁹ Some representations seem to be suffused with the atmosphere of the Holocaust, without making explicit reference to it, and this raises the issue of how often we subconsciously read other tragedies through the Holocaust, without prompting.

One can, though, quite easily find references to Pol Pot, Milošević or Karadžić as the ‘Asian’ or ‘Balkan Hitler’; activists have placed a photograph of Talaat Pasha alongside one of Hitler with his infamous quote, ‘Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?’; Gil Courtemanche has written of a ‘Rwandan’ or ‘tropical Nazism’ in his fictional memoir *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (2003).⁴⁰ Courtemanche also likens the Rwandan churches to gas chambers; others have described Tuol Sleng as the ‘Asian Auschwitz’, or related the Syrian desert to the Nazi concentration camps.⁴¹ Likewise, various scholars have noted how often the ‘Jewish trope’ is used to frame the victims of these genocidal movements, including Zlata Filipović’s fear that she ‘might suffer the fate of Anne Frank’ or Révérien Rurangwa’s likening of Tutsi survivors to survivors of Auschwitz.⁴² These kinds of references are passing comments, but with significant meaning, and are intended to conjure images of the Holocaust as one reads about or views other genocides. They are made by the victims of genocide and western outside observers alike; one is tempted to say *more* frequently in outsiders’ accounts.⁴³ There, equations are either very obvious – “‘Like Auschwitz’: Serbs Pack Muslims into Freight Cars”, ran Roy Gutman’s despatch from

³⁸ Cf. Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), 67-8.

³⁹ Eaglestone in fact comes closest to this in “‘You Would Not Add’”, where he largely reads African writings through the lens and ‘models’ of Holocaust writings.

⁴⁰ See www.armeniangenocideposters.org/ [accessed 31.12.12]; Gil Courtemanche, *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2004), 210, 252.

⁴¹ Courtemanche, *A Sunday at the Pool*, 233; Gail Sheehy, *Spirit of Survival* (London: Bantam Press, 1986), 84, but see, for a brief scholarly discussion of this analogy, David Chandler, ‘Cambodia Deals with its Past: Collective Memory, Demonisation and Induced Amnesia’, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9:2-3 (2008), 355-69; again, see www.armeniangenocideposters.org/.

⁴² ‘Jewish trope’ is Marko Zivković’s: ‘The Wish to be a Jew: The Power of the Jewish Trope in the Yugoslav Conflict’, *Cahiers de l’Urmis* 6 (2000), 69-84. Zlata Filipović, *Zlata’s Diary: A Child’s Life in Sarajevo*, trans. Christina Pribichevich-Zorić (London: Puffin, 1995 [1993]), 178. See also 27 and 157, and Hayden’s scathing (but not unfair) discussion in ‘Mass Killings and Images of Genocide’, 500-1; Révérien Rurangwa, *Genocide: My Stolen Rwanda*, trans. Anna Brown (London: Reportage Press, 2009), 112.

⁴³ See chapter 3, especially n.74.

Banja Luka in July 1992⁴⁴ – or are wrapped in an analytical tone, but nevertheless deliberately appeal to the Holocaust to hammer their point home, rather stretching these analogies as they do so. Of this order is Fergal Keane’s remark that ‘The theology of hate espoused by the [Hutu] extremists was remarkably similar to that of the Nazis in their campaign against the Jews prior to the outbreak of the Second World War’, or Jon Swain’s comment that ‘Like the Nazis, the Khmer Rouge had a mania for documenting their deeds; every prisoner who entered Tuol Sleng was photographed and forced to write a confession to which he attached a thumbprint and signature’.⁴⁵ Alongside these bold but usually isolated remarks, some other representations – usually survivor testimonies, or the literature of the second- and third-generation survivors – are suffused with references to the Holocaust. A prime example is Peter Balakian’s memoir *Black Dog of Fate* (1998): he begins by describing his childhood on a ‘very Jewish’ road in the suburbs of New York, feeling like an ‘Armenian Jew’ before he came to understand later ‘the real kinship Armenians and Jews shared.’⁴⁶ This came, he writes, through reading *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, whose descriptions of Talaat, Enver and Djemal fascinated him ‘the way descriptions of Hitler did when I first read about the Holocaust.’⁴⁷ In a chapter entitled ‘Before the Nazis’, he weaves the story of his own ‘discovery’ of the Armenian genocide through Morgenthau with a narrative history of the genocide, persistently drawing analogies:

Between 1908 and 1915, the Young Turks were developing their own version of Hitler’s racial nationalism, called pan-Turkism, and their Himmler was the Turkish propagandist, Zia Gökalp. ... Just as the Third Reich would isolate the Jews by increments to obliterate Jewish life, the Turks began to level anything that wasn’t Turkish – in particular, everything that was Armenian. ... Hitler, who learned things from the Young Turks, would use the same rhetoric to demonise the Jews.⁴⁸

His reaction is meant to guide our own: ‘I sat sucking the air off the bottom of a Tropicana carton and thinking that the parallels in history are frightening; it was the same with the Third Reich and the Jews.’⁴⁹

⁴⁴ Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide: The First Inside Account of the Horrors of Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia* (Shaftesbury: Element, 1993), 36.

⁴⁵ Fergal Keane, *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey* (London: Viking, 1995), 10; Jon Swain, *River of Time* (London: Vintage, 1996), 254.

⁴⁶ Peter Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate: A Memoir* (New York: Broadway Books, 1998): see 38-44 especially; Henry Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003 [1919]).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 151.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 156-8.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 154. These are not the only explicit references: for example, he describes his mother’s terrified reaction to the news of Jews being murdered in concentration camps (181), the ‘holocaust of Moush’ and the ‘Adana holocaust’ (179, 232), alludes to his friendship with Elie Wiesel (266), and his definition

Others, however, display a more subtle relationship with the Holocaust. As a cultural benchmark, the Holocaust can sometimes function as a precursor, providing a way for thinking through, comprehending and articulating other genocides. We typically seek to understand new events, or explain them to others, by comparing them with precedents or events we find analogous; after all, references to ‘hell’ and Dante’s *Inferno* are quite commonly found in Holocaust representations (thereby, of course, invoking other imaginaries), even if only to emphasise that these metaphors of horror are completely inadequate to describe the camps. Indeed, it would perhaps be more surprising if those seeking to make sense of other genocides did *not* compare them with the Holocaust at some level (whether or not these comparisons make their way into their texts), although obviously their encounters with, and imagination of, the Holocaust may differ wildly. For those like Jean Hatzfeld or Philip Gourevitch, two western (and Jewish) journalists who visited and wrote about Rwanda in the aftermath of genocide, the Holocaust often structures the way they see and interpret other genocides, the imagination of one guiding the questions they ask about the other. A Rwandan or Cambodian survivor, though – perhaps having learnt about the Holocaust through western aid workers, or having encountered the Holocaust when they emigrated to the west – will perceive it through their own experiences; with even more complexity, those from the former Yugoslavia must negotiate between understandings of the Holocaust as a European, Jewish event, and the memories and postwar mythologies of World War II in the former Yugoslavia, and their relationship to the violence of the 1990s. As one might expect, then, the victims of other genocides rarely perceive the Holocaust as the ‘paradigm’ genocide,⁵⁰ but do engage with it as a way of negotiating and comprehending the specificity of their own experiences.

of ‘deportation’ is telling: ‘*Deportation*: a concentration camp in perpetual movement, caravan of death, the Turkish government’s term, Orwellian double-speak’ (197).

⁵⁰ Particularly remarkable in this respect is Rurangwa’s angry testimony, *Genocide*. One chapter recounts a visit to Auschwitz with survivors of other genocides, organised by the Jewish Congress of France. He transcribes, in exceptional detail, the vividly imagined scenes of the selection process on the ramp at Birkenau which paraded through his mind on the bus on the way back to Krakow: his description in itself is a good example of the Holocaust imaginary, but he also regards the Holocaust as the paradigmatic genocide. Of his visit to Auschwitz: ‘It is an internal journey during which one is confronted by the very site of Evil, the symbol of genocide, the paradigm of a Crime Against Humanity. ... A place where all survivors find themselves at home in some way, if I dare say it’ (109). Throughout the chapter, his imagination wanders from the Holocaust to Rwanda and back, emphasising the ‘strange fraternity’ (109) of genocide survivors.

Slavenka Drakulić's *Balkan Express* (1993) is perhaps the best example of this more subtle relationship. She opens her account ('half-stories, half-essays')⁵¹ with a passage quoted from Lanzmann's *Shoah*:

He worked by the barbed wire and heard awful screams.
His field was there?
Yes, right up close. It wasn't forbidden to work there.
So he worked, he farmed there?
Yes. Where the camp is now is partly his field. It was off limits, but they heard everything.
It didn't bother him to work so near those screams?
At first it was unbearable. Then you got used to it.⁵²

The rest of the book is a mediation on neighbourliness, violence and how one's subjectivity is changed by the imposition of national belonging – 'the other, less visible side of the war, the way it changes us from within'⁵³ – and the west's self-distancing and lack of willingness to comprehend, or intervene in, this violence. She rarely mentions the Holocaust; instead, it lingers in the background as a powerful example of the kinds of human behaviours she seeks to understand – nationalism, violence, indifference.⁵⁴ She concludes her account, though, by referring back to the *Shoah* scene, commenting on how the creation of abstract labels to define human beings always also seems to absolve responsibility: 'Now I think I understand what I couldn't understand before: how it happened that people who lived near German concentration camps didn't do anything, didn't help.'⁵⁵

So we all get used to it. I understand now that nothing but this 'otherness' killed Jews, and it began with naming them, by reducing them to the other. Then everything became possible, even the worst atrocities like concentration camps or the slaughtering of civilians in Croatia or Bosnia. For Serbians, as for Germans, they are all others, not-us. For me, those others are refugees. For Europe, the 'other' is the lawless 'Balkans' they pretend not to understand.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Slavenka Drakulić, *Balkan Express: Fragments From The Other Side of the War* (London: Hutchinson, 1993), 4.

⁵² Ibid., n.p.

⁵³ Ibid., 4.

⁵⁴ She is, though, very aware of the way that the Holocaust was used to interpret the conflict for the west. 'After a year of violence', she writes, 'there came the story of the concentration camps, And all of a sudden a thin desperate man behind barbed wire the world recognized not as a Moslem, but a human being. That picture, the words 'concentration camps' and 'holocaust' finally translated the true meaning of 'ethnic cleansing.' At last people in the West began to grasp what was going on. It was suddenly clear that Europe hadn't learnt its lesson, that history always repeats itself and that someone is always a Jew. Once the concept of 'otherness' takes root, the unimaginable becomes possible. Not in some mythological country but to ordinary urban citizens' (Ibid., 3).

⁵⁵ Ibid, 143.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 144-5.

Drakulić is drawing from academic scholarship which developed in the wake of, and partly in response to, the Holocaust⁵⁷ (her use of the phrase ‘the other’, for example), but far from using it to equate Bosnians or Croats with Jews, it provides a way of thinking the violence through. There are other, less-sophisticated examples – for example, Elma Softić’s relatively frequent Holocaust references in *Sarajevo Days*, *Sarajevo Nights* (1995), which (especially given her half-Jewish parentage) seem to function more as wry condemnations of European inaction – but the point is that the Holocaust also provides ways of thinking about other atrocities, rather than merely being used as a tool to gain recognition.⁵⁸ Thus, these writers’ experiences of genocide resonate with their Holocaust imaginaries; in reverse, they are also able to invoke their readers’ Holocaust imaginaries to help explain and illustrate other genocides.

If these texts expose how some imagine their own tragedies alongside the Holocaust, then other testimonies and representations particularly expose the potency of our own Holocaust imaginaries – and the difficulties (and non-sense) of trying to pin whether a text’s resonance with our imagination of the Holocaust is due to deliberate allusions by the author (or even translator), or due to basic similarities in certain experiences of genocide, the insufficient vocabulary we have to describe them, and our own deployment of our Holocaust imaginaries as we read them.⁵⁹ For me, the atmosphere of the Holocaust pervades Rezak Hukanović’s *The Tenth Circle of Hell* (1998), although the title of the book is one of only two explicit references to the Holocaust (unless one counts Elie Wiesel’s rather arrogant foreword). Hukanović’s text is full of familiar descriptions: of his fellow prisoners as the ‘living dead’, of the camp black markets, the sadistic brutality of the guards, prisoners forced to dispose of corpses (and themselves often also ending up corpses, ‘to eliminate the possibility of leaving witnesses’), or phrases like ‘they can’t possibly annihilate all of us’, or ‘[their] only fault was being Muslim or Croat...’.⁶⁰ Hukanović, or his translator, may have chosen

⁵⁷ See Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵⁸ Elma Softić, *Sarajevo Days*, *Sarajevo Nights*, trans. Nada Comić (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1995). More than one Cambodian testimony makes the rather ignorant comment that Hitler killed the Jews, but Pol Pot killed his own race (some say this makes the Cambodian genocide worse) – and while on the surface these are both strategic Holocaust references and quite denigrating, it also shows them conceptualising their own experience against their idea of the Holocaust.

⁵⁹ An interesting (but unpursuable) question here, linked to the question of the primacy of the visual image in facilitating recognition (see later), would be whether literature, or audio testimonies, encourage the use of the imagination more, and thus invoke the Holocaust imaginary as a readily available repertoire of scenes and images.

⁶⁰ Rezak Hukanović, *The Tenth Circle of Hell: A Memoir of Life in the Death Camps of Bosnia* (St. Ives: Abacus, 1998 [1993]), 55 and 86-7; 119; 53; 83, and 26.

their words carefully, but the Holocaust echoes may well, I think, have as much to do with our own as Hukanović's deployment of the Holocaust imaginary. A corollary might be Dallaire's *Shake Hands With the Devil* (2004): his intimate knowledge of the UNGC undoubtedly seeps into his telling, and retelling, of the Rwandan genocide, and resonates also with the Holocaust imaginary:

The massacre was not a spontaneous act. It was a well-executed operation involving the army, Gendarmerie, Interahamwe and civil service. The identity card system ... was an anachronism that would result in the deaths of many innocent people. By the destruction of their cards, and of their records at the local commune office, these human beings were erased from humanity. They simply never existed. Before the genocide ended, hundreds of thousands of others would be erased. The men who organized and perpetrated these crimes knew they were crimes and not acts justified by war, and that they could be held accountable for them. The Interahamwe returned to destroy the evidence. The faceless bureaucrats who fed the names to the militias and destroyed the records also played a part. We were not in a war of victors and vanquished. We were in the middle of a slaughterhouse, though it was weeks before we could call it by its real name.⁶¹

Like the scenes of desperate hunger and terror, devastation at the loss of loved ones, and the vicious brutality of perpetrators which can be found throughout representations of other genocides, Hukanović and Dallaire's descriptions echo with our knowledge and imagination of the Holocaust. Rather than being simply part of a game of identity politics, passages such as these indicate the blurred lines between invocations and inferences of the Holocaust imaginary.

The examples outlined here show the necessity of differentiating between conscious and deliberate uses of the Holocaust lens to frame other atrocities, and other, non-competitive, uses of the Holocaust imaginary which display a different and more subtle relationship with it. Indeed, it largely seems that those who do invoke the Holocaust do so in a very obvious way, appropriating vocabulary and imagery specific to the Holocaust to describe their own tragedies. By contrast, the thoughts and writings of Drakulić, Hukanović and others point towards the way the Holocaust functions in the genocidal imaginary: as an underlying model which informs and structures the conceptualisation and understanding of other genocides, without determining the words and images used to describe them.

⁶¹ Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands With the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (London: Arrow Books, 2004), 281.

Recognising Genocide

Torchin discusses both a ‘Holocaust imaginary’ and a ‘genocidal imaginary’ in her article on ‘Holocaust lenses’ in visual representations of the Armenian genocide, and although it is clear that the latter is in some way derived from the former, the exact relationship is unclear, and she in fact uses the two almost synonymously – writing, variously, that the stock images of the Holocaust ‘*function as* a kind of genocidal imaginary’ (91), that they have ‘*contributed to* a potent “genocide imaginary”’ (83), that the Holocaust ‘*dominate[s]* the genocidal imaginary’ (92), and, more confusingly, that the Armenian atrocities are filtered ‘through the genocidal imaginary of the Holocaust’ (91).⁶² This raises the question of whether the genocidal imaginary is equivalent to, subsumed by, or broader than the Holocaust imaginary: the argument of this chapter (and thesis) is that the genocidal imaginary replicates the framework of the Holocaust imaginary, but sometimes subtly reshapes ideas within that framework. It is precisely the nature of the overlaps and influences between the two imaginaries that I find most important: how far other genocides are only recognisable through a representation of the ‘expected scenes and scenery’ of the Holocaust, and how far they are recognised on their own terms. As I have indicated, the majority of the scholarship which has discussed the relationship between representations of the Holocaust and other genocides thus far has focused entirely on the instances where images and texts strongly ‘echo’ the Holocaust, either verbally or visually. This is, certainly, where the influence of the Holocaust is most obvious; and while the ‘shock of recognition’⁶³ produced by such similarities is powerful, these superficial and often overly contrived resemblances are more a matter of certain representations than the imagination of genocide in general. As anthropologists Andrew Strathern and Pamela Stewart suggest, representations resonate with our imaginations ‘not only by presenting visual images ... but by appealing to, and conforming with, basic scenarios in people’s minds, mental habitus in the terms of Pierre Bourdieu, connected to cosmic schemes of “good versus evil” and “the lessons of history”’.⁶⁴

In this section I argue that the genocidal imaginary is rooted in the imagination of the Holocaust, not because of any visual and verbal similarities encountered in particular

⁶² Torchin, ‘Since We Forgot’, 91, 83, 92, 91 [my italics].

⁶³ As *Time* put it, in its response to the images of ‘skeletal figures behind barbed wire’ in Omarska: Shandler, *While America Watches*, 242.

⁶⁴ Strathern and Stewart, ‘Introduction’, 2.

representations, but because of deeper, structural correlations in the way that the Holocaust and other genocides are represented and imagined. At its simplest, it can be said that the western public's understanding of genocide – again, Holocaust-derived – is of 'mass' plus 'killing', but the broader script is equally important. In representations of other genocides, the perpetrators, victims, process and aftermath of genocide are portrayed in generally similar terms to the Holocaust, whereby the core members of a government plan and then enact the mass killing of a minority victim group, with all the predictable scenes of atrocity and devastating aftermath. These four representational motifs recur across films, exhibitions, photographs and literature about genocide, but with, it must be stressed, 'local' adaptations, inflections, and additional tropes – such as the west's failure to intervene in more recent genocides, or a particular gender dimension. Despite audiences being much less familiar with the basic historical facts of other genocides,⁶⁵ therefore, adhering to this 'script' means that they are still 'culturally legible' or 'recognisable' as genocide, to extend Kellner's argument. Because the parallels between the Holocaust imaginary and genocide imaginary are found in these more structural and connotative elements of the script – the genre, *topoi*, and emplotment, and thus the form, rather than the literal content – each genocide can be recognised as a specific occurrence of the broader phenomenon of genocide.⁶⁶

The imagination of genocide, like the imagination of the Holocaust, thus follows a fairly predictable pattern. I first run through the most iconic images and scenes specific to each genocide – which form the basis for the imagination of each – before discussing how the portrayal of the perpetrators, victims, process and aftermath in the 'genocide script' parallels that of the Holocaust, with adaptations and inflections. Despite the fluidity inherent in this multidirectional imagination of genocide, the genocidal imaginary is also constrained by this predictable pattern, and in the final sections I discuss how this relatively narrow conception of genocide excludes some cases, and some representations, which might fall outside the audience's horizons of expectation.

⁶⁵ See Markovitz, 'Ararat and Collective Memories', 237-8.

⁶⁶ The adherence to this 'plot', where the perpetrators are specifically coded as pursuing their planned total annihilation of an innocent victim group, and the focus on the aftermath, is also what distinguishes the representation of genocide from the representation of other atrocities or tragedies. In photography, especially, atrocity images could stand for any number of different tragedies; it is this script (and also the use of the word 'genocide') which marks this type of tragedy as different from more universal narratives of suffering, displacement, mass death, and criminality.

The phrase ‘starving Armenians’, which once suffused the press, has generally been replaced as the dominant motif of the Armenian genocide by the straggling line of deported women and children being driven across the hilly landscape, which recurs throughout photography, literature, films and in museum exhibitions. Images of the executed Armenian elite,⁶⁷ starving orphans, and piles of skeletal bodies are also frequently reproduced. By contrast, there are almost no photographs of the killing itself in Democratic Kampuchea⁶⁸ – instead we have the phrase ‘the killing fields’, immortalised by Joffé’s 1984 film, which seems a very conceptually imprecise way of describing the historical events themselves. In lieu, there are the unsettling and rather melancholic displays of a selection of the photographs of DK functionaries taken in Tuol Sleng before their ‘interrogation’,⁶⁹ but it is the photographs of piles of bones, found around the country, which are endlessly reproduced. Such images are also absolutely iconic of the Rwandan genocide; in some places the victims’ remains have been buried, but in many the bones, skulls, and clothes have been ordered and left on display, and at Murambi, the exhumed victims are preserved in chalk limestone powder.⁷⁰ Such images are dominant in the imaginary of Rwanda, and are accompanied by the churches where people often gathered and were subsequently massacred, the roadblocks, bloated corpses floating down rivers, and (especially) piles of machetes. Finally, war-torn Sarajevo is an icon of the Yugoslav conflict as a whole, and Srebrenica as the locus of genocide itself, along with Omarska, Trnopolje, Prijedor, Manjača, and other Serb-run concentration camps in Bosnia – and more particularly the photographs of skeletal Bosnian Muslims behind barbed wire.⁷¹ Equally common are the mythologizing depictions of rough, bearded and drunk Serb militiamen, and descriptions of sniping, shelling, raping and pillaging. Here, too, as

⁶⁷ See in this context Aram Andonian, *Exile Trauma and Death: On the Road to Chankiri with Komitas Vartabed*, trans. and ed. Rita Soulahian Kuyumjian (London: Gomidas Institute, 2010); Krikoris Balakian, *Armenian Golgotha*, trans. Peter Balakian and Aris Sevag (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2009).

⁶⁸ Gunnar Bergstrom’s *Living Hell: Democratic Kampuchea, August 1978* (Phnom Penh: Documentation Centre of Cambodia, 2008) epitomises this: Bergstrom (a Swedish Communist) was one of the few foreigners invited to visit DK, and his carefully-chaperoned tour produced a photographic record of dam construction, work groups, and empty urban centres. Bergstrom’s pictures are also on display at Tuol Sleng.

⁶⁹ Interestingly, in the exhibitions of these photographs which have taken place abroad – in New York in 1997, and in London in 2009 – it was the more melancholic and emotive mug shots of handcuffed prisoners which were displayed, rather than photographs of prisoners who had been badly beaten, or who were found dead in the cells by the Vietnamese liberators.

⁷⁰ There is an unsettling resemblance here with the museum/memorial at the hospital in Vukovar, a section of which displays life-size, plaster-of-Paris figures on stretchers and beds, attended to by nurses, as one might imagine the Serb soldiers found them.

⁷¹ See Campbell, ‘Atrocity, Memory and Photography’, parts I and II.

well as with the other three cases, are the iconic images and descriptions of ethnic cleansing and exile, and more universal images of suffering and pain: photographs of refugees and ‘displaced persons’ struggling to carry their worldly possessions, waiting in line for soup kitchens, or clustered in camps and holding areas.⁷² These crowded images of desperate victims are in stark contrast with the portraits of the perpetrators, who appear alone or in rank formation, exuding confidence and power.

These scenes and images function as the instantly recognisable symbols of the genocides.⁷³ A quick glance illustrates why it is that so many have argued – perfectly reasonably – that other genocides and atrocities are frequently constructed (especially by the media) as primitive, barbarous, messy and unsophisticated, the inevitable outcome of ‘ancient’, ‘ethnic’, or ‘tribal’ hatreds, as compared with the coldly executed, industrial modernity of the Holocaust.⁷⁴ Such representations avoid the suggestion that other genocides might also be ‘modern’ (including the notion that genocide itself might be a quintessentially ‘modern’ project). They are, in this sense, a fundamental part of the genocidal imaginary. However, a shortcoming of this literature is that it assumes that the audiences of films, museum exhibitions, literature or photographs about genocide will only encounter the ‘dominant’ iconography of that genocide: there are other non-iconic (but by no means necessarily marginal) tropes and discourses, and more engaged representations, which can always suggest an altogether alternative interpretation of the violence. With the case of Bosnia, for example, one is just as likely to encounter news articles, photography, documentaries or museum exhibitions which focus on the satellite and forensic DNA technology used to locate and identify the bodies massacred in Srebrenica,⁷⁵ or the trials of Milošević, Karadžić

⁷² Naturally, my list of the icons of each genocide may differ from another’s. It is worth noting that most of the motifs mentioned above (re)appear in comparative representations of genocide – for example Lane H. Montgomery, *Never Again, Again, Again...: Genocide: Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Darfur* (New York: Ruder Finn Press, 2007), the IWM’s Crimes Against Humanity exhibition, and are played on in Simon Norfolk’s *For Most of It I Have No Words: Genocide, Landscape Memory* (Stockport: Dewi Lewis Publishing, 1998).

⁷³ Given the relative lack of public familiarity with genocides other than the Holocaust, it ought to be noted that these icons are not as ‘iconic’ – i.e. instantly recognisable – as those of the Holocaust, and are thus more dependent upon being encountered in some sort of informative context, or have to presuppose a level of knowledge about the events.

⁷⁴ See especially Johan Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival, and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Liisa H. Malkki, ‘Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricisation’, *Cultural Anthropology* 11:3 (1996), 377-404; Michalski and Gow, *War, Image and Legitimacy*.

⁷⁵ For example, Clea Koff’s *The Bone Woman* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004) describes her experiences as part of a forensics team excavating mass graves in Rwanda, Croatia and Kosovo; an exhibition at OSA (Budapest) in 2010 focused entirely on the exhumation at Srebrenica, with an accompanying film programme, including *Srebrenica: Autopsy of a Massacre* (2008); Eric Stover and

and others at The Hague (this also holds true for the international trials underway for Rwanda and Cambodia) – which do not fall so easily into the ‘antimodern’ category of that binary. The impressions and meanings which audiences take away from representations of genocide are influenced by many more things than just those clichéd images – the medium of representation, a plot, narrative, particular image, or indeed a personal connection with one aspect or another: we cannot, therefore, approach the representation and imagination of genocide (or the Holocaust) only through the study of their icons, for there are other recurrent tropes which play a significant role in the construction of memory.⁷⁶ Instead, the following broad survey of genocide representations indicates that the emplotment of genocide largely parallels that of the Holocaust; the scenario of genocide is thus not unfamiliar to us.

The perpetrators of genocide, like Holocaust perpetrators, are depicted in the most stereotypical terms: unambiguously ‘evil’ (which serves *pro forma* as an explanation for their actions), they are the fanatical antagonists of the story, but are paradoxically – perhaps – rarely analysed or portrayed in any depth.⁷⁷ Perpetrators are seldom the subject of an entire film, book or exhibition, tending instead to appear anecdotally and fleetingly. As such they remain at a remove, driving the genocidal process without our having a proper explanation of *why*; most representations do nothing to provoke questions about how it might be that a person can conceive of and commit, or collaborate in, the act of genocide. Their coding as evil is sufficient, and the victims’ plight is emphasised whilst the perpetrators’ motives remain (and are understood to be) incomprehensible.

Gilles Peress’ book *The Graves: Srebrenica and Vukovar* (Berlin: Scalo, 1998) and Simon Norfolk’s *Bleed* also foreground the use of forensics in the aftermath of genocide. See also Wagner, *To Know Where He Lies*.

⁷⁶ Essentially, my dissatisfaction with this analytical approach is that it isolates and extracts these icons of genocide from the contexts in which they are embedded and encountered, focusing too heavily on the icons themselves and not the narratives around them (or indeed the noniconic elements of representations). I wonder if this is one of the reasons why so many analysing in this vein have commented that these icons seem, as Michael Griffin writes, somehow timeless and decontextualised, repetitively re-viewed, and bound up in universal symbolic narratives of senseless loss, inconceivable inhumanity, human courage or national valour. Griffin, ‘The Great War Photographs: Constructing Myths of History and Photojournalism’ in *Picturing the Past: Media, History, Photography*, eds. Bonnie Brennen and Hanno Hardt (Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 122-57: 129.

⁷⁷ There are certainly more in-depth treatments of individual Holocaust perpetrators – from Jonathan Littell’s *The Kindly Ones*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (London: Vintage Books, 2009) to Hirschbiegel’s *Der Untergang* (2004). I would suggest, though, that this has more to do with the relative sophistication and higher commercial viability of films or books about the Holocaust than a fundamental difference in the genocidal imaginary, since Holocaust representations certainly do not always demystify the perpetrators.

Individually and collectively, then, the genocidal leaders and their collaborators are vilified and demonised: the names of Talaat, Enver and Djemal Pasha, Pol Pot, Ieng Sary and ‘Comrade Duch’, Milošević and Karadžić are trotted out in news pieces, books and museum exhibitions, accompanied by mug shots which frame them as criminals visually as well as rhetorically, and they appear sly, cold, calculating, and uncompromising.⁷⁸ Their followers and collaborators – unnamed and de-individualised Young Turks, Khmer Rouge, Hutu or Serbs⁷⁹ – appear as impassive, faceless agents of an unseen and powerful organisation, like the Khmer Rouge in *The Killing Fields*, the descriptions and visualisations of Young Turk gendarmes driving the lines of deported Armenians towards the desert in films like *Ararat*, survivor testimonies, and novels like Antonia Arslan’s *Skylark Farm* (2008), or the sly and obstructive mid-level functionaries and military commanders described by Henry Morgenthau and the western journalists travelling the war-torn former Yugoslavia.⁸⁰ Their lack of individuality is perturbing: as Peter Maass wrote after an interview with the chief Serbian ‘interrogator’ at Omarska, ‘What I find most remarkable about that session is that I cannot recall the chief investigator’s face. It is a total blank, gone from my memory’, and, comparing his activities with those of Mengele, asks, ‘Imagine, how could an interview with Josef Mengele be forgettable?’⁸¹

Alternatively, the perpetrators appear in crowds, like camp guards or Serbian neighbours described in Bosnian testimonies,⁸² or the gangs of drunk, whistle-blowing Hutus gathered around roadblocks or storming churches, machetes raised, in *Hotel Rwanda*, Michael Caton-Jones’ *Shooting Dogs* (2005), or Nick Hughes’ *100 Days*

⁷⁸ Interestingly, the names of the leaders of the Rwandan genocide seem not to form a part of the imaginary of Rwanda in the same way that the leaders of other genocides do, although *Hotel Rwanda* does spend some time depicting Bizimungu and Rutaganda. Aside from Pol Pot’s actual name, he remains a somewhat mysterious figure (in line with his relatively mysterious past – see David Chandler, *Brother Number One: A Political Biography of Pol Pot* (Boulder/Oxford: Westview, 1999)). ‘Comrade Duch’ is, by now, probably better known: see Nic Dunlop, *The Lost Executioner: A Story of the Khmer Rouge* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005) and François Bizot, *Facing the Torturer: Inside the Mind of a War Criminal*, trans. Charlotte Mandell and Antoine Audouard (London: Rider, 2011).

⁷⁹ For the Croats are quite often absent in (especially western) representations of the Yugoslav conflict, in accordance with the seeming preference for a simple, binarised dynamic between a clear aggressor group and a clear victim group.

⁸⁰ See e.g. Antonia Arslan’s characterisations of Young Turks as rather slow and stupid in *Skylark Farm: A Novel* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), 93, 95, 121, 147, or Morgenthau’s remarks in chapter 24 of *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*; Fred Doucette’s descriptions of Serbs in *Empty Casing: A Soldier’s Memoir of Sarajevo Under Siege* (Vancouver: Douglas and MacIntyre, 2008), 139, or Michael Nicholson, *Natasha’s Story* (London: Macmillan, 1993), 23, 84, etc.

⁸¹ Peter Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour: A Story of War* (London: Papermac, 1996), 46-7.

⁸² E.g. Kemal Pervanić, *The Killing Days: My Journey Through the Bosnian War* (London: Blake Publishing, 1999), 174; Hukanović, *Tenth Circle*, 71-84.

(1999). Likewise, the words and excuses of the Hutu prisoners interviewed by Jean Hatzfeld in *A Time for Machetes* (2005) are collated, drawn together into a threatening consensus, while Hatzfeld, as interlocutor, is absent.⁸³ As Lee Ann Fujii remarks, ‘the killers’ words seem to spring from a spontaneous and ongoing monologue. This sense of streaming monologue, in turn, helps to render these men as cold-blooded monsters. Once they become monsters, however, they are easy to dismiss as aberrant individuals who would never remind us of ourselves’, and this assessment applies to most representations of *génocidaires*.⁸⁴ There are a few attempts at portraying individuals who refused to become perpetrators, but they are, of course, clearly portrayed as *exceptions* to the rule.⁸⁵

Testimonial descriptions of the sadistic tortures, the cruel beatings and indiscriminate killings further removes them from us: ‘the guards at Omarska very quickly turned into beasts, of two breeds’, writes Kemal Pervanić; the first would immediately jump on and crush their victims, and the second would toy with and keep their victims alive until the next day.⁸⁶ Indeed, we expect such behaviour of perpetrators, and Dallaire’s description of his first meeting with the *Interahamwe* leaders draws together these elements:

I had made my way to the Diplomates, jostling through the ubiquitous roadblocks, drunken and downright mad militiamen, and hundreds of children jumping around, all excited among today’s kills. These kids were being egged on to throw stones at our vehicles and yell at us as we stopped for the militiamen to open the gate. ... Arriving at the hotel, I took the bullets out of my pistol just in case the temptation to shoot them was too extreme, and went inside.

The three young men Bagosora introduced me to had no particularly distinguishing features. I think I was expecting frothing at the mouth, but the meeting would be with humans.⁸⁷

⁸³ Jean Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes. The Rwandan Genocide: The Killers Speak*, trans. Linda Coverdale (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2005)

⁸⁴ Lee Ann Fujii, ‘*Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (review)’, *African Studies Review* 50:1 (2007), 155-6: 155.

⁸⁵ Arslan’s *Skylark Farm* (and the 2007 film adaptation) includes a Young Turk gendarme who attempts to save an Armenian girl with whom he has fallen in love, but, apart from ultimately failing (she sacrifices herself to save the rest of her family), he also comes across as a bit stupid and basically motivated by lust. In *The Killing Fields* there is also a relatively high-ranking Khmer Rouge cadre who discovers that Dith Pran is an educated non-follower of Angkar, but facilitates Pran’s escape; and, of course, *Hotel Rwanda* and Rusesabagina’s own testimony are portrayals of a Hutu who refused to kill and saved many Rwandans.

⁸⁶ Pervanić, *The Killing Days*, 74.

⁸⁷ Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, 345-6.

Dallaire's perplexed perseverance with the binary of monster/human is hardly uncommon,⁸⁸ and indeed mirrors the common designation of Holocaust perpetrators as 'cultured demons'.⁸⁹ Both disavow any continuity between the perpetrators' mental makeups, politics, and socio-cultural codes, and our own. Even careful elucidations of the perpetrators' ideologies does not necessarily demystify them from their characterisation as illogical and hallucinatory – not to mention outside observers' explicit characterisations of them as such;⁹⁰ we are not usually encouraged to make this imaginative leap, and their motivations remain oblique and inexplicable. As Raffi says in *Ararat* – he is otherwise very well informed about the Armenian genocide – 'You'd have to ask them'; or, in the simple but effective scene in Ademir Kenović's *Savršeni Krug* (*Perfect Circle*, 1997), as one of the children asks Hamza after they rescue and adopt a dog wounded by a sniper's bullet, 'Why shoot the dog?'. 'Did he even make a decision?', Hamza says, 'who knows?'. 'Is he happy now?' 'Who?' 'The guy who fired.' Hamza pauses and answers, 'Probably', and flinches as another bullet whizzes past. 'Who knows?'.

In the context of the genocidal imaginary, just as there are perpetrators, so too must there be victims; the one group implies the other, in a reciprocal relationship of violence and suffering.⁹¹ As with representations of the Holocaust, genocide representations often focus on the victims' suffering rather than the machinations of the perpetrators. A common format is to portray the experiences of a few individuals, as an emotive way of explaining the story – whether in feature films and documentaries, novels and outsiders' accounts, or (obviously) testimonies – but also present these individuals against a backdrop of whole families and communities being deported or massacred, incarcerated or forced into manual labour. This oscillation between the individual and the collective – the Tuol Sleng photographs are a particularly effective example – is familiar from Holocaust representations as a way of communicating the psychological enormity of the event, but in cases where the public are less familiar with the basic facts of genocide, it is also a way of emphasising the scope and extent of the killings – which will permit them to be recognised as genocide. Again, the victims are almost always shown as helpless, innocent and vulnerable, with

⁸⁸ See also Maass' fascinating description of his meeting with Milošević in *Love Thy Neighbour*, 202-14, and Martin Bell, *In Harm's Way: Reflections of a War-Zone Thug* (London: Penguin, 1996), 103.

⁸⁹ Zalman Gradowski in Ber Mark, *The Scrolls of Auschwitz* (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1985), 175.

⁹⁰ E.g. Doucette, *Empty Casing*, 85-6: 'As you can see, it was not difficult to hate the Serbs. When it came down to morals, the Serbs had none.'

⁹¹ See Hayden, 'Mass Killings and Images of Genocide', 494, 496.

little or no agency⁹² – unless they are heroised and valorised as resisters, as in Franz Werfel’s novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (1933) and its subsequent film adaptation (1982), Egoyan’s depiction of the siege at Van in *Ararat*, the celebrations of Rusesabagina’s heroism in *Hotel Rwanda*, or the journalists’ descriptions of embattled Bosnian Muslim fighters holding out against the better-equipped Serb forces in their enclaves and trenches.⁹³

This portrayal of the victims as either courageous individuals who endured and survived, or as the undeserving prey of genocidal perpetrators, is perhaps best illustrated by Jean Hatzfeld’s portrayal of Rwandan survivors in his *Into the Quick of Life* (2005) and *The Strategy of Antelopes* (2009). In the first, he foregrounds the survivors’ pain and suffering, their ‘victimhood’, writing that

For several years, the survivors in the hills of Nyamata, as elsewhere, have remained silent, as enigmatic in their silence as the survivors of the Nazi concentration camps in the period immediately following their liberation. Some explain that for them, ‘Life broke in pieces’, for others, ‘It stopped’, and for yet more, ‘It absolutely has to begin again’; all admit, however, that amongst themselves the genocide is all they speak about.⁹⁴

Those same survivors reappear in *The Strategy of Antelopes*, along with the extraordinary stories of others, ‘vital to the message of this book’, who hid and ran in the forest around Nyamata, using ‘the strategies of antelopes’ to avoid the daily hunting parties. ‘It’s in this forest, during the killing season’, Hatzfeld writes, ‘that Eugénie Kayierere gave the most prodigious athletic performance of which this former sports reporter has ever heard – a heroic accomplishment more difficult to imagine than any feat of navigation of mountain climbing. Indeed, it’s simply a triumph beyond human understanding.’⁹⁵ In other, less gushing, dramatisations and narratives, the bittersweet survival of one is celebrated against the loss of many – in the concluding scenes of *The Killing Fields* as Schanberg is reunited with Pran, or of *Shooting Dogs*

⁹² See chapter 5. With regard to agency, as Dina Iordanova has noted, the dilemma of whether to stay or to go suffuses domestic films and writing about the Yugoslav wars, but is absent from western films. Iordanova, *Cinema of Flames*, 254; Milena Michalski, ‘Cultural Representation of Atrocity and Repentance’, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 7:3 (2007), 497-508.

⁹³ For example, Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour*, pp. 236-8; Anthony Loyd, *My War Gone By, I Miss It So* (New York: Penguin, 2001), 94, 106-7; Doucette, *Empty Casing*, 132.

⁹⁴ Jean Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life. The Rwandan Genocide: The Survivors Speak*, trans. Gerry Feehily (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2005), viii. Hatzfeld largely views the Rwandan genocide through the Holocaust, as I elaborate in chapter 3.

⁹⁵ Jean Hatzfeld, *The Strategy of Antelopes: Rwanda After the Genocide*, trans. Linda Coverdale (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2009), 37, 36.

when Marie finds Joe again in England to ask, ‘Why did you leave?’⁹⁶ These images and narratives – like those of the Holocaust – often draw from the standard western set of representational strategies for depicting suffering, loss, devastation and tragedy, to offer us scenes and descriptions which invite intense emotional reactions – piles of corpses, grieving women and orphaned children, or harrowing descriptions of brutality and torment.⁹⁷ The difficulty with evoking this kind of emotion, however, is that it does not invite reflection on genocide itself so much as on its unimaginability – or rather the unimaginability of experiencing it – and often blocks questions over why that particular group was chosen as victims, at that particular moment.⁹⁸

There also seems to be a basic similarity between the way that the Holocaust and other genocides are imagined to unfold – the ‘dynamic’ of genocide. Perhaps one of the more peculiar aspects of watching films, reading books, or visiting exhibitions about genocide (as compared with most dramatisations, even sometimes about historical events), is that we ‘already know’ the plot, ‘how it ends’, and how we are likely to respond to the narratives and images we are presented with. These ‘horizons of expectation’ shape the way in which audiences understand and imagine the unfolding of the genocidal process. Most representations either follow or imply the same basic ‘plot’: pre-existing tensions in a given society deteriorate, more or less rapidly, and those in power (who perhaps only recently came to power) plan and then execute a genocidal scheme which targets a proportion of the population, usually an ethnic or religious minority, for death.⁹⁹ Genocide appears as an inexorable and inevitable event,

⁹⁶ These kinds of redemptive dramatisations are most often found in films and other accounts made by westerners (see also Nicholson’s *Natasha’s Story*, and my chapter 3). In a sense, survivor testimonies always narrate the survival of one against the loss of many, if rarely with as much sense of celebration on the part of the author.

⁹⁷ As I will note at various points throughout the thesis, these (western) representations usually invoke an interpretive framework derived from Christian culture – evil and innocence, sin and redemption, etc. (as did the perpetrators in some cases).

⁹⁸ And it does tend to be ‘that particular group’, in the singular: as I discuss in chapter 2, just as the Holocaust imaginary focuses on the Jewish victims above ‘the others’, so too is there a forgetting of the Assyrian, Pontic Greek, and Kurdish victims of the ‘Turkification’ of Ottoman Turkey; the Khmer Rouge’s targeting of ethnic Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai and Cham; the killings of politically moderate Hutu and the Twa of Rwanda; and the messy complexity of ethnicity in the former Yugoslavia. (This barely even touches upon how perpetrators construct and define their victims according to their own criteria, the victims’ own felt (non?-)allegiance to whichever group, and the potential in some cases for ‘conversion’.)

⁹⁹ These horizons of expectation – particularly of the premeditated plan – are confirmed by the use of foreshadowing in some representations, usually as a device to heighten a sense of foreboding and emphasise precisely that genocidal intent. Arslan adopts the voice of omniscient narrator in *Skylark Farm*, interrupting her description of the Armenian community’s Easter preparations: ‘Holy Saturday. The patient trap, agleam with barbed wire and congealed blood, is about to be sprung’ (57; cf. 31, 73, 96-7). Both the feature film *Shake Hands with the Devil* and *Hotel Rwanda* re-enact the scenes in

with its roots mainly in the perpetrators' opportunistic hatred and extreme political ideologies, with a distinct period of implementation and equally distinct ending – encouraged by the metonym of '1915' for the Armenian genocide, the frequently-seen phrase that 'Pol Pot time' lasted 'three years, eight months, and twenty days', or the '100 days' of genocide in Rwanda.¹⁰⁰ In these representations, the diverse domestic and international origins and contexts of genocide are obscured, and genocide thereby 'contained' as a matter of personal concern to the west. These representations thus cannot encourage an understanding of the 'stages of deliberation',¹⁰¹ and insofar as representations give the history of each genocide, the events tend to be presented as the climax of that drama, the seemingly inevitable teleological end point or coda in the history of a conflict.

More deeply, this rendering of the 'basic plot' has also meant a very specific imagining of the dynamic of genocide. Clearly derived from the representation of the Holocaust, the genocidal imaginary seems to stipulate the morally unambiguous dynamic of a clear aggressor and a clear victim, with violence flowing in one direction only (barring sporadic instances of resistance) – which has precluded more nuanced renderings of the complex agents and structures in any theatre of genocide. Thus, the majority of mainstream representations of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia focus only on

Dallaire's book in which he learns of the genocidal plans through an informant; Dallaire's own account is peppered with desolate sentences which plunge the reader into genocide before it actually occurs (long before he came to know of the plan): 'I did not understand that I had just met men in Rwanda who would become *génocidaires*', 'Not one of the Rwandans at that party ... would survive the coming genocide', or 'One week later, the same devout Christians would become murderer and victims, and the churches the sites of calculated butchery' (*Shake Hands with the Devil*, 79, 128, 216). The *Frontline* documentary *Ghosts of Rwanda* (2004) also emphasises the comments of Americans living in Rwanda in 1994 that, despite the feeling of security the UN presence brought, they 'all knew things were going to blow' – as aid worker Carl Wilkens put it. Transcript available at www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/etc/script.html [accessed 31.12.12].

¹⁰⁰ Overt genocidal violence, against various groups, continued in Ottoman Turkey until at least 1923; some Armenian testimonies include this, including Ketchian, *Shadow of the Fortress*; Euphronia Halebian Meymarian, *Housher: My Life in the Aftermath of the Armenian Genocide* (London: Taderon Press, 2004). In general, though, '1915' is the cipher for the genocide; presumably a longer periodization would disturb the simplicity of '1915' and also call attention to other groups' victimisation. Each of these periodisations – along with 'the Dayton Accords' in representations of the breakup of the former Yugoslavia – posits a clear ending (as well as beginning) to genocide, which occludes the ways in which the structures of violence within a society which helped *produce* genocide often persist in the aftermath: see chapter 4.

¹⁰¹ Berel Lang, *Act and Idea in the Nazi Genocide* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 22. Hatzfeld, for example, wonders, 'At what moment was the decision made? How did the fateful meeting go? Who first spoke of complete extermination? What were the listeners' initial reactions? These questions seem essential. ... Although we cannot reconstruct the unimaginable scene, we do know that the decision to commit genocide in Rwanda followed the kind of pattern we see in the German implementation of the Holocaust: the Rwandan genocide was the result of plans and preparations formulated essentially by collective decisions.' Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, 47.

instances of Serb aggression against Bosnian Muslims, particularly in Sarajevo and Srebrenica – an understandable focus on the most notorious wartime atrocities, but one which nevertheless means that the audiences’ attention is limited to events where the Serbs clearly constitute the attacking or occupying forces, and Bosnian Muslims are cast as defenceless victims. This inserts the complex set of conflicts in which all three sides committed atrocities (although certainly the Serbs were responsible for the larger part of the war crimes, and Bosnian Muslims suffered the most casualties) into the familiar binary perpetrator/victim dynamic, with the Croats often entirely absent. This filtering also occurs in mainstream representations of Rwanda, which never introduce the RPF’s invasion and killings into the dynamic of genocide, presenting them – if at all – as a well-ordered *deus ex machina*; the killings of politically moderate Hutu are also rarely shown. The brutal purges of the Khmer Rouge ranks, particularly in the Eastern Zone, are rarely alluded to (despite their link with Tuol Sleng), and neither are the nationalist activities of Armenian groups in the Ottoman Empire, who were feared as potential traitors. With the focus entirely on the agency of the perpetrators, this rendering of the genocidal dynamic has also occluded the impact which western observers (missionaries, soldiers, journalists, UN staff) and the victims themselves have on the dynamic of genocide, and also of the deeper, structural forces not embodied in any human protagonists, as I shall discuss in chapters 2 and 3.

Indeed, the causes usually take a back seat to the outcome of genocide. It is perhaps the remnants of genocide, those iconic images and descriptions of piles of skulls and bones, personal possessions and discarded weapons, which most occupy the imagination, in the same way that the Holocaust’s ‘icons of extermination’ dominate the Holocaust imaginary. There are many representations which explore how survivors and communities cope in the aftermath of genocide (see chapter 4), but there is a disproportionate, and often quite casual, focus on the devastation of the aftermath, and especially the piles of remains: the ordered rows of skulls and bones in the churches and mass graves of Rwanda and the memorial stupa of Cambodia, the twisted corpses in the mass graves of Bosnia and Croatia, the bodies of Armenians laid out by the roadside, and the various personal possessions – clothes, bunches of keys, a toy, wallets, identification papers.

These remnants are a sticking point for the imagination. They are perhaps so central because they are felt to depict, and confront us with, the essence of genocide – and indeed, to serve as evidence for it.¹⁰² These piles of skulls and bodies show mass death, undeniably, and the consistent cracks in skulls, the blindfolds still across the eyes, the hands tied behind the backs, the skeletal-thin bodies, also speak of murder. At Choeung Ek, exhibition boards explain that the bones were preserved ‘as evidence of these historic crimes and as the basis for remembrance and education by the Cambodian people as a whole’: as Torchin writes, ‘the evidence for atrocity seems clear’.¹⁰³ These physical traces are augmented by techniques, echoing those used in Holocaust representations,¹⁰⁴ which aim to create an atmosphere of authenticity and documentation: the use of black-and-white, the adaptation of true stories, the insertion of ‘documentary’ slides with basic historical information about the genocide at the start or end of feature films like *Hotel Rwanda*, *Shooting Dogs*, and so on, or at the start of testimonies. And yet, while these bones and bodies serve in the imaginary as the clearest physical evidence of the genocide, in an important way, they cannot: they offer proof of mass death, but as Guyer writes, the cracks in Rwandan skulls from machetes ‘signals the means of death, [but] it does not offer incontrovertible evidence of the particular crime of genocide.’¹⁰⁵ These piles are only a proportion of the dead – and they cannot portray the structures of organisation, administration and (crucially, from a legal perspective) the perpetrators’ *intent* to commit genocide¹⁰⁶ – only that which was not totally destroyed.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰² As Brink writes, ‘Crimes of this sort demand evidence. This may be the reason why the characterization of “photographs as traces of something which actually existed” seems so convincing and why photographs of the concentrations camps of pictures actually or potentially relating to the crimes in general were and still are endowed with a special power of evidence (or, for that matter, are particularly severely attacked by revisionists).’ Brink, ‘Secular Icons’, 148.

¹⁰³ Proclamation by Cambodian prime minister Samdech Hun Sen, 2001; Torchin, ‘Since We Forgot’, 92. See also Williams, ‘Witnessing Genocide’, 235.

¹⁰⁴ See especially Classen, ‘Balanced Truth’.

¹⁰⁵ Guyer, ‘Rwanda’s Bones’, 171, n.31.

¹⁰⁶ Although, as Guyer perceptively points out, Rwanda’s bones do, in fact, commemorate genocide as genocide; ‘by refusing to return names, identities, or individualities to the dead, they ... recur to genocide’s logic (which is also colonialism’s logic) – that is, the logic of impersonality whereby persons are recognised only as members of a population’, and so ‘to remember the dead as individuals (to restore names and faces) – in the name of recovered dignity and propriety – is to *fail* to remember the very specific violence that attends genocide as violence against a population’. Guyer, ‘Rwanda’s Bones’, 163. Deliberately remembering the dead, as individuals, might also *resist* that logic, though.

¹⁰⁷ As Keilbach writes of the Holocaust, ‘the piles of bodies, the surviving prisoners, or the camp constructions shown in the photographs represent those traces of the systematic extinction that had not yet been eradicated.’ Keilbach, ‘Photographs’, 61.

What can be seen from the foregoing is that representations of genocide largely replicate the basic scenario or emplotment of events familiar from the Holocaust imaginary. The congruences are in the ‘script’ and modes of presentation, rather than the language or exact images used – or, in Kellner’s terms, genocide is presented according to the same conventions of genre, topoi and emplotment, and is easily recognisable because it conforms to an extant, familiar, understanding of the events. The genocidal imaginary thus extends, adapts and enlarges the Holocaust imaginary in a relatively fluid and creative way, and additional tropes or inflections are incorporated as long as the basic dynamic of genocide does not change. For example, while a core central leadership is less visible in representations of the Rwandan genocide, the connotations of incomprehensible motives and bestial brutality are transferred onto the groups of Hutu perpetrators. Likewise, while representations of other genocides, as with the Holocaust, always emphasise the indiscriminate nature of the killing – men, women and children were all destined for death – a much stronger gender element is visible in representations of the Armenian, Bosnian and Rwandan genocides: motherhood is a strong representational trope in Balakian’s *Black Dog of Fate* and Egoyan’s *Ararat*, and rape as a weapon of genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda is quite prevalent.¹⁰⁸ Equally, representations of the genocides which occurred after the Holocaust almost always include an additional trope, namely, the failure of the west to intervene, whether in films like *Hotel Rwanda*, journalists’ accounts, or the survivors’ descriptions of their feeling of betrayal in testimonies and interviews.¹⁰⁹ The exact nature of the violence might change, but not what it connotes; additional tropes might be included in order to give broader meanings, but the basic scenario remains.

This imagination of genocide – as with the imagination of the Holocaust, in fact – thus cannot really tolerate any major variations in the basic script or interpretation of genocide, and leaves little room for reflection on causes, contingency and ambiguities. It largely excludes, for example, any suggestion of reciprocal violence by the victim group: unless cast as heroic resistance by a few individuals against their more powerful

¹⁰⁸ See the films *Grbavica*, Mandy Jacobson and Karmen Jelincic’s *Calling the Ghosts* (1996), Aida Begić’s *Snijeg* (Snow, 2008), Juanita Wilson’s *As If I Am Not There* (2010), Suzanne Khardalian and PeÅ Holmquist’s *Grandma’s Tattoos* (2011), and Jonathan Torgovnik’s photo-essay *Intended Consequences: Rwandan Children Born of Rape* (New York: Aperture, 2009).

¹⁰⁹ This representational trope of ‘the west’, while castigating the passivity of the UN and other powers, rarely deals with their actions which helped fuel genocide; see chapter 2. Samantha Power’s *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (London: Flamingo, 2003) is a prime example of this. Cf. Levene, *Genocide in the Age of the Nation-State*.

persecutors, it becomes a representation of civil war, as in Tanović's *No Man's Land* and Dragojević's *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* (this is also why, in *Ararat*, Egoyan has the present-day Turkish character, Ali, question the genocide label and offer the denialist arguments he found on the internet, only to be cut off by the director Saroyan and, later, to provoke Raffi's angry condemnation). There are thus no 'grey zones', where the victims can be construed as anything but innocent and the perpetrators or collaborators as anything other than unquestionably evil (see chapter 5).¹¹⁰ Likewise, phrases such as 'ethnic cleansing' or 'forced displacement' might immediately cast doubt on whether the events depicted really are genocide (which is why Martin Bell finds it necessary to describe ethnic cleansing as 'updated genocide' in his memoir of wartime Bosnia);¹¹¹ and if the violence shown is sporadic, drawn-out, and does not necessarily result in mass death – as in portrayals of colonial genocides, like Philip Noyce's *Rabbit Proof Fence* (2002) – then it is even less likely to register as genocide.

The imagination of genocide, then, largely keeps within the borders and boundaries established by the imagination of the Holocaust. However, the genocidal imaginary is nevertheless not reducible to it, and in this respect it is worth considering Moses' question, posed in the context of historiography: 'What is the master category here, Holocaust or genocide?'¹¹² The correlations and parallels in representation perhaps now means that the Holocaust is recognisable as a paradigm amongst many other genocides, and this interreferentiality seems to strengthen the web of imaginative associations which links genocides together, thus reinforcing and consolidating the genocidal imaginary. The interpretive rigidity of the genocidal imaginary means that most representations of genocide – especially if they are to be accepted as such – present audiences with stock scenes, images and descriptions with which they are already quite familiar, and indeed expect. Thus, we tend to be shown 'the most expected image of the unimaginable', and easy explanations which 'are like just-so stories that ... offer us solace when we are confronted with the morally confusing, the cognitively puzzling, and the seemingly unknowable.'¹¹³ In this respect, perhaps these

¹¹⁰ This is probably one of the reasons that Tim Blake Nelson's depiction of the Auschwitz *Sonderkommando* in *The Grey Zone* (2001) was not particularly commercially successful. The genocidal imaginary's teleological focus on a single period of concerted violence also excludes the imaginative possibility of 'victims becoming killers' (Mamdani), or the memories of victimhood which can contribute to a group seeing another as a potential threat.

¹¹¹ Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 230.

¹¹² Moses, 'The Holocaust and Genocide', 534.

¹¹³ Amos Goldberg, 'The Victim's Voice and Melodramatic Aesthetics in History', *H&T* 48 (2009), 220-37: 229; Crapanzano, *Imaginative Horizons*, 6.

stock images also reveal a fear of transgressing *morally*, rather than imaginatively (see chapter 5). But as Scott Straus has argued with regard to Rwanda, ‘genocide is often presented in terms and images that are already interpreted’ for us, and thus ‘often sustain the unimaginable nature of the Rwandan genocide. Rather than help people see and contemplate the violence, these presentations obfuscate it.’¹¹⁴ The next section discusses those representations – including Straus’ own – which aim to transgress the boundaries of the imagination, by presenting us with unforeseen but not unrecognisable images and interpretations of genocide.

Challenging the Horizons of the Imagination

In a sense, one indicator of the genocidal imaginary’s relative homogeneity is the existence of more engaged representations which explicitly seek to interrogate and counter it. Identifying one limiting aspect or another – the easy recourse to stereotypes, a certain sense of predictability and complacency, ‘the abuse of the happy ending’¹¹⁵ – they ask their audiences to imagine genocide differently, aiming not to confirm but to unsettle the imagination, to challenge its boundaries and borders. Scott Straus and Robert Lyons’ book *Intimate Enemy* (2006) is perhaps the most explicit example of this, and they see it as something of a ‘representational experiment’.¹¹⁶ By juxtaposing Lyons’ photographs of *génocidaires*, survivors and judges with sections of perpetrator testimony excerpted from Straus’ interviews with convicts, they explicitly intend to unsettle the standard imagination of perpetrators. The stories of the ‘genocide’s foot soldiers’, Straus writes, ‘are still shocking, often for their simplicity and banality’:

The attentive reader of these pages will find much to learn about how ordinary human beings with no prior history of violence come to take part in a genocide and how they represent themselves. ... [T]hese killers were men who had led quite banal lives before the genocide. They were ordinary husbands, fathers, sons and boyfriends; they were farmers, fishermen, teachers, and market salesmen. Even more disarming, their testimonies made a certain sense; their rationales were not those of demented, sadistic maniacs.¹¹⁷

Likewise, Lyons ‘wanted to make the audience enter a more intimate space, ask questions, experience directly the ambiguous physical resemblances between

¹¹⁴ Scott Straus, ‘Introduction’ in Scott Straus and Robert Lyons, *Intimate Enemy: Images and Voices of the Rwandan Genocide* (New York: Zone Books, 2006), 14-15.

¹¹⁵ This is Stier’s summation of Lawrence Langer’s position: ‘Holocaust, American Style’, 366.

¹¹⁶ Straus, ‘Introduction’, 14.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17, 20, 24.

génocidaire and survivor.’¹¹⁸ These testimonies and photographs confront the easy imagination of perpetrators as ‘inhuman’ by demonstrating – as we read the testimonies, and try to ‘guess’ which portrait is of a killer, which a survivor (they are unlabelled) – that becoming a perpetrator has less to do with long-held hatreds or inherent evil than the circumstances in which we find ourselves, when the everyday becomes the extreme and the extreme the everyday.

Drakulić also challenges closed understandings of perpetrators and victimhood by destabilising notions of identity, belonging, and nationhood. ‘I am not in a position to choose [what defines me] any longer’, she writes. ‘That is what the war is doing to us, reducing us to one dimension: the Nation. The trouble with this nationhood, however, is that whereas before, I was defined by my education, my job, my ideas, my character – and yes, my nationality too – now I feel stripped of all that. I am nobody because I am not a person any more. I am one of 4.5 million Croats.’¹¹⁹ In disavowing the category of ‘Croat’ ascribed to her, but also realising the impossibility of that disavowal (‘being Croat has become my destiny’),¹²⁰ Drakulić unsettles the kind of homogenising, essentialising categorisations that set up false distinctions between victim and perpetrator, Croat, Serb or Bosnian Muslim, and illustrates the ways in which war and genocide affect and effect identities, subjectivities, and violence.¹²¹

Other projects, like the photographic monographs by Simon Norfolk (*For Most Of It I Have No Words* (1998)) and James Nachtwey (*Inferno* (1999)), and the IWM’s Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition (CAHE), take an explicitly comparative approach which collects and presents a range of genocides and atrocities squarely alongside each other.¹²² Their aim is not to suggest any equivalence, but to shift the imagination of

¹¹⁸ Robert Lyons, ‘Photographer’s Notes’ in Straus and Lyons, *Intimate Enemy*, 32.

¹¹⁹ Drakulić, *Balkan Express*, 51. What is arresting about the book is less the (quite well-executed) pot shots at the west than her reflections on subjectivity, identity, and nationalism, and how people are changed from within by their situation. This is, as I will explore further in chapter 2, a common strength of representations from the former Yugoslavia.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹²¹ These false distinctions, in fact, show a parallel between the genocidal imaginary as I have diagnosed it, and the genocidal imaginary of the perpetrators themselves.

¹²² Norfolk, *For Most of It I Have No Words*; Nachtwey, *Inferno*. It is illustrative here to juxtapose the USHMM’s Wexner Centre exhibitions, opposite the permanent exhibition’s exit, with the CAHE, located near the exit of their permanent Holocaust exhibition. While the CAHE fully integrates the Holocaust into its thematic exploration of genocides and serious human rights abuses, the first room of the Wexner Centre has an interactive installation (‘From Memory to Action: Meeting the Challenge of Genocide’) which covers genocide in Rwanda, Srebrenica and Darfur, while the two consecutive rooms host an exhibition on the Nuremberg trials and their legacy, and the (Holocaust) Survivors Registry.

genocide away from being the imagination of *single* genocides in isolation, towards seeing each as a specific example of a common phenomenon which is more recurrent than might otherwise be imagined. Thus, while some representations do occasionally point towards other genocides or wars and atrocities which they see as analogous – either contemporaneous or historical, and most frequently in representations of Rwanda and Bosnia¹²³ – these examples challenge the imagination of genocide as a particularly aberrant or exceptional event. To a greater or lesser degree, they invite reflection on the forms of discrimination and violence which recur across different cases, and all three, interestingly, include atrocities which are either not genocides or would not normally feature in the genocidal imaginary as genocides – the deforestation in the Amazon which is destroying the lives and homes of tribal communities living there, the bombing of Dresden, the conflict in Chechnya, for example.¹²⁴ In so doing, they stretch the imagination of genocide past individual occurrences, stimulating their audiences to reflect on the fluidity of violence in society, its disparate origins and range of manifestations – and indeed, to question what *can* be considered genocidal violence – instead of imagining, once more, ‘genocide’.

In their different ways, these representations challenge and shift their audiences’ horizons of expectation, and of imagination. There is, of course, no one all-encompassing representation which can entirely change the way in which genocide is imagined; indeed, as the above discussion shows, neither is one particular *medium* ‘better’ at unsettling and stretching the imagination of genocide (see chapter 2). The examples discussed above – the work of Straus and Lyons, Drakulić, and Norfolk, Nachtwey and the IWM – should demonstrate that it is not the medium itself which provides the best means of challenging the imagination; instead, they are effective above others because they do not leave ‘genocide’ *entirely* to our imagination, but play with our knowledge in unforeseen and unexpected ways.

Other genocides thus begin to feel a little like a postscript to the Holocaust itself (although perhaps inevitably, in a museum devoted to the Holocaust); the CAHE is a fully free-standing exhibition.

¹²³ This is due to a mix of factors, mainly the prominence of human rights cultures in the 1990s, the sheer numbers of (well-reported) human rights abuses in that decade, and the concomitant sense (or reality) that they were ‘in competition’ with one another – for attention, aid and resources, and even intervention by the west – particularly after ‘Somalia’ (the metonym is telling) and the subsequent reluctance of America and the west to send troops to ‘other people’s wars’. Dallaire, especially, shows a good bit of ‘Bosnia envy’ – he is actually far less concerned with ‘competing’ with the Holocaust than with other events which were superseding Rwanda at the time (see 89, 135, 144, 151, 207, 349).

¹²⁴ Nachtwey’s *Inferno* perhaps stretches this too far – with photographs from Romanian orphanages, Somalia, India, Sudan, Bosnia, Rwanda, Zaire, Chechnya and Kosovo, it will likely be understood as a collection on crimes against humanity rather than genocide, but I include it nevertheless.

A comparison of Straus and Lyons' work with some of artist Alfredo Jaar's is illustrative here: while Straus and Lyons provide material for us to scrutinise and contemplate – the photographs of human beings, and the perpetrators' words – Jaar's work depends upon our extant imagination of genocide, the one of 'stock images of horror', as Straus puts it, for its effect. One of Jaar's series focuses on a survivor, Gutete Emerita. Piled on the floor of the exhibition hall are thousands of copies of two close-up photographs, one of each of her eyes, accompanied by a short text describing the massacre she survived, which ends:

Her eyes look lost and incredulous. Her face is the face of someone who has witnessed an unbelievable tragedy and now wears it. She has returned to this place in the woods because she has nowhere else to go. When she speaks about her lost family, she gestures to corpses on the ground, rotting in the African sun.

I remember her eyes.

The eyes of Gutete Emerita.¹²⁵

By focusing on Gutete and the things she saw, whilst denying us any visualisation of her or those scenes, we are invited to use our extant genocidal imaginary. By contrast, the work of Straus and Lyons, Drakulić, Norfolk and Nachtwey neither presents the expected, nor leaves genocide entirely to the imagination. Rather than offering scenes and scenery which have 'done all the emoting for us',¹²⁶ and are 'already interpreted' for us, they appeal to and then reconfigure our imagination of genocide – thus ensuring that it is still recognisable as genocide. The claims they make – that perpetrators' involvement in genocide can arise from relatively mundane and ordinary motives as well as the more extreme, and that genocide is less an aberrant than an unfortunately all-too-common (and human) event – are not outside the bounds of our imagination, redrawing its borders rather than transgressing its boundaries. These works thus demystify the imagination of genocide, asking us less to imagine, than to *re-imagine*.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the influence of the Holocaust on the representation of genocide goes far deeper, and is a much more complex process, than superficial, explicit uses of the 'Holocaust lens'. Ultimately, the western imagination of the

¹²⁵ Alfredo Jaar, *Let There Be Light: The Rwanda Project 1994-1999* (Barcelona: Actar, 1999), n.p. Another installation consisted of black boxes in the middle of the exhibition hall which contained photographs, but were unopenable by the visitors. Instead, descriptions of the photographs – all aftermaths of atrocity – were written on the box, inviting visitors to imagine.

¹²⁶ Montgomery, 'What Kind of Memory?', 83.

Holocaust has come to determine the recognition of genocide, and – this is the closest my opinion gets to MacDonald’s – the effects can still be quite distorting, as representations streamline their content to fit the notion of ‘genocide’, derived from the (equally distortive) Holocaust imaginary, which demonises the perpetrators whilst valorising the victims (but only as one-dimensional subjects), and focuses on the atrocities and their outcomes, less the causes and process.

‘In the end, though’, Peter Fritzsche perceptively points out, ‘genocide is not the sum of many atrocities.’ Instead, ‘it rests on substantial intellectual work to revisualize the population, to dramatize national history as both something mortally imperilled and potentially transformed ... and to overrule patterns of neighbourliness.’¹²⁷ What the genocidal imaginary seems least able (and willing) to imagine is the perspective of the perpetrators, which also seems precisely what would be most helpful if the commitment to ‘Never Again’ is a serious one. But as Berel Lang argues, discussing his concept of an ‘ethical imagination’,

if we do not, perhaps cannot, learn from history, we may yet learn something still more important – to place ourselves *in* history, to *imagine* historically, with the prospect that this will affect the way that we imagine and understand and then judge the present.¹²⁸

In this respect, the last few representations I discussed are important. Rather than asking us to imagine ourselves *as* the perpetrators – perhaps this would transgress a boundary of the imagination – Drakulić, Straus and Lyons, especially, emphasise the very ordinary motives of people in turbulent situations, such as greed, peer pressure, or fear, which we have all presumably felt, whilst retaining the recognisability of genocide. In this way, they may be more effective at encouraging us to place ourselves in history, and imagine historically: the imaginative leap they require is not as great, and it begins to reduce the imagined gulf between genocide perpetrators and ourselves.¹²⁹ It is, of course, far easier to identify with the victims, but perhaps more important that we can begin to imagine the imagination of the perpetrators.

¹²⁷ Fritzsche, ‘Genocide and Global Discourse’, 105.

¹²⁸ Lang, *Act and Idea*, 64.

¹²⁹ As Brink notes, when Germans were first shown photographs of the concentration camps in 1945, it was too much to cope with: the images invited compassion for the victims, were taken with the accusatory gaze of the Allies, and they found themselves amongst the culprits. ‘Their stereotypical answer was: We do not recognise ourselves in those pictures.’ ‘Secular Icons’, 147. Those representations which directly accuse ‘the west’ or ‘western governments’ for not intervening in more recent genocides follow a similar pattern: it displaces responsibility onto those governments, rather than individuals.

Chapter 2

Explaining Genocide:

Representations of the Origins and Perpetrators of Genocide

‘Atrocity cannot be its own explanation. Violence cannot be allowed
to speak for itself, for violence is not its own meaning.
To be made thinkable, it needs to be *historicized*.’
– Mahmood Mamdani¹

Introduction

At least since the 1970s, the victims’ experiences and perspectives have predominated in representations of the Holocaust² – beginning with the more widespread publication of survivor testimonies and the recording of oral testimony, but soon accompanied by emotive explorations of the victims’ fates in documentaries, feature films, and literature, and, a little later, in museums and memorials.³ This focus on the victims’ experiences – the death of many and the struggles of those who survived – fulfils a vital ethical function, as well as helping to create sympathy amongst western audiences and, thus, to mark genocide as a matter of concern for the international community. I would also argue, however, that a *complementary* exploration of the motives of genocide perpetrators and collaborators, and a more informed understanding of the multiplicity of factors leading to genocide, is needed to fulfil the different but no less important function of demystifying and demythologising the origins of such violence – in order to clarify how the societal structures which enable genocide, if not the specific conditions and conjunctures, are in fact common to human society across the globe.

However, as briefly discussed in the last chapter, most representations of the origins and perpetrators of genocides are rather crude and one-dimensional – as has often been the case with representations of the Holocaust – and therefore hardly better the

¹ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 228-9 (original italics).

² Historiography excluded, but see my discussion in the Introduction, n.69.

³ I would suggest that in memorialisation the turn to the victim, particularly the individual victim, occurred more concretely in the 1990s, with the affective architecture of Libeskind, Eisenman and Freed (see chapter 5), and the inclusion of individual stories and personal objects such as family photographs, spectacles and shoes in museum exhibits. The innovations of the 1970s and 80s revolved more around a questioning of the possibility or process of memorialisation itself – as James E. Young’s discussion of ‘countermonuments’ reveals (Young, *At Memory’s Edge*, especially chapters 4 and 5) – although the work of Libeskind, Eisenman and Freed is more of a continuance or inflection of the conceptual architecture of the countermonument, than a break with it.

‘explanations’ offered by the news media at the time. Although in the past couple of decades a few Holocaust films and works of literature have begun (more or less successfully) to explore the worldview and motivations of the perpetrators in more depth – notably Jonathan Littell’s *The Kindly Ones* (2010) and Martin Amis’ *Time’s Arrow* (1992), and the feature films *Der Untergang* (*Downfall*, 2004), *Good* (2008), *Conspiracy* (2001), *Amen* (2002) and *The Reader* (2008) – few mainstream representations of other genocides have followed suit.⁴ This chapter expands and develops the framework laid out in chapter 1 to argue that mainstream genocide representations, following Holocaust representations, usually portray the origins and perpetration of genocide with what I will describe as ‘closed narratives’, which focus almost exclusively on (deviant) perpetrators and (extreme) domestic factors at the expense of the international contexts and broader social movements which contribute to the causal chain of any genocide. By literally embodying agency and responsibility in the genocidal leadership and ‘foot soldiers’, and by leaning on reductive interpretations of domestic politics, society, and culture, these representations distance genocide from ‘normal’ society, and cannot show that it is the ordinary structures of human society, in extraordinary combinations, which produce genocide.

There is by now a considerable body of empirical literature on the origins of the Final Solution, as well as a growing literature on other genocides – although for many years the latter tended merely to apply the methodologies and categories of analysis from Holocaust research, rather than adapting and developing these approaches to suit other contexts.⁵ Within Holocaust studies, recent research has aimed at synthesising and moving beyond the earlier split in the historiography between those who stressed the role of antisemitism and ideology, and those who placed more emphasis upon the role of modern bureaucratic structures, the radicalising impact of developments on the eastern front, and other, more structural factors underpinning the Final Solution.⁶ As well as a new depth of knowledge about how interactions between centre and periphery drove the process of radicalisation, the extent of collaboration in Axis and occupied Europe, expropriation and expulsion, and the responses of German society to

⁴ There are, of course, exceptions, which will be discussed later.

⁵ As is argued in, for example, the essays by Weiss-Wendt, Moshman, and Bloxham and Göçek in *Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Stone, 42-70, 71-92, and 344-72 respectively.

⁶ For incisive overviews, see Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), especially 68-72; A. Dirk Moses, ‘Structure and Agency in the Holocaust: Daniel J. Goldhagen and his Critics’, *H&T* 37:2 (1998), 194-219; Christopher R. Browning, ‘The Decision-Making Process’ in *Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Stone, 173-76.

Nazism, another important research strand is beginning to take Nazi paranoia and fantasy seriously as a driving force in the elimination of European Jewry.⁷ Alongside this, the field of *Täterforschung* (perpetrator research), which was virtually non-existent until a couple of decades ago, has shown that the perpetrators, far from being extremist antisemites or pathological sadists, were, rather, ordinary people in unusual situations.⁸ These more situationist accounts move on from the medical/psychological models (which often characterise popular understandings of perpetrators – hence, in part, the popularity of Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners*) by contextualising these ‘unusual situations’ historically, and by differentiating the rather monolithic and static category of ‘perpetrator’ with examples of the varied, and variable, responses and motives of different perpetrators in different locations and social situations.⁹

Indeed, the nascent literature on perpetrators emerging from the field of genocide studies only confirms that the situational factor is always key. As Bloxham stresses,

A problem confronting any student of genocide is that the incontrovertible evidence of mass participation in many instances of mass murder across time, space, and culture lends itself to the conclusion that a killing potential actually resides within many, perhaps most humans. Arguments based on specific national or cultural histories as a way of explaining genocide – be these sophisticated discussions of the particular nature of German antisemitism, of the German ‘special path’ of historical development, or cruder, quasi-racist ‘explanations’ for genocide in Rwanda or Yugoslavia based respectively on stereotypes of brutal African tribal conflict or age-old Balkan enmities – are intrinsically limited because, while they may in some instances explain why a particular group was targeted, they do not necessarily explain why the explosion occurred when and how it did.¹⁰

⁷ See Stone, *Histories*, especially chapter 6; Alon Confino, ‘A World Without Jews’; Confino, ‘Fantasies about the Jews: Cultural Reflections on the Holocaust’, *History and Memory* 17:1 (2005), 296-322.

⁸ See especially (and for further references) Stone’s overview in *Histories*, 95-111.

⁹ Michael Mann makes this point very clearly in his ‘Were the Perpetrators of Genocide “Ordinary Men” or “Real Nazis”? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies’, *HGS* 14:3 (2000), 331-66.

¹⁰ Bloxham, ‘The Organisation of Genocide: Perpetration in Comparative Perspective’ in *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian W. Szejnmann (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 185-200: 186-7. The overall genocide studies literature on perpetrators is patchy, although stronger on Rwanda: see especially Scott Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 2006); Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*; and Charles Mironko, ‘*Igitero*: means and motive in the Rwandan genocide’, *JGR* 6:1 (2004), 47-60. Otherwise notable are Alexander Hinton’s anthropological perspective in his *Why Did They Kill? Cambodia In the Shadow of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Janine Natalya Clark’s engagement with Ervin Staub’s concept of a ‘continuum of destruction’ in ‘Genocide, War Crimes and the Conflict in Bosnia: Understanding the Perpetrators’, *JGR* 11:4 (2009), 421-45. See Donald Bloxham, ‘Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participation, and Motivation in Comparative Perspective’, *HGS* 22:2 (2008), 203-45 for an impressive structural perspective.

At present, then, most representations which offer any explanation for genocide tend to opt for simplistic, monocausal explanations of the type described by Bloxham, and avoid engaging with the motivations of those who participated. This mystification perpetuates an inability – and unwillingness – to understand genocide, and also to identify it as it happens. Equally, without an understanding of the situational factors which led people to participate in genocide, the unabashed portrayal of perpetrators as ‘evil’ *and* statements that ‘we are all capable of it’ are both likely to provoke the common horrified reaction of ‘But I could never do that!’ from their audiences.

In the secondary literature on Holocaust and genocide representations there is, as of yet, little extended discussion of the portrayal of perpetrators, presumably in part because the representations themselves tend not to be particularly sophisticated or interesting, and also because concentrating on the victims is both more rewarding and also more in tune with the scholarly community’s commitment to the oppressed and traduced over the past few decades. Aside from a few articles provoked by a particular film or artwork which deals with perpetration in greater depth (such as those mentioned above),¹¹ most merely note the persistence of stereotypes and the demonisation of perpetrators, and move on without really considering the *effects* of such portrayals.¹² It is also worth observing here that few representations, and few secondary analyses, deal with the issue of female perpetrators (*The Reader* being the exception here).¹³ On the other hand, representations (and especially films) are most frequently criticised by scholars for their distortion – or indeed outright occlusion – of the broader origins and causes of genocide, often much to the chagrin of academics working within the fields of film, literature, or museum studies, who feel that such

¹¹ See e.g. the special issue ‘Der Untergang? Nazis, Culture, and Cinema’, *New German Critique* 34:3 (2007), 1-126, and Jonathan Dunnage, ed., ‘Perpetrator Memory and Memories about Perpetrators’, *Memory Studies* 3:2 (2010), 91-177; Christine Haase, ‘Ready for his Close Up? Representing Hitler in *Der Untergang* (Downfall, 2004)’, *Studies in European Cinema* 3:3 (2006), 189-99; Barry Langford, ‘The Dramatic Portrayal of Perpetrators in Holocaust Film’, paper presented at the conference ‘Täterforschung im Globalen Kontext’, Berlin, 29 January 2009. On *The Kindly Ones*, see Susan Rubin Suleiman, ‘When the Perpetrator Becomes a Reliable Witness of the Holocaust: On Jonathan Littell’s *Les bienveillantes*’, *New German Critique* 36:1 (2009), 1-19.

¹² The exceptions here are Montgomery, ‘What Kind of Memory?’, and, in the context of Armenian-Turkish relations, Daldal, ‘*Ararat*’, 407-34.

¹³ An excellent overview is Susannah Heschel, ‘Does Atrocity Have a Gender? Feminist Interpretations of Women in the SS’ in *Lessons and Legacies, Vol. VI: New Currents in Holocaust Research*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendorf (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004), 300-321; see also Christina Herkommer, ‘Women under National Socialism: Women’s Scope for Action and the Issue of Gender’ and Imtraud Heike, ‘Female Concentration Camp Guards as Perpetrators: Three Case Studies’, both in *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*, eds. Jensen and Szejnmann, 99-119 and 120-42. On *The Reader*, see (e.g.) Joseph Metz, ‘“Truth Is a Woman”: Post-Holocaust Narrative, Postmodernism, and the Gender of Fascism in Bernhard Schlink’s *Der Vorleser*’, *German Quarterly* 77:2 (2004), 300-23.

criticisms are missing the point. Accordingly, the first section of this chapter engages with these theoretical debates between historians and scholars from other disciplines over 'how to' present history in the public sphere, and uses some of the aforementioned more sophisticated Holocaust films and literature to argue that while one cannot and should not expect the same level of historical information and analysis as in a scholarly monograph, each medium nevertheless has the potential to give powerful understanding about past events and historical actors' motivations, as well as its own limitations in this respect. However, I argue, this potential is rarely exploited by representations of genocide; the following section thus discusses the inclusions and omissions in the representation of each case in turn. Since, as with mainstream Holocaust representations, genocide and genocide perpetrators are systematically distanced from 'normality' and, following the 'genocide script', genocide becomes an abstract phenomenon with a single set of causes, audiences are unlikely to gain much of a 'sense' of history beyond the brutality and fear, and neither will it lead to much critical reflection upon the human capacity to become willingly involved in genocide, or the possibility that genocide might occur in 'normal', 'western' societies.

Interdisciplinary debates

For historians, questions of causation and responsibility are paramount, and inaccurate or distorted renderings of history are usually both irritating and something of a repudiation or rejection of collective historical endeavour. Such representations are very easy to pick apart and condemn from a purely empirical standpoint – as often happens. Scholars working in film, literature, or museum studies (less so photography), as well as others straddling history and the creative arts, have reacted against what they see as other mediums of representation being held to historiographical standards – or, as Robert A. Rosenstone put it in the context of film studies, the expectation of 'a book on a screen', 'which includes the unspoken assumption that a film should somehow convey the same data that would be delivered on a printed page.'¹⁴ Instead, most argue, each medium – historiography included – has its own techniques and strengths for communicating different aspects of the past, and should be taken on its own terms. However, publications from both sides tend to take on the form of a defence, or championing, of one's own discipline to the detriment of

¹⁴ Robert A. Rosenstone, *Revisioning History: Film and the Construction of a New Past* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3.

the other, usually with only a basic or assumed knowledge of how the other operates;¹⁵ much of this debate, then, is not truly interdisciplinary, because the publications are so rarely in dialogue with each other. Arguably, the crucial issues here are: what meaning about the past does a given film, novel, exhibition or set of photographs convey, and what meaning will this have for the audience? Might it confirm their prior knowledge of and assumptions about an event – or what sort of reassessment might it provoke?

These debates have been most vigorous around the question of ‘history on film/film on history’ – the power and popularity of film perhaps means that more is at stake – but are also emblematic of the issues and debates argued in the context of other mediums. While historians and other critics worry about film’s selection and compression of time and events, the use of melodrama to narrate history, and the illusory patina of ‘authenticity’ adopted by some realist films (this list could be longer), the main defence – and selling point – of film is its ability to communicate powerfully aspects of the past other than merely a narrative of cause and effect. As Rosenstone argues,

film must be taken on its own terms as a portrait of the past that has less to do with fact than with intensity and insight, perception and feeling, with showing how events affect individual lives, past and present. To express the meaning of the past, film creates proximate, appropriate characters, situations, images and metaphors. Success in this endeavour has little to do with how the screen conveys data and everything to do with how well films create and interpret a meaningful and useful history, how accurately they embody its ongoing issues and insert themselves into the ideas and debates surrounding a historical topic.¹⁶

Indeed, film can superbly represent the visual styles and textures of the past, values almost impossible to convey in written words¹⁷ – and, as Natalie Zemon Davis argues, film is particularly effective in using microhistorical approaches to ‘reveal social processes and social codes in a given time and place, sources and forms of alliance and conflict, and the tension between the traditional and the new’ (one thinks of Michael Haneke’s *The White Ribbon* (2009)), or biographical approaches to suggest ‘how and

¹⁵ While historians have written scathing reviews of certain films or museums (see, e.g., Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, ‘Exhibiting Racism: Cultural Imperialism, Genocide and Representation’, *Rethinking History* 2:3 (1998), 349-58), few denigrate filmmakers or curators as a whole, whereas one quite often finds rather contemptuously-written attacks by other scholars – often incongruous to the quality of the rest of the piece – upon the discipline of history *in toto*, which triumphantly point out that history cannot transparently show the past ‘as it really was’, but is a subjective narration and interpretation of the evidence by historians (and are therefore working from notions of history-writing that historians no longer have). See, for example, Iordanova, *The Cinema of Flames*, 89, or Gaynor Kavanagh, ed., *Making Histories in Museums* (London: Leicester University Press, 1996), 4.

¹⁶ Rosenstone, *Revisioning History*, 7.

¹⁷ David Herlihy, ‘Am I a Camera? Other Reflections on Films and History’, *American Historical Review* 93:5 (1988), 1186-92: 1190.

why political decisions are made in different historical regimes’, or speculate on ‘how the past was experienced and acted out, how large forces and major events were lived through locally and in detail.’¹⁸ As Judith Keilbach notes, ‘a fascination with the human subject is what gives film its capacity to make historical experience accessible.’¹⁹ Arguably, it is film’s ability to engage (and manipulate) its viewers’ emotions which gives it its greatest potential to convey meaning about the past, not by didactically imparting knowledge and interpretation (although they often do), but by encouraging audiences to ‘feel’ or ‘experience’ aspects of the past, and thereby to intuit knowledge and understanding for themselves.

Both Anton Kaes and Rudy Koshar use Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s *Hitler – ein Film aus Deutschland* (*Our Hitler – A Film from Germany*, 1977) to argue that film has the ability to portray the ‘structures of feeling’ underlying Nazism within German society, thereby going some way to explaining what ‘nurtured Nazism, gave it its popular resonance, and ensured its mass support until very late in World War II.’²⁰ For Kaes,

It is the filmmaker (as visual artist) who can transcend the “rules of knowledge,” that is, the documentary evidence, the facts and figures which the Nazis tried to conceal and to destroy. It is the filmmaker who can shed light on the social imagination, perverse as it may be, that underlies the unspeakable deeds. It is the filmmaker who can translate the fears and feelings, the hopes and delusions and suffering of the victims, all unrecorded and undocumented, into pre-verbal images and thereby trigger memories, associations, and emotions that precede the kind of rational reasoning and logical-linear discourse needed in historiographical writing.²¹

Koshar in particular argues that *Our Hitler*, and perhaps filmic history in general, ‘is much less able to give useful answers about specific problems such as the composition of Nazi party support or policy steps that led to mass extermination than it is able to give a rather distant visual representation to such things as the “structure of feeling” in which Nazism developed and to which it gave political shape’. By pinpointing the ‘centrality of a desire for myth’, and itself seemingly being invested with ‘something of the longing, the ingredients of the structure of feeling, that produced Nazism in the

¹⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Slaves on Screen: Film and Historical Vision* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 6-7.

¹⁹ Judith Keilbach, ‘National Socialism as Docudrama: On Programmed Ambivalence in Heinrich Breloer’s *Speer and Hitler*’, *New German Critique* 34:3 (2007), 61-74: 62.

²⁰ Rudy Koshar, ‘*Hitler: A Film from Germany*: Cinema, History, and Structures of Feeling’ in *Revisioning History*, ed. Rosenstone, 172.

²¹ Anton Kaes, ‘Holocaust and the End of History: Postmodern Historiography in Cinema’ in *Probing the Limits*, ed. Friedländer, 206-22: 208.

first place', *Our Hitler* goes some way to explaining the way in which the Nazi party 'mobilised support, seized power, and maintained its brutal dictatorship.'²²

Our Hitler is, though, something of a singular film; the ability of film to evoke the past seems to hinge more often on a biographical approach, which allows audiences to witness (and perhaps identify with) a character's dilemmas and choices as they negotiate the historical events unfolding around them. This permits both the accessibility Keilbach mentions and the potential for a detailed portrayal of the historical events. Perhaps the more successful films in this regard are those which have dealt with the issue of individual support for, or collaboration with, the Nazi regime – the most famous example, of course, is *Schindler's List*, although our attention here is directed more towards the moral transformation of Oskar Schindler than the ambiguity of his profiteering involvement with the Nazis in the first place. *Downfall*, through the figure of Traudl Junge, goes some way to suggesting the 'presence' Hitler had for ordinary Germans, as well as the ease with which they could become wrapped up in, and complicit with, the regime, as well as the unerring support he maintained amongst Nazis until the end. Two films which complicate the seemingly stark moral choices for their audiences more effectively, however, are *Amen* and *Good*: both show ordinary main protagonists who, more through circumstance and acquiescence than choice, become caught up in the web of Nazism, and then struggle to disentangle their own beliefs, and consciences, from the Party's grip. Moreover, as the main protagonists, the audiences are invited to identify with them – which, in the case of *Good*, becomes increasingly difficult for the audience as John's involvement in Party activities become less and less 'honorary', culminating on Kristallnacht as he dons his SS uniform and slowly turns to see himself in the mirror, our archetypal vision of a 'Nazi'. Playing with audience identification in this way can be an effective means of conveying 'how people are drawn into events and changed by them',²³ and how the political and social situation restricts the choices individuals can make – whilst stressing that they do still have choices: *Amen*, artistically the better film, explores Kurt Gerstein's efforts to persuade the Vatican to speak out against the Final Solution, after realising the use to which his expertise in chemical disinfectants was being put in the camps. Such films

²² Koshar, '*Hitler*', 158, 172, 157.

²³ Michalski and Gow, *War, Image and Legitimacy*, 36.

thus work directly against the usual recoil of ‘I could never be involved in/do that’ by showing precisely how it was possible.²⁴

Neither of these characters are well-known high-ranking Nazis, though, which avoids audience preconceptions of their characters – and *Downfall* also makes apparent how difficult narrative film finds it to explain the interior motivations of human actors: it ‘cannot easily explore beneath surfaces and illuminate the desires or motives that drive behaviour ... Interior motivation is opaque to the viewer.’²⁵ For all its presentation of Hitler not as a ‘one-sided ranter, a monodimensional monster, but as a complex, multifacteted human being... like you or me’, as David Bathrick argues, *Downfall* still gets no closer to allowing us to *understand* Hitler, or give any insight into the history for which this character is supposedly singlehandedly responsible²⁶ – perhaps why Zemon Davis restricts her vocabulary to film being able to ‘suggest’ or ‘speculate on’ historical individuals’ decisions and experiences. As Barry Langford has pointed out, the problem is that film’s externalised portrayals ‘cannot incorporate the processes of progressive brutalisation, ideological conditioning, group thinking, and the evacuation and inversion of moral and ethical categories under totalitarianism, that combined with innate individual propensities to sadism and violence to produce perpetrators.’²⁷

This does raise the question ‘of why so much hope is pinned on insight into the private worlds of Hitler, Himmler and Co.’, as Keilbach puts it, and she also notes the differences between the narration of past events by history books and by films, where ‘events and protagonists become linked, whereby the protagonists are seen (following the conventions of Hollywood cinema) either as active subjects who set history in motion or, alternatively, as purely reactive beings who “suffer” the events of history passively.’²⁸ As this suggests, narrative film finds it much more difficult to portray how the deep structures and contexts within which the protagonists operate also

²⁴ The scenario of *Good* is very similar to that of the Dorf family in the NBC *Holocaust* miniseries (1979), although the identification here is squarely with the German-Jewish Weiss family, as Andreas Huyssen notes (Huyssen, ‘The Politics of Identification: “Holocaust” and West German Drama’, *New German Critique* 19 (1980), 117-36; see chapter 5 for a further discussion of identification).

²⁵ Herlihy, ‘Am I a Camera?’, 1188-90.

²⁶ Bathrick, ‘Whose Hi/story Is It?’, 8-10. Although Ganz’s performance is well researched and affective, he continues, ‘[I]t is authentic only in the sense of a verifiable representation of statements and behavioural patterns; furnishing no insight into what makes Hitler tick, it denies us any insight into the history for which this character is alleged to have been fundamentally responsible’ (9). I am reminded of Eyal Sivan’s film *The Specialist: Portrait of a Modern Criminal* (1999); the edited trial footage affords us plenty of opportunity to study Eichmann, but his inner thoughts and character remain elusive.

²⁷ Barry Langford, ‘Dramatic Portrayal of Perpetrators’.

²⁸ Keilbach, ‘National Socialism as Docudrama’, 62.

contribute towards events: economic downturn, perhaps, or memories of earlier wars or ‘wrongs’, how generations are shaped, the machinations of bureaucracies, and other slower developments in a society which are harder to fit into a quick-moving plot.²⁹ *Night and Fog* is perhaps the only film which truly lays bare the continuities between *l’univers concentrationnaire* and ‘normal’ society, between the executioners and ourselves – ‘Are their faces really so different from our own?’, the narrator asks – warning against naively believing that ‘we were cured once and for all of the scourge of the camps.’³⁰ Film, then, has the potential to use particular techniques or individual characters to explore the constraints and impulses or drives of a particular period, and the ways in which this might relate to our own time and society; but it often struggles to integrate the agency of historical actors with the broader webs of causation, implying instead that the protagonists are those responsible for the shape of history.

What is common to the diverse testimonies, novels and other works of non-fiction I discuss is that they are not bound by the same conventions of historical writing as historians – although they cannot really avoid the question of fidelity to the historical truth – and that they tend to pursue goals that are not only epistemological but also aesthetic and, often, moralistic.³¹ Such literature can depict or imagine experiences and events for which no historical evidence remains, and can powerfully capture the past in all its experiential fullness – especially through vivid description,³² and by detailing the experiences of one or a few individuals. This approach – which, obviously, underpins survivor testimony and perpetrator biographies, but is also used in some fiction – does of course largely limit the scope of experience and vision to that of the protagonist, although it is nevertheless still possible to incorporate plenty of information about the ‘bigger picture’ of political decisions, social attitudes or national histories – and probably more easily than in film. Littell’s well-researched *The Kindly Ones* certainly manages this, by having the narrator – a (fictional) former SS officer,

²⁹ See Herlihy, ‘Am I a Camera?’, 1190-1.

³⁰ See, e.g. Andrew Hebard, ‘Disruptive Histories: Towards a Radical Politics of Remembrance in Alain Resnais’ *Night and Fog*’, *New German Critique* 71 (1997), 87-113. As Michael Roth argues, the authors of the film ‘aim not to make a memorial to the dead but rather a “warning signal”’: ‘*Hiroshima Mon Amour*: You Must Remember This’ in *Revisioning History*, ed. Rosenstone, 91-101: 92.

³¹ Ann Rigney, ‘All this happened, more or less: What a novelist made of the bombing of Dresden’, *H&T* 48:2 (2009), 5-24: 6, and *passim* for a cogent discussion of the differences between historiography and fictional literature.

³² Which was, of course, one of the criticisms of Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* – that it was full of nauseating descriptions of brutality. See Karyn Ball’s comparison of Goldhagen’s description of the burning of Jews in the Bialystok synagogue with Browning’s analysis of the same incident: ‘Disciplining Traumatic History: Goldhagen’s Impropriety’, *Cultural Critique* 46 (2000), 124-52: 127-30, and Moses’ comments in ‘Structure and Agency’, 211-2.

Max Aue – posted around the various European war fronts in a less likely but nevertheless very informative manner, although this, coupled with Littell’s ‘thick description’, does undoubtedly add to the book’s length.³³ That said, while many survivor testimonies supply a brief timeline or historical summary as a foreword, they are of course the subjective accounts of violence done *to* a person, and so rarely (and cannot be expected to) include contextualised historical explanations – since this was not strictly their experience, or indeed their motivation for writing. Likewise, they cannot be expected to account for the perpetrators’ actions, especially since this asks them to place themselves in the shoes of the very people who terrorised them – although their descriptions of the perpetrators, of course, will generally create a strong impression in readers’ minds.³⁴ This, and the very personal scope of the narration, does often mean that readers come away with little idea of the origins of the genocide and how it might relate to human society as a whole.³⁵

Perpetrator memoirs or testimonies are, of course, harder to come by,³⁶ unless one looks to trial testimony or the occasional documentary project, such as Lanzmann’s *Shoah* and Luke Holland’s *Final Account* project, or Rob Lemkin and Thet Sambath’s documentary about Cambodia, *Enemies of the People* (2010), and Hatzfeld’s *A Time for Machetes*. Novelists can nevertheless write from the perspective of the perpetrator, or a collaborator, and imagine, and verbalise, the inner drives of *génocidaires* in a way that film finds awkward. Again, however, this bumps up against the issues of reader familiarity and what understanding of these perpetrators readers could or might leave with. Discussing William Styron’s portrayal of Hoess in *Sophie’s Choice* (1979), Lawrence Langer wonders, ‘Is it a revelation that Hoess suffers from migraines; or is exasperated by bureaucratic influence from Berlin; or that he is beholden to former

³³ One ought also here to note the impressionistic difference between scenes of violence narrated by survivors, and those by, say, Littell’s protagonist Max Aue. While victims’ descriptions of harrowing brutality impress upon us their horror and suffering, reading from the perpetrator’s point of view seems to cause a slightly different unease or discomfort – or so one could suggest, given the various assessments of Littell’s writing as ‘pornographic’ or ‘sensationalist’. For an analysis, see Suleiman, ‘On Jonathan Littell’s *Les bienveillantes*’.

³⁴ As, of course, might any representation – consider the impact of Hilberg’s characterisation in *The Destruction of European Jewry* (1961).

³⁵ Some have, of course, nevertheless offered very sensitive and subtle insights into the nature of perpetrators and the implications of genocide for society – one might cite Levi, Antelme, Rousset, but also Haing Ngor, and some of Jean Hatzfeld’s respondents. In general, it might seem that victims can be particularly well-placed to comment almost anthropologically on some of the social and cultural mechanisms and manifestations of the violence they experienced, particularly if victims and perpetrators are from the same society – but are of course less well-placed to explain the higher political machinations and international context.

³⁶ Suleiman lists some in ‘On Jonathan Littell’s *Les bienveillantes*’, 1-2.

Prussian mannerisms; or admires his Arabian stallion's spontaneity?', and judges that 'In attempting to imagine Hoess as someone other than a creature of melodrama, a monster of iniquity, Styron has created an unremarkable figure almost totally dissociated from the deeds that led to his execution after the war.'³⁷ Langer's analysis exposes the possibility that the evocation of everyday details and mannerisms might detract our attention from the full gravity of the perpetrators' actions, or impart psychological explanations; but then again, it also humanises them, and, indeed, drawing the seeming 'contradiction' between the home and work lives of a mass murderer to the reader's attention might also impart a certain historical understanding. As I noted in regard to *Downfall*, perhaps it is more difficult to portray the inner consciousness of well-known Nazis because the reader's prejudgement of the protagonist is inescapable; in this respect, Littell's creation of Max Aue as a composite character, one lower in the Nazi hierarchy but who unmistakably ticks all the boxes for 'war criminal', encourages the reader to understand and judge the actions of a perpetrator on their own terms.

The biographies of political (and other) leaders aimed at a popular audience bring some of these issues of the inclusion or occlusion of context into sharp focus.³⁸ At worst, these works tend to be a mixture of fact and suggestion, relying on 'pop-psychology' and simple, decontextualised explanations to account for their subjects' roles in conceiving and committing genocide. As well as failing to explain why so many lower-level perpetrators and collaborators willingly participated, and the wider social tensions and non-political causes, however, they also give the impression that human agency (specifically that of leaders) drives history: causation and responsibility is embodied, metaphorically or literally, in the figures of leaders now in the dock. Others, though, include a more careful historical contextualisation and question precisely such clichéd and simplistic representations. They are closer to the other popular nonfiction accounts of genocide which offer broader overviews – Becker's

³⁷ Lawrence Langer, *Admitting the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 80.

³⁸ E.g. Philip Short, *Pol Pot: The History of a Nightmare* (London: John Murray, 2004); Stephen Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills: Rwanda's Rebirth and the Man Who Dreamed It* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2008); Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, *Milosevic: Portrait of a Tyrant* (New York: Free Press, 1999); Adam LeBor, *Milosevic: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002); Vidoslav Stevanovic, *Milosevic: The People's Tyrant*, trans. Zlata Filipovic (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004); Christopher S. Stewart, *Hunting the Tiger: The Fast Life and Violent Death of the Balkans' Most Dangerous Man* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2008). Nick Hawton's *Europe's Most Wanted Man: The Quest for Radovan Karadžić* (London: Arrow, 2010) is an exception, combining engaging anecdotes with thoughtful and quiet analysis, without pretensions or the usual demonising.

When the War was Over (1986), for example, or Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* (1999)³⁹ – which generally avoid this concentrated focus on perpetrators and leaders, combining historical narration (not always chronological) with personal reflections and illustrative vignettes (in the form of conversations with survivors or descriptions of sites they visited, for example). These accounts aim to simplify the events in order to explain them to a mass audience, and also translate them into meanings and morals, but this of course does not *de facto* prevent them from giving a fair historical overview with non-sensationalist explanations for the perpetrators' involvement. Literary responses to genocide thus have great flexibility in their presentation of history, even within their genres, and while they may be able to include historical detail and explanation with more ease than films, they nevertheless confront some of the same difficulties.

Surprisingly, little interdisciplinary work has been done on the basic question of the techniques through which museums present history to the public, despite the growth of museum studies over the past three decades into a vigorous and often theoretically-inclined discipline⁴⁰ – although there are plenty of negative assessments from historians which complain of a lack of depth and complexity in historical exhibitions, their (mis)selection of material and simplistic or troubling interpretations of the past, and their tendency (perhaps less frequent now) towards the conservative narration of history as national identity. In a sense, museum curators have the most flexibility to represent historical events through whichever medium they find best communicates different aspects of the past, whether panels of text, still or moving images, sound, objects, or architecture – and may be all the more effective for this flexibility. Like

³⁹ Becker, *When the War Was Over* (New York: Public Affairs, 1998 [1986]); Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda* (London: Picador, 2000 [1999]).

⁴⁰ This is perhaps because at the time of its growth, those working within museum studies were primarily responding to the issues of power, voice and identity which dominated cultural studies as a whole at the time, and thus concentrated particularly on ethnographic museums, overlooked or subaltern histories, cultural identity, and the subjectivity and agency of visitors. Gaynor Kavanagh has written or edited several books about history museums (see especially her edited books *Making Histories in Museums*; *Making City Histories in Museums*, with Elizabeth Frostick (London: Leicester University Press, 1998); *History Curatorship* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990); and her own *Dream Spaces: Memory and the Museum* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000)), but they are less theoretically-inclined, superficial, and (on the interdisciplinary note) pander to the usual stereotypes about historians' dry writing and notion that they have the definitive word on history. In terms of relevance to this thesis, and chapter, Macdonald has written insightfully of the presentation of 'difficult heritage' and how the legacies of Nazism are communicated to the public at Nuremberg in her *Difficult Heritage*, while Richard Sandell has considered how museums (including Amsterdam's Anne Frank House) can present histories of prejudice in order to combat it, in his *Museums, Prejudice, and the Reframing of Difference* (London: Routledge, 2007).

literature, museums are also perhaps able to shift more easily between the general narrative and more detailed explanations than films – precisely because they can combine different mediums. It is also worth noting that the museum is, explicitly, a ‘space for learning’ in which visitors expect a certain level of didacticism – perhaps even more so in exhibitions dealing with this subject matter. As such, curators of genocide exhibitions may feel freer to spend time attempting to answer the questions of ‘why’ and ‘how’ in more depth; exhibitions are in that sense closer to a ‘book on a wall’, although one should also note that part of museums’ function is to ‘make sense’ of the material they present for the public – to offer clearer and simpler explanations for events and also to point to the more general and present-day ramifications for society – and in this way they do function differently from historians’ texts.

Although its chronological narration can imply a logic of inevitability, the museum’s flexibility does allow for a more comprehensive exploration of causation and perpetration, and has been used quite effectively by some museums to convey the interactions between human agents and overarching structures. One thinks, for example, of the IWM’s Holocaust Exhibition, which carefully includes sections on the eugenics movement and interwar mass politics as well as the history of antisemitism, and a huge chart depicting the Nazi Party structure of command which covers the walls of one otherwise empty room (aside from a typewriter), suggesting the importance and extent of the Nazi bureaucratic machine. While the mugshots and brief biographies of the perpetrators do rather demonise and distance them, the film in the Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition tackles the issue of participation much more powerfully. Fergal Keane’s bold assertion that ‘we are all capable of it’ is backed up by the testimony of two young Hutu killers, who admit their role in the killing but explain the coercive pressures on them and ask forgiveness. The film’s thematic exploration of the broad origins and mechanisms of such violence is exceptionally effective, combining structural factors such as the world economy, scarcity of resources, and geopolitics with the impact of national and local histories, ideology, and perpetration or collaboration. Still, some of the other techniques currently used by museums to communicate meaning to visitors seem less suited to the explanation of causation and perpetration: the use of the victims’ personal objects and affective architecture (of Libeskind, Eisenman, Safdie and Freed, for example), especially, are geared towards eliciting sympathy for and emotional identification with the victims; aside from the

distance from the perpetrators that this can produce in itself, it is hard to see how the same techniques might be used to encourage understanding of the causal factors. This is partly due to the dual function of museums as both educative and memorial spaces,⁴¹ but it is worth considering whether it also establishes (or reinforces) a binary split between perpetrators and victims. As a medium, then, museums have a fair degree of flexibility to present a balanced and comprehensive narrative of the origins and perpetration of genocide, not only with text but also artefacts or audio-visual material.

Finally, there has been less extended dialogue about the use of photographs as historical sources by historians, partly because they have only been really *accepted* as such in the past few decades, but also because of the limitations of photographs as a historical source for aiding the meat-and-potatoes work of explaining cause and effect.⁴² While they have been enthusiastically taken up by those working within memory studies, trauma studies, or postcolonial or subaltern studies, for example, for their ability to help ‘enact a reckoning with history that takes the full measure of the residual effects of the past in the present’,⁴³ photographs *cannot* depict structures and organisational procedures, or the complexity of political decisions and individual choices: even in sequences, or where captions can provide some intelligibility to photographs, their level of information will always be constrained.⁴⁴ Instead, they remain momentary arrests of events and locations, aids for visualising and imagining the past but not explaining its course – particularly adept at communicating the immediacy of an event as it unfolds, or documenting the presence of individuals or the scenes of an aftermath.

That said, photographs taken by the perpetrator group can help to reconstruct their worldview, or perhaps more appropriately, their ‘gaze’; as Janina Struk has shown, the German troops’ obsession with photographing ‘types’ – not only of Eastern European Jews but also Poles and Gypsies – indicates something of the racialising, stereotyping

⁴¹ Dan Stone, ‘Memorials, Museums, and Memory’ in *Historiography of the Holocaust*, ed. Stone, 508-32: 521.

⁴² But see the journal *History of Photography*, Jennifer Tucker, ed., ‘Photography and Historical Interpretation’, special issue of *H&T* 48:4 (2009), 1-168, Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), Ulrich Baer, *Spectral Evidence: The Photography of Trauma* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, Hirsch, *Family Frames*.

⁴³ Jennifer Tucker with Tina Campt, ‘Entwined Practices: Engagements with Photography in Historical Inquiry’, *H&T* 48:4 (2009), 1-8: 3.

⁴⁴ Keilbach, ‘Photographs’, 60.

mindset which objectified and excluded ‘inferior types’, as well as perhaps a desire to ‘know’ this enemy by ‘fixing’ him in photographs.⁴⁵ Equally, one might look to the idealised images of the ‘Aryan race’ circulating, as the polar opposite to these ‘types’ in the community of inclusion/exclusion, and the scientific and eugenics images (and films) taken to underpin this binary. She is, though, careful to note that Nazi ideology itself is not necessarily implicit in photographs of executions or hangings, for example, but relies on what Ulrich Keller calls ‘poisonous captions’ to carry a prejudiced message.⁴⁶ The images of German soldiers standing by their victims, smiling, laughing, and mocking, also suggest something of how at least those men experienced their duties at the front and during deportations in Germany;⁴⁷ the evidentiary status of photographs also means that, many years later, in the 1995 ‘Crimes of the Wehrmacht’ exhibition, these same photographs were able to challenge and revise the postwar mythology widely held throughout German society, of the Wehrmacht having remained ‘clean’ throughout the war. As will be discussed, Lyons’ photographs in *Intimate Enemy* subvert the usual adulatory effects of the portrait genre – which, intentionally or not, can work to separate political leaders and higher-level perpetrators from us – to achieve the same effect: the contestation of blithe or unthinking characterisations of perpetrators. The strengths of photography, then, lie more in its documentary ability and in the way it can reveal the perpetrators’ gaze – or play with our gazes upon *them*⁴⁸ – than in explaining the origins of genocide.

Each medium, then, has its limitations, but also the potential to convey meaning and understanding to its audiences in very different but powerful ways. The majority of genocide representations I discuss, however, have shied away from using these potentials to explore in more depth the mechanisms of violence and the inner worldview of the perpetrators; rather, the explanations they offer, and their depictions of the violence and those who perpetrate it, fit into the familiar and unquestioned (and

⁴⁵ See Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, 59-61. Plenty has been written about the Nazi perpetrator’s ‘gaze’, especially its ‘contamination’ of the photographs; see Struk, and Daniel Uziel, ‘Wehrmacht Propaganda Troops and the Jews’, *Yad Vashem Studies*, XXIX (2001), 27-63.

⁴⁶ Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, 68-9.

⁴⁷ Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust*, 110; Struk, *Photographing the Holocaust*, 63-6.

⁴⁸ As Langford notes, the casting in *Conspiracy* plays with audience expectations of the characters – Stanley Tucci, of *The Devil Wears Prada* fame, ‘modifies the fussy punctiliousness [he] normally brings to his roles’ into an ‘unexpected coldness and ruthlessness that on occasion erupts into physical violence’ in his portrayal of Eichmann; Colin Firth, associated with various ‘Mr Darcy’ characters, ‘confound[s] audience expectations and reveal[s] the inverted moral universe of Nazi ideology’ when it becomes clear that his character, Stuckart, objects to the plans for the “Final Solution” on purely legal, rather than humanistic, grounds. Langford, ‘Dramatic Portrayal of Perpetrators’, 7-8.

unquestioning) frames of reference which their audiences expect. The remainder of this chapter discusses the representation of perpetrators and historical causation in each case study in turn, which best allows me to pinpoint and explain the specific emphases, inflections, and lacunae of each set of representations in a way that a thematic exploration would flatten. There are also some significant differences between the case studies themselves *and* the representations which are best explored separately. Of course, there are some genocide representations where the questions of cause and origin are less relevant – particularly those of genocide’s aftermath (discussed in chapter 4). However, even exclusive portrayals of the victims do (at least subconsciously) imply a set of perpetrators, and what needs to be kept in mind is that, in the absence of any other representation, the audience will likely ‘fall back on’ their established understandings of the causes of genocide – whether taken from contemporary news media, internet sources, other films and books, or discussions amongst friends and family, and so on. These mainstream representations thus tend to do little to challenge received ideas about the historical origins and perpetrators of genocide, and indeed may perpetuate them; others, as I will show, counter these representations most effectively with explorations of the ordinariness of genocide.

Accounting for Genocide

Despite the differences between the cases, the representation of the perpetrators and origins of genocide does solidify into a general narrative pattern. These ‘closed narratives’, as I have called them, explain genocide by magnifying domestic factors – the perpetrators themselves, their political ideologies and fanaticism, some kind of bankruptcy (or even innate barbarism) in a society – and by largely ignoring the international context, whether shifts in global power balances, regional conflict, or the less immediately visible currents of ideas in ‘modernity’ which advocate the sculpting and control of populations, ethnic homogeneity, and the suspicion of difference. In fact, as my analysis will make clear, even these ‘domestic factors’ are limited, since there is rarely much discussion of the impact of economic decline, social divisions, political legitimacy, and so on. These narratives thus close off any linkages between genocide and the rest of the globe, positing an ‘internal logic’ to genocide which has few or no ramifications for ‘normal’ society. As chapter 3 discusses further, this leaves ‘the international community’ in the position of onlookers, (potential) interveners, and

providers of a political role model which might supposedly prevent such barbarism from breaking out again⁴⁹ – but neither implicated in nor threatened by genocide.

As with the representation of the Holocaust, then, agency and causation are often embodied in the perpetrators, who are depicted in ways which mark them as archetypally ‘evil’. Guilt is nationalised or extended to the entire perpetrator group of Turks, Khmer Rouge, Hutu or Serbs – which occludes any internal differentiations or alternative affiliations within groups (such as politically moderate Hutu or Bosnian Serbs who did not identify with ‘mother Serbia’), as well as the participation or collaboration of other groups, and most obviously the sheer diversity of participants, their motives, and their levels of involvement – all of which would render the ways in which ordinary people become killers more intelligible. The depiction of perpetrators according to these cultural archetypes of ‘evil’ removes, and indeed almost precludes, the need for any deeper exploration of the perpetrators’ motivations, precisely because their role in the situation is predetermined and de facto ‘incomprehensible’. These depictions largely conform to what Caroline Picart and David Frank label the ‘classic horror frame’ in their discussion of the overlaps between Holocaust films and the horror genre, where ‘the monster is coded as thoroughly other and is ritually staked at the end to restore normal order ... the sane and irrational spheres of “self” and “other” are clearly delineated – an attempt that may obscure what the monstrous shares with the normal.’⁵⁰ In contrast, they write, are ‘conflicted horror frames’, ‘wherein these boundaries are violated, with horror residing in the realm of the “normal” ... [which] may create for the audience a sense of ambivalence about the status of the monster or may depict a more diffused sense of evil.’⁵¹ Many commercial Holocaust films (and other mediums) have followed the ‘classic horror frame’, and equally, few genocide representations challenge the dominant view and expectation that only socially deviant and inherently evil individuals could be at the root of crimes such as genocide.

This framing also, as they point out, bears striking similarity to the ideological-intentionalist interpretation of genocide. The perpetrators’ hatred serves as the primary explanation for the violence, implying intent and a ‘plan’ for genocide, alongside other

⁴⁹ See Levene, *Genocide In the Age of the Nation-State*; Martin Shaw, ‘Britain and Genocide: historical and contemporary parameters of national responsibility’, *Review of International Studies* 37:5 (2011), 2417-38.

⁵⁰ Picart and Frank, *Frames of Evil*, 4.

⁵¹ Ibid.

time-worn notions of ethnic or religious hatreds, extremist ideologies, or a cultural propensity for violence; but this cannot explain the *timing* of genocide, show how policies and personal motives change over time, or capture the dynamic whereby the responses of *all* of those in the theatre of genocide – local populations, other ethnic groups, foreign witnesses, and the victims – all have an impact upon the course of genocide (speaking of a ‘theatre of genocide’ may prove useful, since it implies that all on stage are actors). Genocide is thus perceived as an event rather than a process, and the specificities of each case are flattened out into a set of domestic ‘explanations’: national culture or ethnic or religious hatreds drive the perpetrators to commit genocide, simply because they want to. All of these distortions safeguard western society from considering its own role in fomenting genocide, and certainly from considering the possibility that genocide could (once again) be committed by the west.

Armenia

Representations of the Armenian genocide appear most driven by the need to establish, beyond any doubt, that a genocide did occur as the result of a carefully prepared and implemented plan on the part of ‘the Turks’; the Armenian Genocide Museum’s (AGMI) permanent exhibition is the clearest example of this, almost entirely populated as it is by the ‘hard evidence’ of orders and secret telegrams from Talaat and Enver, huge reproductions of Armin Wegner’s photographs of the atrocities, and the eyewitness reports of foreign diplomats and missionaries – there is less of what one might call the ‘softer’ evidence of survivors’ belongings and family photographs, and even survivor testimony.⁵² Similarly, in *Skylark Farm*, Arslan adopts the role of omniscient narrator, imagining the meeting at which Talaat issues his instructions to the Special Organisation and other complicit officials, while the Armenian community remains in blissful, disbelieving ignorance.⁵³ The designation of the perpetrators as ‘Turks’ rather than ‘Young Turks’ or ‘Ottoman Turks’ nationalises blame particularly strongly here, also emphasising an enduring guilt or responsibility through successive generations.⁵⁴ As Asli Daldal has observed of *Ararat*, ‘the negative depiction of Turks is monolithic’, and Egoyan, like most others, does not hesitate to make use of

⁵² See my forthcoming article ‘Situating Tsitsernakaberd: The Armenian Genocide Museum in a Global Context’, *International Journal of Armenian Genocide Studies* 1:1 (2013).

⁵³ Arslan, *Skylark Farm*, 73.

⁵⁴ Discussing the ‘Young Turks’ or ‘Ottoman Turkey’ might well encourage an understanding of them in their historical context, but might also suggest a break between this regime and Kemal Atatürk’s Republic, which much Turkish denialist literature also uses to exculpate the current Turkish state.

stereotypical imagery which marginalises and demonises ‘the Turk’.⁵⁵ The triumvirate of state leaders (Talaat, Enver, and Djemal) are shown as calculating and vindictive: Arslan imagines a scene where Talaat, on the eve of genocide, unceremoniously casts aside his favoured Armenian friend, to the delight of Enver,⁵⁶ while *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* shows repeated scenes of Talaat and Enver gleefully cackling at the progressive realisation of their plans before, coolly straight-faced, denying any plan or any violence against the Armenians to the numerous foreign dignitaries who visit them to protest, with photographic or eyewitness evidence.

This portrayal is consolidated by the depiction of gendarmes and local leaders as sly, deliberately obstructive, and sadistically cruel – indeed, despite their basis in eyewitness statements, the scenes of brutality and torture nevertheless seem a little *overdone* – as in *Ararat*, where young women are stripped and forced to dance whilst being doused with petrol and burnt alive, or in the film of *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh* in which young boys are raped and castrated by local commanders (a horrified German officer stutters, ‘That’s not a man up there, that’s...’ but is told, ‘Our customs are different here’).⁵⁷ There is no exploration in any film or book as to the motivations of those involved, and these scenes, in fact, correlate with the negative characterisations of ‘the Turks’ in the nineteenth and early twentieth century (and earlier),⁵⁸ having the effect of utterly distancing them from European, western society. To be sure, the occasional ‘good Turk’, or neighbour who harbours no real bad feeling, does appear – in Arslan’s *Skylark Farm*, as the young Turkish suitor of an Armenian girl, and in *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, in the figure of a local police official who warns the main protagonist Gabriel Begradian of the forthcoming ‘relocation’ of all Armenians to the Syrian desert (there are none in *Ararat* or Balakian’s *Black Dog of Fate*) – but they appear as simple-minded or naive, and their benevolence has little effect in the wake of so much destruction.⁵⁹

⁵⁵ Daldal, ‘*Ararat*’, 418, 408.

⁵⁶ Arslan, *Skylark Farm*, 74.

⁵⁷ Equally, see Arslan’s description of Turkish gendarmes massacring the family, *Skylark Farm*, 114-21. Edgar Hilsenrath, in his *The Story of the Last Thought*, trans. Hugh Young (London: Abacus, 1991), narrates equally horrendous tortures, but without the over-embellishment intended to horrify the reader; see e.g. 117-24.

⁵⁸ For a recent discussion, see Jo Laycock, *Imagining Armenia: Orientalism, Ambiguity and Intervention* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), especially chapter 2.

⁵⁹ On altruism, see Richard Hovannisian, ‘Intervention and Shades of Altruism during the Armenian Genocide’ in *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Hovannisian (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1992), 173-207, and more Fatma Müge Göçek, *The Transformation of Turkey: Redefining State and Society from the Ottoman Empire to the Modern Era* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), chapter 7.

In terms of explaining *why* the perpetrators described above acted in the way they did, though, audiences generally need to take recourse to notions of hatred against minority groups or assume that either ‘the Turks’ were themselves predisposed to or enjoyed the violence (especially given its sadistic and gratuitous nature). In a memorable scene, *Ararat*’s Edward Saroyan, director of the film-within-the-film, barely conceals his deep-felt emotion as he asks, ‘Who were these people who could hate us so much? How can they still deny their hatred – and so hate us even more?’; later, in response to the question as to why the Turks committed genocide, Raffi shrugs and replies, ‘You’d have to ask them.’ However – if not quite in the manner of Syberberg’s exposures of ‘structures of feeling’ – *Ararat*, *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, *Skylark Farm*, and Edgar Hilsenrath’s *The Story of the Last Thought* (1991), do convey the slightly jealous feeling amongst ordinary Ottoman Turks that the Armenians thought themselves superior – or *were* superior – and the greed which motivated local villagers and officials, through scenes of looting and descriptions of the sales of Armenian businesses, homes, and goods. All of this is shown without reference to the vital context of the hierarchical *millet* system, and the reforms to it which were being imposed by the European powers, the Armenians’ economic prosperity, or their long-standing adoption of European culture and political ideas, which were beginning to impinge upon and challenge the position and traditions of Ottoman Turkey.⁶⁰

Indeed, none of these representations really delve into the ideology they vilify – the Young Turk ideology of pan-Turkism, and particularly its relationship to the wider (geo)political and social shifts wracking the European continent at the time⁶¹ – and this leaves the Young Turks as a fringe movement, an extremist (not nation-building) ideology which arrived as if from nowhere. None of the novels, films, or the AGMI’s exhibition have chosen to make this violence more explicable, and its connections with Europe and European violence clearer, through an acknowledgement of the impact that the loss of empire (and prestige) has as a factor which often pushes states to violence, and an understanding of pan-Turkism as being a part of the violent reordering of Europe along ethnic and national lines in the first half of the twentieth century.⁶² This latter aspect is also masked by the strict focus upon the Armenian population as the

⁶⁰ For the best historical treatment of this, see Bloxham, *Great Game*.

⁶¹ Balakian does provide his own brief summary of the young Turks and pan-Turkism, but only by way of comparison with Nazism. See chapter 1 above, n.46.

⁶² See Bloxham, *Great Game*; Cathie Carmichael, *Genocide Before the Holocaust* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009); Benjamin Lieberman, *Terrible Fate: Ethnic Cleansing in the Making of Modern Europe* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2006); Bloxham and Moses, ‘Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing’.

only victims, while the tens of thousands of Assyrians, Pontic Greeks, and also Kurds who equally did not fit into the Young Turk vision of a new Ottoman Turkish society remain undepicted, as does the continued violence in the region well after 1915.⁶³ Likewise, most films omit, and most literature only makes passing reference to, the Hamidian massacres of the 1890s and the Adana massacre of 1909 as a certain kind of precedent in both the perpetrators' and victims' minds – perhaps because the narrative concentration is on the events of 1915 – although the opposite is true in the AGMI exhibition, where the lack of real narrative has the opposite (perhaps not unintended) effect of collapsing these massacres into the escalating continuum of violence against the Armenians. Equally, while the context of the Great War is usually made clear, the fears of the Ottoman Turks that it would result in the creation of a separate Armenian state and, more immediately, the possibility that some Armenians on the borderlands with Russia might collaborate with their army against the Axis are rarely mentioned, for fear of playing into the hands of revisionists and deniers. Presumably because their authors are approaching from an Armenian (mostly diasporic) subject position, which tends to focus on violence done *to* the community and its lingering effects, each of these representations is a paradigmatic example of a closed narrative.

Cambodia

By contrast, the representations of the Cambodian genocide are far more varied. If the emphatic allocation of blame onto 'the Turks' generally implies that the Armenians were massacred simply because the Turks hated them, then identifying the Khmer Rouge as solely at fault for the killing in Cambodia might imply a slightly different reason, one which invokes lingering cold war notions of 'the evils of communism' to explain the violence; but again, the genocide cannot be explained without reference to the specific nature of Khmer Rouge ideology and the crucial geopolitical context in which it was born and developed. In the most literal terms, this took the form of millions of tonnes of American bombs which destroyed the Cambodian countryside around the Vietnamese border, and was singularly important in radicalising the Khmer

⁶³ See Bloxham, *Great Game*, 97-112; Mark Levene, 'Creating a Modern "Zone of Genocide": The Impact of Nation- and State-Formation on Eastern Anatolia, 1878-1923', *HGS* 12:3 (1998), 393-433; Uğur Ümit Üngör's recent *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); and Dominik J. Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer, eds., 'Late Ottoman Genocides', special issue of *JGR* 10:1 (2008), 1-182.

peasantry's support for the Khmer Rouge.⁶⁴ These bombing campaigns are only hinted at in *The Killing Fields* and John Pilger's *Year Zero* (1979), though;⁶⁵ only William Shawcross' book *Sideshow* (1980) and *Enemies of the People* begin to portray their huge impact, although less through talking to peasants who endured them than through statistic-strewn description and footage.⁶⁶ *Enemies of the People* is also the only representation which indicates how the political infighting within the Khmer Rouge (largely over whether to ally with Vietnam or China) affected the intensity and sweep of the political purges, and which hints at the targeting of Cambodia's ethnic and religious minorities, mainly Vietnamese, Chinese, and Cham Muslims.⁶⁷

Tuol Sleng Museum itself barely takes advantage of its opportunity to give some context and background to the genocide; as Rachel Hughes found, most western visitors left emotionally affected but feeling very uninformed.⁶⁸ One set of rooms provides the basic timeline of DK, its projects, and the biographies of the leaders of the Khmer Rouge, but little else; if visitors traverse to Block C, they will find rooms with copies of Wynne Cougill's *Stilled Lives* (2004) mounted on the wall, which tells the stories of fifty-one men and women who joined the Khmer Rouge – conscripts and volunteers, recruits and converts, mostly poor and uneducated peasants, the majority of whom were executed by the regime, many in S-21.⁶⁹ Only here will visitors gain some sense of the motivations of some of those who joined the revolution, and be confronted by the ambiguities between 'perpetrator' and 'victim' in the Cambodian case – and the impossibility of distinguishing between them in the faces displayed in the block across the courtyard. Otherwise, the museum relies very much on its aura of 'place', but the torture instruments by themselves cannot explain the origins of this violence.

⁶⁴ Ben Kiernan, *The Pol Pot Regime: Race, Power and Genocide in Cambodia Under the Khmer Rouge, 1975-79*, 2nd edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 74.

⁶⁵ In fact, although his argument depends upon the viewer paying close attention to the implications of the dialogue, Scott Laderman is not incorrect to argue that *The Killing Fields* almost suggests that it was the American *withdrawal* from Cambodia which allowed the killing to go unchecked(!): Laderman, 'Burying Culpability: *The Killing Fields* (1984), US Foreign Policy, and the Political Limits of Film-Making in Reagan-Era Cinema', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* 30:2 (2010), 203-20.

⁶⁶ William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1980).

⁶⁷ See Ben Kiernan, 'Documentation Delayed, Justice Denied: The Historiography of the Cambodian Genocide' in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Stone, 468-86: 476-9. Haing Ngor, in his testimony *Survival in the Killing Fields*, with Roger Warner (New York: Carrol and Graf, 2003), does mention the targeted killings of ethnic Vietnamese – his wife spoke fluent Vietnamese, and was under threat, although she was Cambodian (349); he also notes the Chinese influence upon the Khmer Rouge (391).

⁶⁸ Rachel Hughes, 'Dutiful Tourism: Encountering the Cambodian Genocide', *Asia Pacific Viewpoint* 49:3 (2008), 318-30: 326-8.

⁶⁹ Wynne Cougill, *Stilled Lives: Photographs from the Cambodian Genocide* (Phnom Penh: Documentation Centre of Cambodia, 2004).

Likewise, because the basic tenets of Khmer Rouge ideology tend to be narrated by those who *experienced* them – the majority of testimonial accounts have come from those who were living in the urban centres in 1975 – few are able to explain the Cambodian peasantry’s attraction to the Khmer Rouge, which was largely due to the US bombing and their promises of ousting ‘western imperialism’ and other foreign influences, hand in hand with the restoration of the ancient glory of Angkor, the abolition of corruption and the exploitation of the peasantry, and a social levelling which in practice saw the ‘old people’ now placed at the top of this inverted social hierarchy (Tuol Sleng does not explain this either – presumably because it played into the government’s strategy of self-legitimation through maintaining fear of the Khmer Rouge).⁷⁰ This is why the splitting of families, the murder of the educated, the destruction of the temples, and the erratic, grandiose projects remain incomprehensible to most testimony-writers, although Haing Ngor’s assessment of Khmer Rouge ideology and description of the Khmer Rouge intentions in his testimony *Survival in the Killing Fields* (2003) is thoughtful and largely accurate, and his shrewd play on words hints at the motivation of some of the lower-level perpetrators:

‘I tell you, the people at the top of the Khmer Rouge, like Khieu Samphan, are highly educated, but the people under them cannot even read and write. They don’t know where their revolution is going. They don’t even know they are communists.’

‘Of course they do.’

‘No they don’t,’ I said flatly. ‘When have you ever heard them mention the word “communist”?’

‘That’s true,’ said the paediatrician, after a moment’s thought. ‘But then what are they?’

‘*Kum-monuss*,’ I said, and they all laughed. It was a play on words: *kum*, a long-standing grudge that finally explodes in disproportionate revenge, and *monuss*, meaning people. ‘That’s what they are at the lower level,’ I said, “revenge-people.” All they know is that city people like us used to lord it over them and this is their chance to get back. That’s what they are, communist at the top and *kum-monuss* at the bottom.’⁷¹

As Ngor’s comments might suggest, there has been overall a much closer and more fruitful exploration of Cambodian perpetrators in representations of the genocide. Most testimonies, for obvious reasons, concentrate on the lower-level perpetrators – few even knew Pol Pot’s name at the time, let alone anything much about him or the leadership of the all-pervasive *Angkar* – and while their descriptions of abuse, beatings

⁷⁰ Judy Ledgerwood, ‘The Cambodian Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crimes’, *Museum Anthropology* 21:1 (1997), 82-98: 91.

⁷¹ Ngor, *Survival*, 171; also 211 for another assessment of Khmer Rouge ideology, and 55 for his sober reflections on the effects of ideals and war.

and killings cannot help but distance the reader from these perpetrators, others provide much more perceptive treatments of the motivations of these perpetrators.

Ngor, for example, recounts a scene where he meets a former teacher, now a zone leader, and questions why the man, who was very intelligent and could easily think of several ways to alleviate the desperate situation, did not do so – concluding that he was subservient to the higher orders of the regime through fear.⁷² Both *Enemies of the People* and Rithy Panh's film *S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine* (2003) raise the issue of indoctrination and 'following orders' through interviews with former village leaders and guards at Tuol Sleng respectively: *S-21* explores how the guards of Tuol Sleng came to be in this position – they were sent there as a cohort of young cadre and groomed for the work – and their thoughts about it, but their instinctual repetition of the slogans and justifications of thirty years before, the way that they slip all too easily into re-enacting their former routines of locking and unlocking cells, and threatening and ministering to prisoners, and the way that the dynamic between the survivor Vann Nath and the guards evolves into one of judge and criminals, does exoticise these perpetrators to some extent and make them less comprehensible to us – not least because they do not seem to have renounced these ideas.⁷³ Likewise, Steven Ozaki's documentary *The Conscience of Nhem En* (2008) allows Nhem to indict himself through his excuses, noting also how he has managed to ingratiate himself within the power structure of the new regime; both this film and *S-21* exploit the 'ethnographic' potential of film to expose the structures of feeling which still linger in these perpetrators. Similarly, although *Enemies of the People* seems to be slightly transfixed by the nature of the violence in Cambodia – at one point one of the informants is asked to show us how he killed people, using a rubber knife (this after a scene where the same man is shown killing a chicken), and there is also a discussion of the Khmer Rouge's habit of eating human livers – the film's main informants, both leaders at the village level, are candid in their explanations of how and why they came to kill, and the viewer is left with a realistic sense of how this was possible, not least because it also integrates interviews with mid-level cadre and with Nuon Chea,

⁷² Ngor, *Survival*, 278-87.

⁷³ In one scene, Nath confronts five of the former guards outside the cells, and asks, 'Do you see yourselves as victims? You who worked here?' While one replies, 'We're like people who've had an accident', Nhem En argues that they are 'all victims. No-one can say he wasn't', and when Nath asks, 'If those who worked here are victims, what about prisoners like me?', Nhem, with astonishing aplomb, calmly replies (as if it is obvious), 'They're secondary victims. Because here if you didn't obey you were dead for sure.'

‘Brother Number Two’. Although Chea is careful with his words, the moments when he lapses into real emotion – anger – are those when he insists on the need to eliminate the party’s enemies, and we can see something of the conviction with which the Khmer Rouge pursued their enemies, real or imagined – and the film also weaves in information about the broader political context.

And in fact, none of the books which focus for any length of time on Duch, the former commander of S-21 (Nic Dunlop’s book *The Lost Executioner* (2005), and François Bizot’s *The Gate* (2004) and *Facing the Torturer* (2011)) demonise Duch or seek to present him as a Nazi-like aberrant individual.⁷⁴ Bizot insists on the complexity of both Duch and the position he was in: ‘I was looking not at a monster from the abyss but at a human being ... his masters employed him as a cog in a vast timepiece beyond his comprehension’,⁷⁵ he wrote, and has repeated this sentiment in his testimony at Duch’s recent trial at the Khmer Rouge Tribunal.⁷⁶ Indeed, Bizot finds himself torn in trying to understand this ‘young man who committed his life and his existence to a cause and to a purpose that was based on the idea that crime was not only legitimate but that it was deserved’:

My existence brought me to intimately be in contact with this person and I cannot get rid of this idea, and I cannot rid myself of the idea that what Duch perpetrated could also have been perpetrated by someone else ... And that’s where these things are particularly difficult for me. I felt that these crimes were the crimes of a man and in order to understand its horror – their horror, it was certainly not by transforming Duch into some kind of monster, but rather it was by acknowledging in him his humanity as ours, and that is – and that was obviously not an obstacle, unfortunately, to the massive killings that were perpetrated. And it is this awareness of this ambiguity of – this ambiguity in his humanity, inhumanity, that causes my personal tragedy, my personal tragedy today.⁷⁷

Dunlop’s characterisation of Duch owes rather more to the post-Eichmann notion of the ‘banal bureaucrat’,⁷⁸ but his interviews, woven into the text, with other former Khmer Rouge (many of whom had studied in Paris) who joined because of their

⁷⁴ Dunlop, *Lost Executioner*; François Bizot, *The Gate*, trans. Euan Cameron (London: Vintage, 2004); Bizot, *Facing the Torturer*.

⁷⁵ Bizot, *The Gate*, 115.

⁷⁶ See Bizot’s testimony in the Transcript of Proceedings, 8 April 2009, 71-4, 97-8, available at http://www.eccc.gov.kh/sites/default/files/documents/courtdoc/E1_10.1_EN.pdf, and also 9 April 2009 at http://www.eccc.gov.kh/sites/default/files/documents/courtdoc/E1_11.1_EN.pdf [both accessed 31.12.12].

⁷⁷ Bizot, testimony, 8 April 2009, 97-8.

⁷⁸ See Dunlop, *Lost Executioner*, especially pp. 7, 116, 157; but cf. 314.

ideological commitment,⁷⁹ and his evocations of Tuol Sleng both as an institution and a museum,⁸⁰ are on balance more thought-provoking than sensationalist explorations of the origins of the Khmer Rouge violence. Thus, while representations of the Cambodian genocide generally give neither a domestic nor international context, there has been a much closer and more fruitful exploration of the motivations of both lower- and higher-level perpetrators in film – which uses extended interviews with perpetrators to construct an idea of why and how they killed – and in literature, which uses its space to reflect more broadly on human nature and motivation as well as narrate a story. While the lingering fascination with violence does still exoticise these crimes somewhat, this impression is complicated by the stories of recruitment, indoctrination and conviction which typify the experiences of these men and women.

Rwanda

A handful of books and films about the Rwandan genocide stand out for their more nuanced representations of causation and perpetration – notably Raoul Peck’s film *Sometimes in April* (2006), alongside Straus and Lyons’ *Intimate Enemy* – but most conform to the same basic pattern. Almost all include a searing indictment of the international community’s failure to act – far fewer indicate its role in actually *facilitating* the genocide⁸¹ – and each is quick to establish the basic contours of the genocide: the two ‘tribes’ or ‘ethnic groups’ of Rwanda, with Hutu clearly agitating against frightened-looking Tutsi; the president’s plane crash (most feature films begin their narrative at this point or just after) and the immediate killings at the roadblocks and in the churches and schools; and the flight of the whites and inaction of the UN. The individual fates and stories narrated in these testimonies and feature films thus become variations on this ‘accepted’ narrative.

Here, too, there has been a focus on the lower-level perpetrators – in part because of the necessity to confront the widespread participation in the genocide, in part because no single figure or group emerged as the clear architect. Although there is no

⁷⁹ Ibid., 37-53, 66-77, 92-101, 285-8, 299-302.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 21-3, 310-11, 315-7.

⁸¹ Lukas Bärfuss’ novel *One Hundred Days*, trans. Tess Lewis (London: Granta, 2012), is an exception: it details the many ways in which aid organisations facilitated and were complicit in the inequalities and structural violence in Rwanda before 1994. But ‘We were lucky that every crime in which the Swiss colluded had a bigger criminal in the picture, who diverted attention away from us and provided us with cover. No, we aren’t the ones who direct blood baths. Others do that. We just swim in them’ (180).

comparable demonization of a leadership, most films do depict leaders according to the usual conventions: *Hotel Rwanda* presents us with the lazily cunning and corrupt figures of General Bizimungu and George Rutaganda, who clearly have control of the proceedings; Bizimungu appears again in *Shake Hands With the Devil* (2007) as a much clearer coordinator of the killings; in *100 Days*, *Shooting Dogs*, and *Sometimes in April*, the unnamed local mayors, councillors, *Interahamwe* and military leaders are shown preparing for genocide. The thousands of ‘ordinary’ killers, though, appear in all of the films and literature as menacing crowds of drunken guards at roadblocks, or mobs brandishing machetes, yelling and whistling as they chase Tutsi. There is little exploration of their motives: even Hatzfeld’s *A Time For Machetes*, which presents the testimony of a group of perpetrators now in prison, does not really give any deeper insight – and Hatzfeld warns his readers not to trust their words, as they often fabricate. Rather, the stream of voices discussing killing, looting, and hatred firmly holds them in that position of a deindividualised, bloodthirsty mob. Again, the only real exception here is Straus and Lyons’ *Intimate Enemy*: Straus provides a concise but informative historical overview, and his research interviews with perpetrators contain pointed questions which elicit a deeper insight into why individuals participated and how they felt – the interviewees’ responses are also not remoulded into thematic chapters as with Hatzfeld’s books, and are much more diverse. This book, and *Sometimes in April*, which explores the pressures and choices upon Hutu in 1994 through a particularly intense roadblock scene with the main character, Augustin, are the only representations of the Rwandan genocide to really challenge their viewers’ and readers’ assumptions about perpetrators and engage with the fact of the mass participation of ordinary Rwandans, whilst also giving a more nuanced historical background; most others fall into the stream of the more familiar, and less unsettling, narratives of ethnic division and international inaction.

These representations often rely on or imply an exclusively ethnic frame of reference to ‘explain’ the killings,⁸² emphasising the racial hatred underlying the Hutu/Tutsi binary without a clear explanation of where it came from, or indeed why it should have exploded with such ferocity in 1994.⁸³ As well as ignoring the Twa minority entirely,

⁸² As Ann-Marie Cook argues in the context of film: Cook, “‘Based on the True Story’: Cinema’s Mythologised Vision of the Rwandan Genocide” in *Promoting and Producing Evil*, ed. Nancy Billias (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 169-86: 170.

⁸³ As Luke Fletcher notes – this is easily applicable to other cases – hatred was also a *consequence* of the violence, instead of or as well as a cause, because, he argues, it made the work easier. Fletcher,

these static categories of Hutu-perpetrator/Tutsi-victim occlude the many Hutu who were killed as political dissidents – which *Hotel Rwanda* gestures towards, but does not really bring to the fore. Certainly, some do emphasise the constructed nature of the categories, usually with reference to Belgian colonial rule and/or tales of ‘bought’ ethnicity: although he writes in his introduction that ‘It happened because of racial hatred’, Rusesabagina goes on to detail the arbitrariness of the distinctions between Hutu and Tutsi, and the solidification and exploitation of these supposed differences by the Belgian colonists⁸⁴ – as does *Hotel Rwanda*, particularly in a scene at the bar where a Rwandan describes stereotypical ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ to two western journalists, who are then confounded when two girls also there, who ‘could be sisters’, appear to conform to neither ‘type’. Nevertheless, the Hutu/Tutsi distinction continues to govern the dynamic of violence in these representations, and thus these deconstructions of the Hutu/Tutsi binary, especially when they are described as ‘idiotic theories’ (Dallaire),⁸⁵ make the killings seem even more irrational or inexplicable – why the violence if all are really the same? – which masks how these categories were reified and manipulated, and served as the physical signifiers of precisely those mythologies and histories which were being mobilised in the name of violence.⁸⁶

Most are careful to emphasise the planned nature of the genocide – referring to the stockpiling of machetes (in the early scenes of *Hotel Rwanda* and *Sometimes in April*, and in Dallaire’s discussions of the informant who told him of the weapons caches and genocidal plan), the lists of names of those to be eliminated first in each neighbourhood, the use of ID cards to identify others, or the ominous meetings of Hutu power leaders – as in *Hotel Rwanda*, in Roger Spottiswoode’s feature film of *Shake Hands with the Devil* (2007), and most clearly in the opening scenes of *100 Days* when a government official tells the local mayor: ‘All over Rwanda, people are organised... You must understand that the decision of this new government has been made... Every

‘Turning *Interahamwe*: individual and community choices in the Rwandan genocide’, *JGR* 9:1 (2007), 25-48; some of Hatzfeld’s perpetrator respondents echo this in *A Time for Machetes*, 204-8.

⁸⁴ Paul Rusesabagina, *An Ordinary Man: The True Story Behind Hotel Rwanda* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006), x; 29-31. *Shooting Dogs*, in particular, pedals this kind of explanation; people are hassled ‘because they are Tutsi’; Marie has stones thrown at her and is called a cockroach ‘because I am Tutsi’.

⁸⁵ In the documentary *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Journey of Romeo Dallaire* (2004). Paul’s answer in *Hotel Rwanda* to how such violence was possible is simply ‘Hatred... insanity’. See Mohamed Adhikari, ‘*Hotel Rwanda*: Too Much Heroism, Too Little History – Or Horror?’ in *Black and White in Colour: African History on Screen*, ed. Vivian Bickford-Smith and Richard Mendelsohn (Oxford: James Currey, 2007), 279-99: 281.

⁸⁶ See Arjun Appadurai, ‘Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization’, *Public Culture* 10:2 (1998), 225-47, especially 232, for a discussion of how the uncertainties of visible ethnic identity can exacerbate violence.

Tutsi must be removed in the next two days. We are going to clean the whole country.’ These films also focus on the radio broadcasts by RTLM as inciting the killings – in the opening seconds of *Hotel Rwanda*, a menacing broadcaster explains exactly why he hates the Tutsi and ends with the warning: ‘Stay alert. Watch your neighbours.’ As Anne-Marie Cook has suggested, films especially repeat this ‘iconography’ of the Rwandan genocide in ways which imply a particular causal relationship, thus reducing a very complex situation to simple notions of cause-and-effect where, for example, radios make killers.⁸⁷ Only *Sometimes in April* – where RTLM features quite heavily, since Augustin’s brother worked there as a DJ and is now on trial at Arusha – points out that ‘Radios don’t kill people. People kill people.’

Sometimes in April is, in fact, one of the only representations which really tries to contextualise the genocide, and it makes use of the film format to follow the diverse experiences of a variety of Rwandans, in past and present, to give a more complex picture. Through the reactions and experiences of Augustin’s family, we sense the tensions within society, and see the army training *Interahamwe* and distributing lists of names, and the compliance of the peasants who were simply called off ‘to work’. As Adhikari comments, its opening scenes are ‘much more explicit about the orchestration of an impending mass slaughter. Whereas what one sees in *Hotel Rwanda* could be typical of any one of a dozen tin-pot regimes across the globe, *Sometimes in April* shows the training and indoctrination of *Interahamwe*, distribution of weapons, circulation of hit lists.’⁸⁸ *Hotel Rwanda* and the other films do convey something of the social tension and political instability haunting the streets before the genocide – film is, after all, particularly effective in creating tension – but in the end, if the comparative point about *social crisis* exacerbating existing tensions which can explode into genocide is to be made, this can only be understood in the context of the economic, political, and social problems that had been affecting the country long before the time period covered by those films, including the huge drop in the price of coffee, rising unemployment and land and food shortages, and great political instability⁸⁹ – not least the increase in pressure created by the invasion of the RPF from Uganda in 1990.

⁸⁷ Cook, ‘Based on the True Story’, 175. For the same argument in written accounts, see e.g. Kinzer, *A Thousand Hills*, 159-60. On the tendency to place too much causality in hate radio, see Scott Straus, ‘What Is the Relationship between Hate Radio and Violence? Rethinking Rwanda’s “Radio Machete”’, *Politics and Society* 35:4 (2007), 609-37.

⁸⁸ Adhikari, ‘*Hotel Rwanda*’, 190.

⁸⁹ The international market price of coffee, which accounted for over half of Rwanda’s foreign exchange earnings, plummeted in the latter half of 1989, exacerbating the extant resource scarcities amongst a

Indeed, the portrayal of the regional and international context in these representations shows very well the workings of these closed frameworks of narration. The regional roots of the genocide and indeed the general instability of the Great Lakes Region goes unmentioned;⁹⁰ some, of course, draw the link between the Belgian colonial rule of Rwanda and the solidification of the ethnic categories (and antagonism between them) this brought, but of course the lapse of time between decolonisation and the genocide loosens direct responsibility, and once again restricts the explanation to Rwanda's borders. Almost nothing of the French support for Hutu Power is shown⁹¹ – only *100 Days* shows a particularly arrogant and racist French soldier aiding the Hutu, while in Boubacar Boris Diop's novel *Murambi* (2006) a French officer is obliged, despite his distaste, to bring the local mayor to safety⁹² – and only *Sometimes in April* and *Hotel Rwanda* show the delivery of machetes to Rwanda by China. Meanwhile, the international community is positioned only in the role of failed saviour, even as its inaction or flight is viciously condemned: the condemnatory scenes of Madeleine Albright and other US diplomats wrangling over the definition of Rwanda as 'genocide' and whether or not to intervene (reproduced in *Sometimes in April*, Peter Raymont's documentary *Shake Hands with the Devil* (2004)), and Dallaire's impassioned insistence that intervention would have halted the killings, only consolidate this argument. Some films and testimonies do make a very pointed connection between the whites leaving, and the killing – in *Shooting Dogs* and *Sometimes in April*, we watch from the position of the victims as the Hutus cheer away the departing UN vehicles' dust with their machetes before turning towards us – but in most, the international community remains entirely without agency, able only to flee or observe within the UN mandate, a benevolent but failed policeman.

skyrocketing population with food and land shortages, where the lack of availability of wage labour was breaking down family traditions and possibly even encouraged young men to turn to the politics of Hutu Power and the *Interahamwe*. Fletcher, 'Turning *Interahamwe*', 27.

⁹⁰ Mamdani; *When Victims Become Killers*, especially 35-8, 276-82; René Lemarchand, 'Genocide in the Great Lakes: Which Genocide? Whose Genocide?', *African Studies Review* 41:1 (1998), 3-16.

⁹¹ See, amongst others, Daniela Krosiak, *The Role of France in the Rwandan Genocide* (London: Hurst & Co., 2007), and Scott Straus, 'The Historiography of the Rwandan Genocide' in *Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Stone, 517-43, especially 534.

⁹² Boubacar Boris Diop, *Murambi: The Book of Bones* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), 114-29.

Bosnia

Almost all outside representations of Bosnia express consternation at some point that such a thing ‘could happen once again in Europe’, but although one would have thought that they would have to work quite hard to cover up the elephant in the room – that genocidal warfare and the dubious goal of a (preferably expanded) ethnically and culturally homogenous nation are not fundamentally incompatible with western mores and political culture, but rather an extreme product of them – the usual time-worn distancing mechanisms still seem to suffice. Most put it down to either ‘fascist’ or in some way ‘extreme’ politics and politicians – and the figures of Milošević, Karadžić, Mladić et al. have received a huge amount of coverage as a result of their trials – or blame static and perennial ‘problems’ which imply some kind of inevitability, such as “ethnic hatreds” or continuing cycles of violence which periodically plague the region and its crazy people (Kusturica’s *Underground* (1995) in fact seems to posit a highly sophisticated mix of the two, whilst retaining its air of sheer madness). Other films, like *Behind Enemy Lines* (2001) or *Harrison’s Flowers* (2000), use the wars as a generic zone of violence in which to set their (equally generic) plotlines of western macho heroes saving the day, or the power of human love to overcome all the odds.

Most often, these representations emphasise ethnic (and occasionally religious) difference as the root cause of the conflict, but the ways in which that difference had to be reified and mobilised to become the basis for violence are generally ignored. This also shields audiences from having to consider the more disturbing scenario of neighbourly violence; by (re)defining those neighbours only as ‘Croat’ and ‘Muslim’, for example, the killings of those who once perhaps shared coffee and worked in each other’s fields are abstracted and subsumed into a more impersonal, and seemingly inevitable, framework of violence between warring groups. The concrete ways in which the political myths of 1389, Ottoman domination, and the dream of a Greater Serbia – and especially the ways in which the memories of the Second World War fostered fears of another genocide against the Serbs were manipulated and mobilised by politicians in the 1980s and 1990s – is often overlooked or belittled by those quick to accuse the Serbs of having too long an historical memory, or an ‘excess of history’. Importantly, the focus on ethnic categories also tends to conceal the role of nationalism in the conflict, presumably in part because it calls into question some of the

underpinnings of the western political order; it receives relatively little comment (or is cast as a type unrelated to western ‘patriotism’) in western-produced literature or films, for example, but is often the subject of much discussion by those who felt its effects, such as Drakulić in *Balkan Express*. The politics which prepared and stoked the conflict are never made recognisable to us, never placed on the same spectrum as our own – it is described as ‘a clash of totalitarianism and democracy’ even at the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Hercegovina in Sarajevo – and audiences are thus shielded from any critical consideration of the potential that nationalism and other politics of exclusion in their own country, however marginal at the current point in time, have for exploitation and mobilisation by the political elite in times of crisis. But the roots of this specific crisis, in economic decline and the ensuing social instability, and the slow collapse of Yugoslavia’s particular brand of communism – indeed, in the context of the breakup of the Soviet Union and the turn to nationalist populism all across the region, and the shifts in international power balances and allegiances which all of these brought – remain largely unremarked in all of these representations.⁹³

Throughout all this, the perpetrators (Serbs, occasionally Croats) are generally shown in the most stereotypical terms. Milošević is seen perhaps less as the classic totalitarian genocidal dictator, than a sleazy opportunistic politician who nevertheless crafted and headed a brutal expansionist campaign of aggression, aided and abetted by Karadžić, Mladić and the others now on trial at The Hague. They appear mostly in literature – with the exception of Mladić in Srebrenica in Leslie Woodhead’s documentary *A Cry from the Grave* (1999), and the plotline in Richard Shepard’s *The Hunting Party* (2007) of three journalists’ hunt for ‘The Fox’ [Karadžić], the wily war criminal openly hiding out in the forests of Republika Srpska – and there is no shortage of biographical treatments, particularly of Milošević, which especially if read in isolation tend to lay all responsibility for the conflict at the feet of these few politicians.⁹⁴ Perhaps inevitably, the biographical approach often searches for the reasons for leaders’ actions in their own pasts, rather than situating the options open to them and

⁹³ On the collapse of Yugoslavia’s communism, see Dejan Djokić and James Ker-Lindsay, eds., *New Perspectives on Yugoslavia: Key Issues and Controversies* (London: Routledge, 2011); Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); on the wider context, John B. Allcock, *Explaining Yugoslavia* (London: Hurst & Co., 2000).

⁹⁴ For a discussion, see Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso, eds., *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe: New Perspectives on Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2008), 14, 35.

the choices they made within the broader social and political context of the time. Even Slavenka Drakulić's *They Would Never Hurt A Fly* (2004), her coverage of the war crimes trials at The Hague, wavers between her strong insistence that such figures really are ordinary people who can be found (or made) in any society, and a style of writing which nevertheless creates a strong aura of dangerousness and deviance around them.⁹⁵ The figure of Arkan (Željko Ražnatović) also, unsurprisingly, gained attention in a few books and films, all of which seem dazzled by his dark past and manner, and none of which explore him as an opportunistic individual, exploiting the power structures open to him like so many other genocide perpetrators and collaborators.⁹⁶

The notoriety of the leadership in these mainstream representations contrasts sharply with the anonymity of the lower-level perpetrators (as elsewhere), who often conform to the stereotype best shown in Michael Winterbottom's film *Welcome to Sarajevo* (1997) – drunken, hairy, machine-gun toting Serbs at a roadblock, pulling Serbian children off a bus so that they cannot escape to the west. Other perpetrators are cruel, vicious paramilitaries – no doubt modelled on Arkan – the most famous example being Ron Haviv's photograph of the Serbian paramilitary swinging his foot into a civilian lying on the pavement in Bijeljina,⁹⁷ but such figures also appear in *Behind Enemy Lines* and *Savior* (1996), and more hauntingly in *Perfect Circle*. For the most part, there is little consideration of the varying motives of the perpetrators, and little differentiation between them; few draw the distinction between Serbs and Bosnian Serbs, for example, although this has implications for understanding precisely how the war was fought and directed.⁹⁸ Neighbourly violence is presented within the framework of the irrational and the vicious – as the incongruous fact that neighbours had always lived alongside one another until, 'one day', one knocked on the other's

⁹⁵ Slavenka Drakulić, *They Would Never Hurt a Fly: War Criminals on Trial in The Hague* (London: Abacus, 2004). She frequently expresses surprise that the defendants look ordinary – 'Kovač really looked like somebody you could trust to give your daughter a lift to the hospital' (48), 'Jesilić looks like your best friend, your ideal son-in-law' (59), 'It is hard to imagine Mirko Norac shouting the order for execution... Norac actually looks like what he really is, a waiter' (36-7); see also 19, 48-9, 68-9. Jesilić in particular exercises her imagination – as to how 'this nice fisherman ended up executing Muslim prisoners' (67) – and in an interlude she points out that fishing 'is not quite the innocent sport it seems. Fish have to be killed. ... The fish would appear from the water, wriggling helplessly on the hook. I can imagine him unhooking the fish and throwing it on the grass. Then watching it gasp for air' (64). These contrast directly with her insistence upon their ordinariness: see 50, 70, 84, and especially 165-72.

⁹⁶ Christopher S. Stewart, *Hunting the Tiger*; a character in Goran Marković's film *Turneja* (2008) is also clearly modelled on him. Åsne Seierstad's portrayal in her *With Their Backs to the World: Portraits of Serbia*, trans. Sindre Kartvedt (New York: Basic Books, 2005) is more shrewd.

⁹⁷ Ron Haviv, *Blood and Honey* (Dubrovnik: War Photo Limited, 2000), n.p.

⁹⁸ *Turneja* is a particularly tongue-in-cheek take on how Belgradians viewed (view) their 'fellow' Bosnian Serbs.

door with a gun – refusing the kind of approach which might begin to explain this kind of internecine violence. And indeed, this is the point at which the gulf between western-produced and domestically-produced representations is most apparent; in stark contrast with these closed narratives, writings and films from the former Yugoslavia very frequently touch upon what was, for them, a primary experience of the conflict.

Neighbourly violence and the wrenching apart of friendships by ethnicity is a preoccupation in much of the literature, including Miljenko Jergović's *Sarajevo Marlboro* (2004), Vladimir Jekanović's *Made in Yugoslavia* (2000), and Slobodan Selenić's *Premeditated Murder* (1996).⁹⁹ Each exploits literature's ability to convey nuance, to switch between the present and the memory of the past, between different perspectives, between external events and the internal thoughts of the protagonist. In one of his vignettes in *Sarajevo Blues* (1998), Semezdin Mehmedinović portrays the sharp and fundamental break which occurred on the first night of the war with a depth hidden by the simplicity of his prose: going home that night,

A bunch of guys with stockings over their heads and Kalashnikovs aimed at us stopped the trolley. As I got out, I took a look at this motley crew only to recognise the guy from my team who hadn't shown up. I was so taken by surprise that I had to repeat my question twice: "Šljuka, is that you?" Embarrassed, he kept quiet behind his stocking.

My confusion lasted for a while. Instead of a guy I was supposed to hang out with over a few beers after a game, I found myself facing a real terrorist occupying the very trolley I happened to be riding in. I couldn't figure out how to explain this to myself, this fundamental physiognomic change. But when the number of people began to multiply – the number of people who, like Šljuka, started wearing stockings on their heads instead of their feet – I was no longer confused.¹⁰⁰

The story of Milan and Halil in Dragojević's *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame* is also the story of the annihilation of their friendship and shared history. Dragojević chose to explore not the war but the people involved in it, using flashbacks to show how the motley crew of Serb soldiers trapped in a tunnel by Muslim forces came to leave their former lives and fight, for a variety of explicable but not excusable reasons. Between the stories of two ignorant nationalists convinced by propaganda and political myth of the necessity of the war, a wheeler-dealer who goes instead of his conscripted nerdy

⁹⁹ Miljenko Jergović, *Sarajevo Marlboro*, trans. Stela Tomašević (New York: Archipelago, 2004 [1994]); Vladimir Jekanović, *Made in Yugoslavia*, trans. Zeljana Zovko and Cathy Porter (London: Picador, 2000); Slobodan Selenić, *Premeditated Murder*, trans. Jelena Petrović (London: Harvill, 1996).

¹⁰⁰ Semezdin Mehmedinović, *Sarajevo Blues*, trans. Ammiel Alcalay (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1998), 14.

younger brother (who clearly would not last a minute at the front), a professor of literature, a former JNA colonel, and a druggie who (quite literally) falls into soldiering, Dragojević offers a potentially authentic account of ‘how people get drawn into events and are changed by them.’¹⁰¹ Tanović uses a similar technique in *No Man’s Land*, exploring the characters of his two main protagonists – Nino, a Serb, and Čiki, a Bosnian Muslim – as they wait in a trench between Serbian and Muslim front lines for help for the third, Cera, who is lying on top of a mine. They fight about who started the war (the one with the only weapon at that particular point forces the other to concede that his side started it – to the victor goes the spoils and the interpretation of history), but Nino is not the usual demonised Serb, either, appearing ungainly, naïve, and uncomfortable about being in this war, while Čiki is a wiry, resourceful adversary. Nevertheless, Tanović ridicules the supposedly infallible differences between them: not only do they speak the same language and even know the same girl back home, but they end up sharing cigarettes, and shots are edited so that they mirror each other. In this way, both films offer a much more intimate portrait of the conflict which fully confronts the viciousness of neighbourly violence and insufficiency of ethnic categories to explain it.

Tanović, like Dragojević and many others, also has a point to make about the presence of the westerners – the vulture-like journalists and ineffectual UN who eventually crowd around the trench do not see Nino and Čiki sharing cigarettes or agreeing to a truce by wearing their rifles on their shoulders; they *do* see them giving the cameras the finger, brawling, and the shoot-out at the end in which both are killed (the soundtrack is silent except for the whir and click of camera shutters). The journalists trundle off, thinking they have seen the action, but the German demining expert is in fact powerless to save Cera: the mine, inscribed ‘Made in E.U.’, cannot be defused. This serves as a clear metaphor for the conflict as a whole; the voyeuristic west watches avidly, but without a shred of introspection as to either its role in stoking the conflict or the decidedly European roots of the dream of ethnically pure nations. And while many representations (western and former Yugoslav) bemoan the ineffectuality of the UN, as with Rwanda, few see it as having an active role or an impact upon the course of proceedings (save those who discuss the actions of Dutchbat at Srebrenica – *A Cry from the Grave*, for example): but as the UN chief walks away from the trench,

¹⁰¹ Michalski and Gow, *War, Image and Legitimacy*, 36.

he tells his secretary: 'I'd like you to notify each side, please, that we have information that the other side is planning to commandeer the central trench this evening. Alright?'

Conclusion

As my analysis above suggests, these mainstream representations of genocide do not really exploit the potential of each medium to convey a real sense of history; or, rather, they are exploited in the service of a 'good story', which gives little depth of historical understanding since the stories tend to the universal. As I noted, one cannot really expect survivor testimonies to provide a fully-contextualised history of the events they experienced, even if many do include 'documentary' material, such as timelines and maps. However, the fact that many other representations also focus on the victims' experiences means that historical explanation is often reduced to scenes of brutality and escalating violence which retain the dynamic of perpetrators with all of the agency and victims with none – again, apart from a few plates or pages at the beginning, or the brief historical exhibitions in Srebrenica and Sarajevo or Tuol Sleng. Aside from the biographies themselves, which tend to demonise, none of the mainstream representations take a biographical approach to the perpetrators comparable to *Our Hitler*, *Downfall*, *Good*, or *The Kindly Ones*; instead, the protagonists are usually altruistic saviours or foreigners. By contrast, the other, more engaged representations I have discussed exploit precisely this same individual perspective, or microhistorical approach (the closely-focused stories in *No Man's Land*, *Pretty Village*, *Pretty Flame* and *Sometimes in April*, the ethnographic stance of *S-21* and *Enemies of the People*, and the literary vignettes of Mehmedinović or reflective, wide-ranging style of Bizot) to expose some of the 'structures of feeling', the diversity of experiences, and the way that identity is enveloped and essentialised by war and genocide. International factors are consistently left out of the equation here, too – Tanović's 'Made in E.U.' (and the mostly didactically-presented descriptions of the American bombing of Cambodia) aside – which, I would think, merely means that this angle awaits its artist, rather than that the mediums themselves are fundamentally unsuited to saying something meaningful about the interconnectedness of the modern world.

Although the audiences of mainstream representations of genocide may be unfamiliar with the basic history of the events at hand, they are nevertheless quickly familiarised

through the use of the format of Holocaust representations – emphasising agency over structure, and underscoring genocide’s ‘extraordinariness’. All narrate genocide as exception: the implicit or explicit explanations they offer focus only on the domestic sphere – and then only on the limited, unrepeatable and context-specific factors such as individual leaders and their deviant political ideologies, ethnic antagonisms, and war; as Mamdani would have it, it is often narrated from the ‘victims’ perspective’ as a rupture in history, with a focus upon the extremity and experience of the event itself rather than its roots in a specific set of historical conjunctions which also guide and determine the choices and actions of the perpetrators. As with mainstream Holocaust representations, these closed narratives shield western audiences from an understanding of genocide as a process which arises from factors common to the west, from the ordinary and universal, rather than the extraordinary and particular – the sort of comprehension which would go some way towards a better self-understanding and a more critical perspective of the west’s role in the world and in conflicts. The avoidance of recognisably more generic domestic factors, such as economic decline, social instability, or the tensions which accompany a sense of ‘crisis’, as well as the exclusion of the international context – currents of political and social thought (such as the European ideal of ethnic homogeneity), the regional power balances, conflicts, and allegiances (as with the Great Lakes region, or with Serbia’s allegiance to Russia because of religion), or the hegemony of empires and the tumult of their collapse (the Ottoman Empire, the cold war power blocs) means that genocide is neutralised, literally ‘domesticated’, by these closed narratives. In this particular casting of the genocidal dynamic, the international community (generally embodied in the UN or journalists) can be chastised for inaction or placed in the role of potential saviours, but are never seen as having an active impact upon the course of events. The next chapter questions this perspective, amongst other things, in some of the most widely read and seen representations.

Chapter 3

Witnessing Genocide: Western Protagonists in the Theatre of Genocide

‘Journalists rarely overdose on tragedy. It’s one thing to see a man get shot, and it’s something else when that man is your father. Journalists observe other people’s tragedies; we rarely experience them. ... We were visiting hell, not living in it.’
Peter Maass¹

‘Men and women who venture to someone else’s war through choice do so in a variety of guises. UN general, BBC correspondent, aid worker, mercenary: in the final analysis they all want the same thing, a hit off the action, a walk on the dark side.’
Anthony Loyd²

Introduction

As Peter Maass’ comments above intimate, the western witnesses of genocide have a vastly different experience from the victims and perpetrators of genocide: there to observe, and generally with a passport out of the carnage, they experience genocide first and foremost as outsiders, with no (prior) personal connection to the events unfolding. Their subsequent autobiographies, and the feature films which portray their experiences, are usually highly dramatised narratives of what is inevitably ‘somebody else’s suffering’, and raise questions of how genocide is subjectively experienced and understood, the role professional institutions such as the media or UN play in public understandings of genocide, and of voyeurism and violence as spectacle. This chapter calls attention to the plethora of representations which view genocide through western eyes – whether those of a war journalist, UN staff, or someone caught in the maelstrom – and looks critically at how such representations might influence western audiences’ perceptions of genocide.

As I have already noted, the representation of the Holocaust has come in the past few decades to be characterised by a particular focus upon the victims and survivors, and a privileging of the survivor’s voice as a vehicle through which we can approach the ‘meaning’ and experience of the event. And yet if the scope is broadened to include the representation of other genocides, the picture changes. Although some representations do focus on, or are told by, ‘bystanders’ or ‘outsiders’ in the Holocaust – such as the figure of the celebrated righteous individual (immortalised by Spielberg’s Oskar

¹ Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour*, 104.

² Loyd, *My War Gone By*, 54.

Schindler), the work of the Red Cross, or the Vatican (in *Amen*, for example), or those who frame the start and finish of the USHMM exhibition as American liberators of the camps – nevertheless, western outsiders occupy a much more central place in the representations of other genocides, both as a part of their history, and as the narrators of that history. To take the clearest example, there are to date far more English-language accounts of ‘Bosnia’ by foreign correspondents and UN staff, than survivor testimonies; the Rwanda genocide is likewise known to the Anglophone world almost wholly through the accounts of outsiders.³ There are, in fact, a relatively large number of Cambodian survivor testimonies (mostly written by the diaspora community), but there also exists a small clutch of accounts by westerners who were present during the fall of Phnom Penh in 1975, before they were ousted by the Khmer Rouge. Somewhat differently, the few accounts of western witnesses to the Armenian genocide – most notably that of Henry Morgenthau – are celebrated by the Armenian community, largely because of the value of their assumed impartiality in rebutting Turkish denial.⁴ These figures pervade western-produced films, too, whether as the vehicle through which genocide is experienced (most frequently war correspondents), or as characters with a central role to play in the story. The transmission of genocide is often in very different hands, therefore, as compared with Holocaust representations.

These accounts are almost exclusively ‘western-facing’, stories of western involvement and experience, written from the perspective of a westerner and aimed at a western market. If, as James Dawes has suggested, ‘in a time of human rights chic’, those such as Dallaire are ‘a celebrity for witnessing genocide’,⁵ then it seems that the autobiographies of and films about western protagonists can almost be read *in place of* victim testimonies, for they claim for themselves a similar status as one who saw, and was affected by, the genocide. But what is problematic about them is that, partly because they assume the authority and sometimes moral standpoint of the eyewitness,

³ Two books worthy of separate consideration here but which have been omitted due to lack of space are Bärffuss’ *One Hundred Days* and Courtemanche’s *A Sunday at the Pool*, both novels about aid-worker witnesses far more immersed in Rwandan society than most other protagonists, which complicate some (but not all) of the usual interpretive categories.

⁴ Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*. The importance of this book to the Armenian community (and changes in memory cultures) can partially be seen from the number of editions: there are at least five English-language versions, three of which were issued since 2000. Likewise, the film-within-the film in Egoyan’s *Ararat* is based around the testimony of Clarence Ussher, while the German soldier Armin T. Wegner is well known for his photographs of the deportations. As I noted in the previous chapter, these celebrated westerners are honoured at the Tsitsernakaberd complex in Yerevan, and the exhibition strongly relies on their writings.

⁵ James Dawes, *That The World May Know: Bearing Witness to Atrocity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 38.

partly because of their status as journalists or diplomats, they are unproblematically consumed as authoritative accounts of genocide – whereas an analysis of the narratives they construct, and the frames through which they present genocide and its victims, shows that they rarely step out of the familiar western interpretations of genocide. Filling the shelves of the bookshops and film stores, then, these accounts are popular, and are read or viewed alongside – or instead of – survivor testimonies; as such, they can afford us an insight into the shaping of western responses to genocide. While this focus does mainly limit the scope of this chapter to written accounts and films⁶ – all ‘mainstream’ in their marketing, and almost all ‘mainstream’ in their approach – considering them in this way will highlight the important ways in which they differ from the accounts of genocide survivors, and thus how they can give rise to entirely different interpretations of, and responses to, these other genocides. The issue at hand is one of understanding how the western witnessing individual’s subject position, frameworks of interpretation, and treatment of the historical reality can affect our perceptions of and responses to genocides other than the Holocaust.

Taking an explicitly literary formulation, I propose to consider these characters as ‘western protagonists’, in order to foreground the narrative and dramatic elements characteristic of their written accounts and the films about them – their strong individualism, their appearance as the lead characters in the stories they wrap around themselves – but also to point towards the agency they wield and the active roles which they play but rarely acknowledge in such situations. It also avoids forcing them into the shoes of so-called ‘bystanders’: as witnesses who are often inextricably bound up in genocide’s chronicling, prevention or prosecution, many also attempt to ‘do something’ (by opening the world’s eyes to the tragedy, calling for military intervention, and so on), and almost all do have a direct or more subtle impact upon the course of genocide (through their presence itself, their efforts at intervention, or the limited aid they could give to a few). They blur the lines between observers and participants, and complicate the rather rigid categories of ‘perpetrators, victims and bystanders’ originally delineated by Raul Hilberg to describe the historical actors of the Holocaust.⁷ Simone Gigliotti has suggested that these figures are perhaps better

⁶ Western eyewitnesses are amongst those featured in the USHMM’s exhibition ‘From Memory to Action’ (see http://www.ushmm.org/genocide/take_action/gallery/portraits [accessed 31.12.12]); they also help narrate the CAHE film and are prominent in the Armenian Genocide Museum in Yerevan.

⁷ Raul Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945* (New York: Aaron Asher Books, 1992).

understood as ‘secondary witnesses’, people who witnessed genocide but were not the intended target of it;⁸ while I incorporate her searching insights into the ambiguities and burdens of ‘moral witnessing’, especially since these are crucial to the self-image formation in many of the protagonists’ accounts, I also want to shift the balance away from the passivity also attached to ‘witness’ – those who see, and are affected – towards seeing them in their own way as actors in the theatre of genocide.

It is important to note at the outset, though, just how heterogeneous these autobiographies and films are. The hardened figure of the war journalist is something of a cultural ‘type’, and most of the books and films about them seek to emulate this image; but the voices of those there in a different capacity – such as Roméo Dallaire, French ethnologist François Bizot, forensic anthropologist Clea Koff, UN lawyer Kenneth Cain, or the missionaries and foreign diplomats serving in the Ottoman Empire during World War I – all offer a variety of opinions, perspectives, and experiences. In part because of the more recent development in the market for biographies, personal stories, and films, and also because of the history of direct humanitarian and media involvement in worldwide conflicts, there are far more written accounts and films about Bosnia and Rwanda than there are Armenia or especially Cambodia (given that very few westerners were allowed to enter DK), and as such they will inevitably take the limelight here. Moreover, some protagonists, such as BBC correspondent Kate Adie or journalist Aidan Hartley, are writing of a lifetime spent in war zones, where Rwanda and Bosnia sit alongside the other conflicts of the nineties; others write solely of one genocide, such as BBC war correspondent Martin Bell, or

⁸ Simone Gigliotti, ‘Genocide Yet Again: Scenes of Rwanda and Ethical Witness in the Human Rights Memoir’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 53:1 (2007), 84-95. She discusses Roméo Dallaire, UN lawyer Kenneth Cain, and journalist Aidan Hartley as witnesses who then become ‘writers of atrocity testimony’, ‘ethical bearers of truths and responsibilities to the victims of human rights abuses’ (84, 85). Most of the protagonists I discuss claim the same ethical status (although not all are as traumatised), and I also discuss certain writers who visited after the genocide was over – forensic anthropologist Clea Koff, for example, or journalists Philip Gourevitch and Jean Hatzfeld. Nevertheless, I think the term adequately describes the witnessing function of these western protagonists. In the context of Holocaust testimony, Dominick LaCapra has discussed ‘secondary witnesses’ as oral historians or interviewers of survivors, as ones ‘bearing witness both to the witness and to the object of testimony conveyed by the witness’ (he largely rejects extending this label to historians), rather than ones who directly saw the violence. This exemplifies the point I make throughout this thesis, namely, that viewing Holocaust theory from the vantage point of other genocides can help us refine it. LaCapra’s definition of ‘secondary witnesses’ comes in the course of a discussion of the impermissibility of secondary witnesses assuming the victims’ voice: very strongly, he states that they ‘may not undergo secondary traumatising’ (it is here that he forwards the concept of ‘empathetic unsettlement’). Gigliotti’s suggestion that the status of genocide victim can be extended to some secondary witnesses through trauma (which I discuss further later) is problematic in this regard. LaCapra, ‘Attending to the Victim’s Voice’ in *Catastrophe and Meaning: The Holocaust and the Twentieth Century*, eds. Moishe Postone and Eric Santner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 217-20, especially 227, n.10.

journalists Philip Gourevitch and Jon Swain, while French writer and journalist Jean Hatzfeld has published a novel about Bosnia as well as his three on Rwanda.⁹

Most of the films under consideration feature war correspondents as their main characters – *The Killing Fields*, *Welcome to Sarajevo*, *Harrison's Flowers*, and *The Hunting Party*, or other western protagonists, such as the mercenary in *Savior* or US soldier in *Behind Enemy Lines*, and the documentary and feature film about Dallaire (2004 and 2007) – and westerners are also used as more minor characters to represent a voyeuristic but uncomprehending and non-interventionist west, in every film on Rwanda but perhaps most forcefully in *No Man's Land*. These accounts vary widely in terms of the aspects of the genocides they cover, the depth of history they provide (or not) as background to the conflict, and their own personal reactions to the scenes of violence and murder they witnessed. It follows that my discussion will be broad-ranging and dotted with counter-examples (indeed, it sometimes seems easier to illustrate a trend with a counterexample than several long-winded examples), but analysing them as 'western protagonists' brings out enough core similarities to discuss their impact upon the representation of genocide – and their differences from those of the survivors of genocide.

Drawing from literary theory, postcolonial and other critical studies, as well as theories of anthropology and ethnography, I will ask how viewing genocide through a western protagonist's eyes might affect readers' and viewers' perceptions of, and responses to, genocides other than the Holocaust. The first section considers the protagonists *as* protagonists: the lead characters in their own stories, told in confident and authoritative narratives – and occasionally overly dramatised and glorified, as is common for war journalists – but also observers who write of 'the bruises of being a witness.'¹⁰ In the second section I discuss more broadly the limitations of being an 'outsider' on their experiencing and understanding of genocide, and the interpretive frameworks through which they see and present the events they witnessed. Certain themes and issues which belie an outsider's perspective are present throughout most accounts, while the Holocaust is a commonly-invoked interpretive frame and point of comparison; the

⁹ Kate Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers* (London: Headline, 2002); Aidan Hartley, *The Zanzibar Chest: A Memoir of Love and War* (London: Harper Perennial, 2003); Bell, *In Harm's Way*; Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You*; Swain, *River of Time*; Jean Hatzfeld, *La Guerre au Bord du Fleuve* (Paris: Éditions de l'Olivier, 1999).

¹⁰ Hartley, *Zanzibar Chest*, 225.

accounts of Bosnia and Rwanda, especially, present both themselves and the international community as largely powerless observers, obscuring a more subtle reading of the dynamics of structure and agency. The final section explores issues of voice and representation to develop my analysis of how these films and autobiographies portray the victims of genocide – the ‘primary’ witnesses, on whose behalf many campaigned for intervention. I argue that the protagonists’ mediation of the victims’ words often deprives them of the affective individuality of survivor testimony, presenting them instead as ‘stock’ stories and characters – even if these universalised portrayals of suffering are intended to evoke compassion. Throughout, I show how western eyes and western voices filter and inflect the picture of genocide, and thereby channel western understandings of genocides other than the Holocaust in ways which tend to perpetuate mainstream frameworks of interpretation.

Western Protagonists

The autobiographies of the western protagonists – and the films portraying their experiences – are, in the final analysis, irrevocably about themselves: this is, after all, part of the autobiographical genre. Autobiographies are bought and read as a highly personal account of a life experience, presumably because their writers are found interesting in themselves, or because their experiences define them. These protagonists are the central characters in their own stories: we trail them through the unfolding of the disaster, watching through their eyes and empathising with their feelings, fearing for them in their brushes with death and pain. We are thus doubly removed from the scenes, as genocide becomes something witnessed by others on our behalf.

‘This is not one tale but two: of Bosnia and her children’, opens ITN journalist Michael Nicholson, for example, but his *Natasha’s Story* (1993) is also very much about himself, and his own experiences in Bosnia. The book was filmed as *Welcome to Sarajevo*, where Nicholson’s fictional counterpart Michael Henderson also, inevitably, becomes the centre of attention as he battles to smuggle an orphan back to England. As Milena Michalski and James Gow have argued, although the director’s original intention was to make Sarajevo and its people the subject of the film, *Welcome to Sarajevo* ultimately succumbs to the pull of a well-established genre of war film, where the dangers and dramas of a war zone are shown through the experiences of the

central character, a war journalist, who becomes the focus of interpretation for the audience.¹¹ Like the autobiographies, they are, at core, about the outsider's experience; indeed, this is the staple format for dealing with the breakup of Yugoslavia by most western directors, from *Harrison's Flowers* to *The Hunting Party*, *Savior*, and *Behind Enemy Lines*. Joffé's *The Killing Fields* somewhat complicates this genre (as I shall discuss later), and while neither film about Dallaire has the Hollywood drama veneer, they are of course overridingly focused on the general and his experiences.

These western protagonists have strong, bold and individual personalities – following the Hollywood 'action hero' model (as well as reality), the majority are male¹² – and are motivated by a strong desire to do good in the world. Given the tendency of war reporters to move in 'packs',¹³ it is curious how infrequently foreign correspondents refer to the presence of their colleagues, thus keeping the focus resolutely upon themselves. The exception is Ed Vulliamy's *Seasons in Hell* (1994), in which, for example, he uses the pronoun 'I' only a handful of times. Instead, he consistently cites his colleagues' reports alongside his own so as to present a more authoritative account:

This book inevitably focuses on those few episodes of the war that I witnessed. To attempt anything like a comprehensive picture, I have had to rely on the eyes, ears and work of these colleagues and friends, to become a sort of master of ceremonies and in places to introduce and quote them.¹⁴

¹¹ Michalski and Gow, *War, Image and Legitimacy*, 38-9. These include, for example, Alfred Hitchcock's *Foreign Correspondent* (1940), Peter Weir's *The Year of Living Dangerously* (1982), Roger Spottiswoode's *Under Fire* (1983), and Oliver Stone's *Salvador* (1986).

¹² The only female journalists under consideration here are Kate Adie and Janine di Giovanni. The diplomats serving in the Ottoman Empire were, of course, all male, but the ratio of male to female missionaries (and their diaries or memoirs) much more even. Morgenthau's *Ambassador Morgenthau's Story* is the most prolific of the diplomats' memoirs, but see also Leslie A. Davis, *The Slaughterhouse Province: An American Diplomat's Report on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917* (New Rochelle: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1990); *United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide, 1915 to 1917*, comp. Ara Sarafian (London: Taderon Press/Gomidas Institute, 2004); James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: documents presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon by Viscount Bryce*, ed. Ara Sarafian (Princeton/London: Gomidas Institute, 2005). Of the missionaries, Clarence D. Ussher, *An American Physician in Turkey* (London: Sterndale Classics, 2002); "Turkish Atrocities": *Statements of American Missionaries and the Destruction of Christian Communities in Ottoman Turkey, 1915 to 1917*, comp. James L. Barton (Ann Arbor: Gomidas Institute, 1998) (the majority of missionaries included here are female); Maria Jacobsen, *Diaries of a Danish Missionary: Harpoot, 1907 to 1919*, trans. Kristen Vind (London: Gomidas Institute, 2001); Bertha B. Morley, *Marsovan 1915*, ed. Hilmar Kaiser (Reading: Taderon Press/Gomidas Institute, 1999); Grace H. Knapp, *The Tragedy of Bitlis: Being Mainly the Narratives of Grisell M. McLaren and Myrtle O. Shane* (London: Sterndale Classics, 2002).

¹³ Mark Pedelty labels it 'pack reporting': *War Stories: The Culture of Foreign Correspondents* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 126.

¹⁴ Ed Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia's War* (London: Simon and Schuster, 1994), ix. (This care over authenticity, however, did not spare him from the libellous accusations of Michael Hume and Thomas Deichmann when the LM controversy broke roughly three years after publication.)

In this way, these self-confident narratives, engagingly written and with the discursive authority of the eyewitness, invite us to identify with these central characters and their viewpoint. Many have a distinct travelogue quality to them – the diplomats’ and missionaries’ accounts of the Armenian deportations no less than the journalists’ tours of the former Yugoslavia – as the protagonists set out from familiar shores to dangerous regions, and are swept up in the horrors unfolding therein, with their moments of fear, bewilderment, pain and disgust, and finally return home to bear witness to genocide. In a sense, this classic tripartite division between ‘before, during and after’ mirrors that of many survivor testimonies, but they differ markedly in the emphasis placed on each phase. Whereas, in the service of an interesting, dramatic, or perhaps just focused book, the western protagonists tend to minimise their lives ‘before’ and ‘after’ to concentrate entirely upon the scenes they witnessed, for most survivors it is vital to give a full sense of life before genocide, in order to evoke and mourn the loss of family and community, and often also to convey the difficulty of living in the aftermath, haunted by the mental and physical scars of genocide. Even if the protagonists’ accounts include brief histories of the origins and outbreak of the genocides, therefore, they nevertheless largely begin, and end, *in media res*; amidst the sense of chaos and bloodshed this brings, it is usually harder to gain the same intimate insight into the origins and human impact of genocide. Ryszard Kapuściński’s subtle observations about the chronicling of the wars in Sudan, where ‘history’ is implicitly understood to be written by foreigners, resonate strongly here: ‘History in these parts appears suddenly, descends like a *deus ex machina*, reaps its bloody harvest, seizes its prey, and disappears. What exactly is it?’¹⁵

The narratives follow the protagonists closely, and are sometimes more effective in engendering concern for them, and sympathy for their injuries, than the victims themselves. ‘Mines, pot-shots, stray mortars, mad *mujahedin* and lunatic driving: it’s no surprise that just a month “in theatre” began to see us feeling a little frayed’, comments Adie, whose witty and well-written book does, however, tend to obscure the devastating suffering of the residents of the many war zones she has visited.¹⁶ Likewise, the story of General Dallaire’s experiences in Rwanda, and his post-traumatic stress and suicide attempt in Canada, invites sympathy with his pain,

¹⁵ Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Shadow of the Sun: My African Life*, trans. Klara Glowczewska (London: Penguin, 2002), 198.

¹⁶ Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers*, 312.

although he himself would probably prefer the focus to be on the victims and survivors of the genocide. Sherene Razack has accused Canadian representations of the Rwandan genocide of ‘stealing the pain of others’ (borrowing from Sontag): her criticism of Rayment’s documentary *Shake Hands With the Devil* is caustic, although unfortunately not without basis:

Drawn powerfully into General Dallaire’s suffering, we the viewers understand ourselves to be him. ... His is still the principal story of the genocide. When Rwandans speak of their own loss, as they do only very occasionally in this film, the camera pauses briefly, and moves on to the close-ups that inform us who has really been shattered.¹⁷

Likewise, the death of colleagues also elicits a very personal response which stands in contrast to the multitude of deaths occurring all around – understandably, but with an implicit hierarchy. ‘If you become inured to the suffering of others, and most war correspondents do, this never seems to include the pain of your own casualties’, writes Anthony Loyd candidly in his *My War Gone By, I Miss It So* (2001). ‘A war reporter gets hit and bam, everyone busts a gut to get them out, the driest and most cynical usually leading the charge. “Ours.”’¹⁸ This rarely happens for the ‘locals’, except perhaps for ‘Tuna’ (Tihomir Tunuković, a Croatian cameraman),¹⁹ and more famously for Dith Pran, both ‘fixers’ and translators. At the moment when Schanberg and the other western journalists realise that they can do nothing to save Pran from having to leave the safety of the French Embassy, Jon Swain writes, ‘Our abandonment of him confirmed in me the belief that we journalists were in the end just privileged passengers in transit through Cambodia’s landscape of hell. We were eyewitnesses to a great human tragedy none of us could comprehend.’²⁰

Perhaps most striking is the drama and glamour attached to some of these western protagonists, usually (although not exclusively) the war correspondents, in the films about them and their own autobiographies. As one academic observes, ‘We claim to abhor war, and yet we romanticize the professionals – foreign correspondents, cameramen – who enable us to partake in the experience. Pictures for which photo-journalists risk their lives, and video footage taken by “smart” bombs as they hit their

¹⁷ Sherene H. Razack, ‘Stealing the Pain of Others: Reflections on Canadian Humanitarian Responses’, *The Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 29 (2007), 375-94: 383.

¹⁸ Loyd, *My War Gone By*, 104-5. Indeed, this is the entire plot of *Harrison’s Flowers*.

¹⁹ See Bell, *In Harm’s Way*, 85-96; Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour*, 97-8.

²⁰ Swain, *River of Time*, 156.

target have a large, enthusiastic audience in the West.’²¹ Indeed, of all the various stripes of journalist, foreign correspondents seem to produce the most books about themselves and their exploits, perhaps because publishers (and public) believe theirs are the most interesting ‘tales’ of the profession and will therefore sell well.²² Foreign correspondents are often portrayed, and portray themselves, as heroic risk-takers, adventurous daredevils who risk life and limb to get the story or take the picture; much the same could be said for some of the diplomats’ and (male) missionaries’ reports of life in Ottoman Turkey, where they relate tales of outwitting Turkish officials and Kurdish bandits, of escapades in the hinterland, and desperately trying to protect the Armenian population.²³ As Mark Pedelty notes in his anthropology of war correspondents, ‘The practice of war reporting seems an endless dance with death in the autobiographical texts, a life of constant contact with extreme violence. ... There is scant mention of the countless hours spent sitting in press conferences, interviews, taxis, and offices waiting for something “big” to happen. The time-consuming act of writing is also ignored.’²⁴ Relating the story of a risky decision to travel down a dirt track in search of a Serb-run camp in Bosnia, Maass comments how ‘this war has led to the death or injury of dozens of journalists’, before reflecting:

That’s because the best stories are often ones that somebody is trying to hide, or that are difficult to reach because of fighting. The journalists who get to them are usually the ones willing to run the most risks, which means the scoops often go to the craziest SOB rather than to the best writer or the best analyst. That was part of my unease about working in a war zone; I was competing against loonies. I was almost dismayed by the realization that I had the capacity to act like a crazy SOB, despite my better judgement.²⁵

‘The degree of stupidity in heading down the dirt track cannot be measured. It was way off the chart’, he continues, affirming both his daring and his survival.²⁶ Or, as Adie comments: ‘No old hand sets off towards a major disturbance with anything other than

²¹ Vesna Goldsworthy, ‘Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization’ in *Balkan As Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, eds. Dušan I. Bjelić and Obrad Savić (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 29.

²² Howard Tumber, ‘The Fear of Living Dangerously: Journalists who Report on Conflict’, *International Relations* 20:4 (2006), 439-51: 440.

²³ Ussher’s *American Physician* is full of such encounters and escapes (though see his explanation, 1). See also Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, and Davis, *Slaughterhouse Province*.

²⁴ Pedelty, *War Stories*, 30. Others have built on his insights: see particularly Howard Tumber and Frank Webster, *Journalists Under Fire: Information War and Journalistic Practices* (London: Sage, 2006), Philip Knightley, *The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore/London: John Hopkins University Press, 2004), Greg McLaughlin, *The War Correspondent* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), and Philip Seib, *The Global Journalist: News and Conscience in a World of Conflict* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

²⁵ Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor*, 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 17-18.

apprehension, and a terrific set of legs for running away.’²⁷ Many correspondents also discuss their near-addiction to war zones, and their exhilaration at close scrapes: as Chris Ayres puts it, ‘The thrill of writing an I-nearly-died-a-gruesome-death story is unbeatable... War makes you feel special’ – a sentiment entirely unthinkable for the victims of genocide.²⁸ Loyd’s book is exemplary of this: whilst showing a fierce commitment to reporting the war and its victims, and in fact giving one of the better introductions to the human origins and impact of the Yugoslav wars, his enjoyment is unmissable and his need for heroin when away from the war zone, to recapture its ‘heady glowing rush’, is more troubling. His is an outspoken memoir, and an exceptional case, and yet one gains the impression that his sentiments are not entirely unshared by his colleagues, as his comment that ‘they all want the same thing, a hit off the action, a walk on the dark side’ in the second epigraph to this chapter suggests.

This breathless narration and the telescoping of months spent following a war into a few action-packed scenes often means these accounts echo movie scripts, and indeed some make the comparison explicit. Kenneth Cain, Heidi Postlewait and Andrew Thompson’s collaborative memoir of their years working for the UN, *Emergency Sex (And Other Desperate Measures)* (2006), contains the same high-tension brushes with danger and death, bouts of binge-drinking and wild parties, as well as their more sober thoughts on the humanitarian tragedies of the nineties. ‘So here I am. On a Black Hawk’, marvels Ken, arriving in Mogadishu in 1993. ‘I have a stiff new UN passport and an armed American escort. We have an enemy my father deemed a Nazi and a warrant for his arrest to complete the fantasy. The desert air and sand blast up into the bird from the downdraft of the blades, and I’m in a movie.’²⁹ The drama and storylines of some of the protagonists’ narratives sometimes makes it difficult to distinguish between ‘real life’ and ‘reel life’, and thus also between the protagonists’ dramas and the stark reality on the ground. As Lindsey Hilsum recalls, a US marine colonel in Iraq told her, “‘Out there it’s a cross between *Mad Max* and *Apocalypse Now*,” he said. “You’ll see a lot of high-end kinetics.”’ The truck four behind hers in the convoy was blown up by a landmine shortly after: ‘This, I suppose, was what he meant by “high end kinetics”’. It made spectacular pictures for Channel 4 news. It looked like the

²⁷ Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers*, 232.

²⁸ Chris Ayres, *War Reporting for Cowards: Between Iraq and a Hard Place* (London: John Murray, 2005), 265.

²⁹ Kenneth Cain, Heidi Postlewait, and Andrew Thomson, *Emergency Sex (And Other Desperate Measures): True Stories From A War Zone* (London: Ebury Press, 2006), 104.

movies. But in the 25 years I've spent in and out of war zones I've learned that the bits that look exciting on television are the smallest part of the reality of war and, in many ways, the easiest to report.'³⁰ The danger with this somehow filmic rendering of genocide (as with the protagonists' autobiographies more generally) is that it can displace the more serious monotony of violence and killing, creating instead scenes which are emotionally intense – exhilarating, even – and in this sense, as with those discussed in chapter 2, these accounts also use their medium of literature to convey events vividly, but without really exploiting its potential to add to our sense and understanding of history and genocide.

This situation is often replicated in popular feature films, which also present the war correspondent as courageous, fiercely independent, and intensely committed to the truth. As Pedelty comments, 'While such films also contain implicit critiques of journalism, the protagonists fit squarely within the rugged individualist model of the aforementioned autobiographies. As in the autobiographies, film reporters are unencumbered by editorial censorship and other institutional constraints. The pop culture protagonists ply their trade with near lunatic courage.'³¹ This is especially so for films on Bosnia, and perhaps the most recent and illustrative example can be found in the opening sequences of *The Hunting Party*: bullets whiz around reporter Simon Hunt and his cameraman 'Duck' as they attempt to get close-ups of fighting in an urban war zone, and Duck's voice tells us:

You hear people talk about the horrors of war all the time but, the dirty little secret is, if you're just reporting it, war has its bright side as well. I know, I know, I'm sacrilegious, but, being that close to death – being that *alive* – it's completely addictive. And if anyone tells you otherwise, they are lying. I worked with Simon Hunt for nine years. We worked as a team for the network news covering wars from El Salvador to Desert Storm to the killing fields of Bosnia. No one was crazier than he was. No one was as dangerous, as fun, or as good as he was.

As they dive for cover behind a wall, Simon persuades Duck to go back out to 'shoot some goddamn footage': 'Simon gave me balls I never even knew I had. 'Course, during our years together I got shot four times and Simon never got as much as a scratch. But together we won lots of awards.' While westerners seldom occupy such a central place in films about Rwanda – though they are certainly present – western-directed films about the breakup of Yugoslavia revere their central characters in a

³⁰ Lindsey Hilsum, 'Moving On', *Index on Censorship* 35:1 (2006), 28-31: 28.

³¹ Pedelty, *War Stories*, 30.

similar vein. Both *Welcome to Sarajevo* and *Savior* follow the battles of westerners to rescue a child; in *Harrison's Flowers*, the wounded photojournalist's wife rather improbably arrives in Croatia and, helped by two other journalists, rescues him; in *Behind Enemy Lines*, an American soldier dodges bullets and outruns landmines to defeat his Serb pursuers and retrieve evidence of Serbian concentration camps from a crashed plane.³² In these films, the Balkan wars appear as something of a playground for the western protagonists, the setting for tales of love and rescue, of retribution and outwitting evil; none engage very seriously with the issues of neighbourly violence, ethnic conflict, and political disintegration, in contrast with films originating in the Balkans, such as *No Man's Land*, *Perfect Circle*, or *Pretty Village, Pretty Flame*.

The Killing Fields, too, is usually cited as an excellent example of this genre, but it also deviates in significant ways. Revolving around the relationship between *New York Times* reporter Sydney Schanberg and his Cambodian fixer, Schanberg appears initially as the archetypal foreign correspondent, tearing around in search of the elusive scoop, later caught, held, and almost shot by Khmer Rouge cadre. Yet we also see a demanding, overbearing and unthinking side of his personality at this time, and he is, ultimately, powerless to save Pran when the Khmer Rouge order all Cambodian nationals out of the French embassy. Although the film dwells on Schanberg's anguish and shame throughout the second half, which portrays Pran's experiences during the four years of DK, the film is ultimately as much about the genocide and a Cambodian survivor's experience of it as about Schanberg. As Joffé recalls in the director's commentary, 'I didn't want to make a kind of John-Wayne type movie. You know, where the Marines move in and everything is done to plan, and the casualties are somehow expected and they're heroic and noble. I wanted to make a film about confusion and the anguish of a country.'³³ In this way, *The Killing Fields* combines a very effective portrayal of genocide with a more nuanced and thought-provoking exploration of western witnessing.

As well as these tales of daring escapades and adventurous exploits, however, are more serious reflections on the protagonists' role as witnesses. Often present in an official

³² For a stimulating discussion of this and other films on Bosnia, in particular the dichotomy between western-produced films and those by directors from the former Yugoslavia, see William Van Watson, '(Dis)solving Bosnia: John Moore's *Behind Enemy Lines* and Danis Tanovic's *No Man's Land*', *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 6:1 (2008), 51-65.

³³ Roland Joffé, director's commentary, *The Killing Fields*. See also Michael Dempsey, 'Light Shining in Darkness: Roland Joffé on The Mission', *Film Quarterly* 40:4 (1987), 2-11, especially 10-11.

capacity, whether as journalists or UN soldiers and workers, the majority express a burning desire to ‘do something’, whether filing reports and broadcasting ‘to let the world know’ in the hope of intervention, or railing against and fighting with the UN system to utilise its resources more effectively, like Dallaire and so many others, eventually and almost inevitably becoming jaded in that battle.³⁴ Journalists, certainly, refer to what they see as the crucial social values of their work: ‘The public are perceived as more or less ignorant about world affairs, and the journalist-witness has to open their eyes to the world’s brutal reality’,³⁵ observes Howard Tumber, in his study of foreign correspondents. ‘Being a witness to what was happening was everything’,³⁶ argues Jeremy Bowen, while for Cain, ‘There is no ambiguity here. I am a witness. I have a voice. I have to write it down.’³⁷ The missionaries and diplomats who were present during the deportations of the Armenians were acutely aware of their role as witnesses, especially given the obfuscations and denial which already accompanied the deportations themselves; Clarence Ussher, especially, wanted to set down his account because ‘As the Armenians of Van were believed to have rebelled against the Ottoman Government, it is important that the facts of the case should be made widely known ... their actual loyalty, their patience under almost unimaginable provocation, and their heroism when loyalty and patience proved of no avail ... I speak of what I do know by the witness of my own eyes and ears’.³⁸ Even those who visited after the genocide, such as Gourevitch, Hatzfeld, or Koff, situate themselves to some degree as witnesses to the genocide, if only through its aftermath and survivor testimonies.

Most profess a need or even duty to bear witness, to inform others of what they have seen, and many also admit that witnessing genocide deeply affected them: ‘I have written [this book] because this war has mattered to me more than anything else I have lived through, and still does; and I felt the need to attempt a more permanent record of

³⁴ As Cain did, after his years as a UN lawyer: ‘I planned to harness the power of an ascendant America to personally undo the Holocaust. Don’t laugh. We were young. We weren’t the first, and won’t be the last, to venture forth overseas with grand ideas.’ (*Emergency Sex*, 295). Cain eventually left the UN, disillusioned, although he has campaigned for reform. See Dawes, *That The World May Know*, chapter 3 (‘Burnout’), especially 142-3.

³⁵ Tumber, ‘Fear of Living Dangerously’, 445, citing Philip Seib, *Beyond the Front Lines: How the News Media Cover a World Shaped by War* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 52-4, 84-5.

³⁶ Jeremy Bowen, *War Stories* (London: Pocket Books, 2006), 147.

³⁷ Cain, Postlewait and Thompson, *Emergency Sex*, 295.

³⁸ Ussher, *American Physician*, 1. Morgenthau acted as a kind of hub for reports, sending as many as he could to Washington despite the displeasure of and obstacles posed by the Turkish authorities. See *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 249, and Barton, “*Turkish Atrocities*”, compiled from testimonial reports by American missionaries, which are clearly written as documentation, in response to a circular sent around by Barton (which asked them to differentiate between what they themselves saw and what they heard or believed to be true).

what happened and how we dealt with it than that which is available in a breathless minute and forty-two seconds on the evening news', wrote Bell.³⁹ Reading the autobiographies of those who covered more than one conflict – Adie, Bowen, Bell, Hartley, and the UN trio Cain, Postlewait and Thompson – one senses that the genocides they witnessed (here, Bosnia and Rwanda) had a deeper effect upon them than 'ordinary' wars. Their experiences in Sarajevo or Rwanda are cast as extreme events, different to 'ordinary' war zones; they spend longer describing the scenes of carnage and reflecting upon human nature and violence.

A few, however, set themselves apart by communicating a very real sense of being traumatised by the scenes they witnessed, and their helplessness to prevent the carnage. Simone Gigliotti has discussed the writings of Dallaire, Cain and Hartley on Rwanda in this regard (I would add Fergal Keane's *Season of Blood* (1995) and Fred Doucette's *Empty Casing* (2008)), and suggests that these authors 'undergo a transgression from observer to victim of genocide through the process of becoming morally engaged and committed to the scenes of the genocide's ruins in the form of violated, murdered, and unprotected bodies.'⁴⁰ I am uncomfortable with her extension of victimhood to these secondary witnesses, on the grounds that whilst they were present during and deeply affected by the events, they were not the intended targets of it, and, crucially, their sense of self and identity is affected in quite different ways⁴¹ – but her analysis of their status as ethical witnesses, and how trauma is figured in their texts, is thought-provoking. 'Words frequently fail me when it comes to Rwanda', begins Hartley, one of the few journalists who entered Rwanda in the immediate aftermath of the genocide.

I have no mementos I'd want to display from that time. There are big gaps in my memory. I am unable to recall so much of the people, events, conversations, entire weeks of experience. Outside the many lapses, the parts I do recall are explosively vivid. ... It seems the images were branded on my retina, like photographic film.⁴²

³⁹ Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 1. An article by Ed Vulliamy echoes this sentiment: 'This War Has Changed My Life', *British Journalism Review* 4:2 (1993), 5-11.

⁴⁰ Gigliotti, 'Genocide Yet Again', 86.

⁴¹ Both western protagonists and victims may, instantly or with time, develop an identity as a moral witness. Westerners may be exposed to danger because of their identities as (potential) witnesses, but they are not targeted under a genocidal schema because of their (imputed) identity in the way that Armenians, Jews, and so on, were. (Cambodia is an exception here.)

⁴² Hartley, *Zanzibar Chest*, 388-9.

He describes their discovery of the church at Nyamata, with bodies strewn everywhere:

I have come to know these men and women with a unique intimacy. I won't ever forget those people at Nyamata church. Some of them were less than human. They had lost heads, limbs and all form. But there was something very alive about the scene. They were not dead and gone. As I watched, I felt as if I were witnessing their murders before my very own eyes. ... I saw all of this and the memory of it remains encased in amber. Yet it all happened in a split second, in the time it took me to stop and look down in the grass at that limb, and move on.⁴³

As Gigliotti comments, Hartley's normally fairly precise writing style becomes fragmented and strangely blurred as he recounts their fatigued travelling across Rwanda without adequate transport, interspersed with graphic and intimate visions of wounding and massacre.⁴⁴ Dallaire's trauma is primarily figured in his text through his careful documentation of his efforts to persuade the UN to allow him to intervene, coupled with his overwhelming frustration and helplessness at their refusal; Doucette's *Empty Casing*, his account of his time in Bosnia as a UN observer, forms something of a parallel.⁴⁵ Keane frames his *Season of Blood* with his recurrent dreams about Rwanda; the opening pages describe the horrific images and scenes he sees, his feelings of distressed helplessness, and he writes in the final pages, 'At the very outset I asked what it was that dreams asked of us. Perhaps they request something very ordinary: simply that we do not forget.'⁴⁶ He represents himself throughout the book as wanting nothing more than not to have seen what he saw; his is also the one which conveys the sense most strongly that he is writing, in part, for catharsis.

With or without the accompanying sense of trauma, these passages establish the western protagonists as moral witnesses. But the scenes they witnessed also produce a desire to intervene, despite – for the journalists and UN peacekeepers – professional restrictions; their agonising over these contradictions has echoes in the scholarly discipline of anthropology, especially the nascent field of the anthropology of violence, where questions revolve around cultural understandings of violence, the difficulties of writing about it, and especially the appropriate distance to take from the scenes anthropologists witness. Most of the protagonists write with at least a nod, if not several reflective passages, towards the attendant dilemmas of witnessing which Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois have outlined:

⁴³ Ibid., 389.

⁴⁴ Gigliotti, 'Genocide Yet Again', 91-2.

⁴⁵ Dallaire, *Shake Hands With the Devil*; Doucette, *Empty Casing*.

⁴⁶ Keane, *Season of Blood*, 191.

[T]he rules of our living-in and living-with peoples in dramatic flux, often on the verge of extermination, remain as yet unwritten, perhaps even unspoken. There is no appropriate distance to take from our subjects during torture, lynching, or rape. What kinds of participant-observation, what sort of eye-witnessing, are adequate to scenes of genocide and its aftermath, or even to structural violence and ethnocide? When the anthropologist is witness to crimes against humanity mere scientific empathy is not sufficient. At what point does the anthropologist as eye-witness become a bystander or even a co-conspirator?⁴⁷

In the end, the protagonists' frustration at their inability to effect decisive intervention, and their pride at what they *did* manage to achieve,⁴⁸ makes for a curiously double discourse; the passivity usually implied in the word 'witness', coupled with their frequent assertions of helplessness and powerlessness, obscures the agency – albeit limited – which they wielded, and the more subtle effects of their presence in the theatre of genocide. Martin Bell's *In Harm's Way* (1996) is illustrative: while on the one hand he is categorical that they 'could do nothing to prevent it' (21), and that the British peacekeeping forces 'pushed [the mandate] to the limit, but even at the limit it allowed them to do very little' (193),⁴⁹ in other, less forcefully-written lines, he argues that the journalists 'were to some extent responsible for [the UN's] deployment' (29), and that the news pieces had a direct effect on foreign policy (141-5); he also speaks of journalistic 'crusades', either to influence policy, or to set up orphanages or indeed rescue children from them (22, 39, 78-9, 142), as is the plot of *Welcome to Sarajevo*. On the ground, journalists also shared vital information with diplomats and the UN, he notes (23, 30), acted as guarantors of prisoner exchanges (34), and had daily dealings with 'the warlords' (141); it is here that he acknowledges that 'As a result we were hardly main players ourselves, but not mere bystanders either. Our role, in the theatre of the Bosnian war, was partly that of messengers, and partly lamplighters, for we tried to cast some light on those dark places' (141).

Most journalists will highlight this role as 'messengers' – echoed by the films – but this is also the source of their disillusionment and feeling of impotence, especially

⁴⁷ Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Philippe Bourgois, 'Introduction: Making Sense of Violence' in *Violence in War and Peace: An Anthology*, eds. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 26-7. See also Scheper-Hughes, 'The Primacy of the Ethical: Propositions for a Militant Anthropology', *Current Anthropology* 36:3 (1995), 409-40; Alexander Laban Hinton, ed., *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Neil Whitehead, 'Guest Editorial: Rethinking Anthropology of Violence', *Anthropology Today* 20:5 (2004), 1-2.

⁴⁸ Cf. Dawes, *That The World May Know*, 122.

⁴⁹ He then quotes a member of the British battalion: 'We are powerless under the present mandate to prevent this genocide taking place on a holocaust-like proportion'. See also 22, 129.

when faced with the bitterness of local populations who realise the world will not act.⁵⁰ But as Bell's comments above intimate, and I think needs underscoring, the western protagonists *are* players in the theatre of genocide, if without the type of agency they would most like. Their mere presence affects perpetrator behaviour, just as it also gave victims hope – as suggested by the missionaries' and consuls' fears of what would become of the Armenians if they were ordered to return to America or Europe; they did have a more direct influence in the way that those in Bosnia and Rwanda did not, both in remonstrating and pleading with the authorities, in hiding Armenians, and caring for the sick within their compounds; they had little impact on the general course of genocide, but could save individual lives – the corollary of this being the flight of the white nuns and expats from Rwanda, or perhaps the UN 'safe areas' in Bosnia (while they lasted). As well as acting as a deterrent, though, in individual situations it is quite possible to imagine that the presence of the cameras acted to escalate violence: several journalists uncomfortably tell of travelling to the front lines and having soldiers offer to shoot, or for *them* to shoot: 'A vague misgiving flittered through my mind as I wondered how much Marko's attention to his task was intensified by my presence', writes Lloyd.⁵¹ Equally, given the position of the camera, it is hard to imagine that Arkan's Tigers were *unaware* of Ron Haviv's presence as he took the infamous photograph of a paramilitary kicking his victims on the pavement in Bijeljina.⁵² The western protagonists, then, are not just protagonists in their own stories, but also protagonists in a quite real sense; their agency is limited but they do play a role in the theatre of genocide, something often obscured by their self-identification as powerless witnesses, and which again distorts the dynamic of genocide to focus squarely on the perpetrators and victims. Presenting their accounts only as 'what they saw' also does not call attention to the frames through which they interpret, and represent, genocide.

Through Western Eyes

The protagonists' experience is, at core, an outsider's experience, and this also brings questions of epistemology, interpretation, and presentation into play.⁵³ With what

⁵⁰ E.g. Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 21, 129.

⁵¹ Lloyd, *My War Gone By*, 34, 35, 29, 147; Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 172-3; Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour*, 110. Cf. Hartley, *Zanzibar Chest*, 411, where he lists the multiple occurrences in which he could have helped, but chose not to 'interfere', as he saw it then.

⁵² Haviv, *Blood and Honey*, n.p.

⁵³ The debates surrounding what became known as 'epistemological hypochondria' (Clifford Geertz, *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist As Author* (Cambridge: Polity, 1988), 71) within the discipline of

authority can they really speak of ‘somebody else’s suffering’, of other cultures visited at such moments of extremity? These are not the texts of historians, or political scientists, or anthropologists – neither are the survivors’, although they, the protagonists, and many filmmakers often co-opt timelines, maps and other documentary material into their accounts. Nevertheless, many protagonists write of the origins, history, and impact of genocide in an authoritative and definitive style. The perspective and interpretive frameworks of an outsider deeply inform their presentation of what they witnessed, however; as is so frequently noted in critical studies, discourses of cultural ‘others’ often have as much to do with perceptions and constructions of history and experience, as with reality itself. This section focuses on how far these western viewpoints, if they can be termed that, reproduce and perpetuate the already familiar (and problematic) understandings of genocide, underscoring them with the authority of the western eyewitness.

Some do explicitly draw attention to their status as outsiders, like Peter Maass in the epigraph to this chapter, or Jeremy Bowen when he writes that ‘It was impossible not to identify with the people who were caught up in the siege, but we were just visitors. ... And it was not our friends and relations who were getting killed and maimed. Our homes weren’t being destroyed. It wasn’t our city, though it started feeling that way sometimes.’⁵⁴ Thus, while sometimes exposed to the same levels of danger – as in Sarajevo, for instance – they were, nevertheless, not one of the targeted group. ‘I was fine. I had money. I could eat and I could leave. I could savour discomfort as an experience rather than be overwhelmed by it. But in the cold shells of their houses, in the crowded refugee centres, in the concrete cells of their flats, the Bosnians suffered’, writes Loyd,⁵⁵ or, as Bell comments, ‘we had so many advantages that real people,

anthropology, following the ‘literary turn’ of the 1970s and 1980s, underpin my reading here. These constituted a soul-searching into exactly how (anthropologist) outsiders can ever really *know* or claim to understand the cultures that they describe, a questioning of the textual and rhetorical strategies employed by ethnographers to assert authority, and a heightened awareness of how the particular cultural, institutional, and political influences upon the anthropologist may (consciously or unconsciously) guide their interpretations. The staples for this theoretical field are Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 2000 [1973]); Geertz, *Works and Lives*; James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1986); James Clifford, ‘On Ethnographic Authority’, *Representations* 1:2 (1983), 118-46.

⁵⁴ Bowen, *War Stories*, 143-4. The accounts of the missionaries in Ottoman Turkey are slightly different in that they speak of their ‘flocks’ with the familiarity and affection of those who have lived there for some time, but equally with precisely the kind of disparaging discourses of ‘race’ and ‘backwardness’ which one might expect – and the content of their narratives means that both they and the present-day reader remain well aware of their status as outsiders.

⁵⁵ Loyd, *My War Gone By*, 166.

facing equal dangers, did not. We were there of our own free will, they were not. We could escape, they could not. We had United Nations accreditations and the use of its best field hospitals, they did not.’⁵⁶ Many war correspondents speak metaphorically of their cameras or flak jackets as barriers – both filters for the scenes of horrors, and protection unavailable to the ‘locals’ – which function as signs of difference;⁵⁷ their view of the bloodshed cannot be as personal as for those losing their families and community, and it gives rise to different responses. Horrified at his discovery of three brutally murdered Bosnian Muslim women in a village, Loyd writes:

Yet we were outsiders. For Bosnians who had lost family or friends in such a way, whether it was Stupni Do or Uzdol, the hunger for retribution would be all the stronger and less easily assuaged. What we had seen that day was just the tiniest fraction of what was going on in the surrounding hills and forests. The key to our reaction lay not in feeling anger, but in the understanding it brought of how easily such atrocities provoked a response in kind.⁵⁸

Loyd brings out an important point rarely made by those showing atrocity images – that in such conflicts these images can provide impetus for further or future atrocities – whilst acknowledging that there is always a subjective distance between the protagonists and the victims of genocide, even as they may be physically proximate.

It is the nature of war correspondents’ work that they ‘parachute’ into a zone of conflict, largely uninformed of the history, language and culture of the regions of which they subsequently write. Experiencing as outsiders, protagonists also come to write as outsiders – the interpretive frames they arrive with will in part determine their experience, and their writing⁵⁹ – and most protagonists take recourse to established frameworks of interpretation and representation to ‘explain’ genocide, including the crudest characterisations. As Susan Carruthers noted, referring to the media coverage of humanitarian disasters in Africa in the 1990s, ‘these parachutists predictably plunder a stock of well-worn clichés, stereotypes, and pre-scripted storylines: of African tribalism, implacable enmities, unspeakable evil, maniacs with machetes, and benefactors in blue berets’; and, she continues, ‘journalists who reflect retrospectively on their African days tend not to do much better a job of explaining the deep roots of

⁵⁶ Bell, *In Harm’s Way*, 82.

⁵⁷ E.g. Ibid., 127; Bowen, *War Stories*, 143; Loyd, *My War Gone By*, 22.

⁵⁸ Loyd, *My War Gone By*, 154.

⁵⁹ As Joan W. Scott has written, ‘Experience is at once always already an interpretation *and* something that needs to be interpreted.’ Scott, ‘The Evidence of Experience’, *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (1991), 773-797: 797.

the continent's crises, however much remission from the deadlines they may enjoy for rumination.⁶⁰ A few, such as Michael Nicholson, are completely unselfconscious in their descriptions of the violence as 'mediaeval', or offhand claims that 'The two tribes share the same language but have little else in common. ... The ferocity of the Balkan peoples has at times been so primitive that anthropologists have likened them to the Amazon's Yanomamo, one of the world's most savage and primitive tribes.'⁶¹ Others, like Adie, might point out the incorrectness of characterising people who 'look different' as 'primitive' or 'mediaeval', but then blithely continue to use such terms throughout their texts.⁶² As Rebecca Gould has commented, then, often 'categories which would be outlawed in most humanities discourses are adopted in political science and journalistic discourse as *de rigueur*... Particularly when the object of observation is little known, expectations dictate outcome; the ostensible subject matter is often a mere medium for prejudice, politics and exoticising projections.'⁶³

Less attuned to local histories, cultures, and symbols, the protagonists may also pass over the significance of certain narratives or events. While many profess complete boredom with the 'history lectures' they were constantly 'subjected to' during the breakup of Yugoslavia – 'In the Balkans, you don't need to ask for history lessons, because they come at you all the time, uninvited and long-winded...'⁶⁴ – these mythical narratives of nationhood (Adie dismisses them as 'superstitions')⁶⁵ nevertheless provide a window into the way in which these hegemonic narratives create, and then destroy, identities and communities. Many 'Muslims', like many 'Tutsi' and many 'Jews', only began to feel 'Muslim', 'Tutsi' or 'Jewish' in response to such narratives. Likewise, westerners rarely understood, or even knew about, the role that the American bombing of Cambodia played in the rise and radicalisation of the Khmer Rouge, which was something Joffé wanted to explore in his film: 'It was about not understanding, and it was about the rigidity of not understanding, and we learn about this through the relationship of Sydney and Pran. Up to the turning point of

⁶⁰ Susan L. Carruthers, 'Tribalism and Tribulation: Media Constructions of "African Savagery" and "Western Humanitarianism" in the 1990s' in *Reporting War: Journalism in Wartime*, eds. Stuart Allan and Barbie Zelizer (London/New York: Routledge, 2004), 155-73: 165-6.

⁶¹ Nicholson, *Natasha's Story*, 141, 16.

⁶² Compare Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers*, 249, 302 with 120-1, 292-3, 300.

⁶³ Rebecca Gould, 'The Engaged: Politkovskaya and the Politics of Representing War', *spacesofidentity.net* 7:2 (2007), online at <https://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/soi/article/view/7969/7099> [accessed 15.09.12].

⁶⁴ Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor*, 24.

⁶⁵ Adie, *The Kindness of Strangers*, 300.

the film, Sydney consistently underestimates that Pran is a man in terms of his potential'⁶⁶ – or, as Thompson referred to Cain early on in their memoirs about their time with the UN, 'another clueless American in a country that America carpet-bombed.'⁶⁷ Indeed, François Bizot is perhaps the only westerner well-qualified enough to give something of a 'cultural translation' of the events he witnessed, being fluent in Khmer and having lived in Cambodia for many years before his ordeal.⁶⁸

More generally, these films and books fall into the 'closed narratives' discussed in the previous chapter. Again, this is partly a function of their being 'parachuted' in – they are foreign correspondents, not area specialists (and thus also miss the gradual and contingent escalation into violence and genocide) – but it is also because they are in the main structured as eyewitness narratives, focusing on their encounters at roadblocks and their interviews with politicians, the suffering of the victims they met, and the carnage they witnessed. However, a major and even overriding theme which preoccupies almost all of the protagonists' accounts, in a way which partly distinguishes theirs from survivor testimonies, is that of 'the international community' – in their calls for intervention, for a revised UN mandate, or discussions of their own voyeurism and the notion of the 'CNN effect'. While many Rwandans and Bosnians express bitterness at the failure of the international community to intervene decisively, and at the ineffectiveness or even complicity of UN troops or journalists (as parodied most excellently in *No Man's Land*), none go to the extent of the entirely accusatory texts of David Rieff or David Rohde,⁶⁹ nor is it an overriding concern or frequent topic in the same way as for Dallaire and so many of those who were present at the time. The same is true of feature films, where the themes of international inaction or inept intervention loom large in, for example, *Welcome to Sarajevo*, *Hotel Rwanda*, and *Shooting Dogs*. The international community is, again, figured as indifferent, uncaring, and passive⁷⁰ – a characterisation which, again, sidesteps the deeper, more active roles played by geopolitics, regional contexts and histories, and the globalisation of the economy and society.

⁶⁶ Dempsey, 'Light Shining in Darkness', 10.

⁶⁷ Cain, Postlewait and Thompson, *Emergency Sex*, 55.

⁶⁸ See *The Gate* and *Facing the Torturer*; this, and the humility with which he writes, are in part why he does not really feature in this chapter.

⁶⁹ David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (London: Vintage, 1995); David Rohde, *Endgame: The Betrayal and Fall of Srebrenica, Europe's Worst Massacre Since World War II* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997).

⁷⁰ E.g. Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 38, 40-1, 190-1; Bowen, *War Stories*, 168-9; Janine di Giovanni, *The Quick and the Dead: Under Siege in Sarajevo* (London: Phoenix, 1994), 43-4, 118

The exceptions here are those who witnessed the Armenian genocide, who were far more cognisant of (indeed were representatives of) Great Power politics, peppering their accounts with references to historic allegiances, the Balkan wars, Armenian sophistication through exposure to the west, and (something they themselves believed in) notions of immutable and incompatible ‘races’ – although they also sometimes misattribute responsibility for driving genocide on to Germany.⁷¹ But in accounts of more recent genocides, the inaction of the international community is a major framing device through which the protagonists represent genocide. These texts, then, are engaged with and constitutive of a particularly western set of discourses, embodying the outsider’s perspective and at something of a remove from the issues and concerns facing the victims and survivors of genocide. As Heike Härting has observed, ‘In the popular imagination, the Rwandan genocide frequently figures as a humanitarian narrative of international moral irresponsibility and ignorance. Subsequently, cultural responses to the genocide take the west as their primary critical reference rather than the genocide’s political dimension or its dominant modes of representation.’⁷²

The Holocaust is another dominant interpretive frame through which these protagonists witness genocide – most frequently in accounts of Bosnia, but often also in discussions of Rwanda. As a cultural point of reference common to the protagonists and their audiences, the Holocaust figures variously as an occasional point of comparison, a moral compass underpinning calls for intervention, or a filter or screen through which events are seen; writers with Jewish background are, as might be expected, much more likely to make this comparison. As I suggested in chapter 1, survivor testimonies tend to reference the Holocaust only rarely, or in different ways, and the Holocaust as an interpretive trope thus remains a particularly western discourse. It is important to note that not all the protagonists make such extensive use of the Holocaust – the three discussed by Gigliotti are somewhat unrepresentative in this regard; it figures only rarely in Adie’s account, while Bell makes at least as many

⁷¹ Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, chapters 1-15; Ussher, *American Physician*, especially 111-14. See Bloxham, *Great Game*, 115-33. Vahakn Dadrian continues the earlier and incorrect argument in his *German Responsibility in the Armenian Genocide: A Review of the Historical Evidence of German Complicity* (Cambridge, MA: Blue Crane Books, 1996).

⁷² Heike Härting, ‘Global Humanitarianism, Race, and the Spectacle of the African Corpse in Current Western Representations of the Rwandan Genocide’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28:1 (2008), 61-77: 64. Cf. Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda*, 61-2; he demonstrates that in Britain and the US, ‘public interest was largely confined to humanitarian assistance and charity appeals ... French journalists covered intervention issues (Goma refugees; *Opération Turquoise*) but not the genocide itself’ (61); Belgian and Dutch coverage overall was better-informed and more nuanced.

references to the First as the Second World War, Loyd is fairly dismissive of his own family history as both perpetrators and victims during the Holocaust, and Courtemanche makes scant mention of it in *A Sunday at the Pool*.

Aside from their frequent offhand, but cumulatively systematic, comparisons with the Holocaust,⁷³ the protagonists most often use the Holocaust as the moral underpinning for calls for intervention. Indeed, while Bell makes little reference overall, the Holocaust figures strongly in the closing pages of his book as, reflecting back on the last four years, he struggles to make sense of the conflict and the international community's reticence, and takes recourse to a discussion of the Holocaust. 'On a strict calculation of national interest Srebrenica was none of our business. ... But if you put history into fast rewind, and follow this argument back over fifty years, you will see its destination with chilling clarity. Was Buchenwald none of our business? Were Auschwitz and Birkenau none of our business? The case collapses under the weight of history, and of its own invidiousness', he writes; or, as Maass observes more succinctly, 'In spare moments, I amused myself with a question: If journalists had found gas chambers next to the camps, would Washington have reacted differently in the pre-election summer of 1992?'⁷⁴ Such appeals are invocations of the rallying cry of 'Never Again', exposing its hollowness whilst paradoxically invoking its sentiment.

These references illuminate how other genocides are experienced, written, and then read, within western post-Holocaust discourses about genocide and mass atrocity. As Petar Ramadanović's analysis of an American journalist's writings on Bosnia makes clear, the perceptions, meanings and inferences that western witnesses and audiences draw from the events they see may be entirely different from those of the perpetrators or victims:

Nor did the Serbs create camps to remind the West of the Second World War. It is also not very likely that the Jewish center meant for the Serbs what it means in Danner's text, where it is a reminder of the link between today's Bosnia and the Holocaust.⁷⁵

⁷³ See chapter 1 for quoted examples, or, to give a sense of the range of 'systematic': Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 19, 38, 138, 181, 193, 203, 217, 230, 232, 299; Bowen, *War Stories*, 127, 163; Cain, Postlewait, and Thompson, *Emergency Sex*, 165, 206, 207, 244, 295; Doucette, *Empty Casing*, 79, 111, 112, 133; Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You*, opening page and 65, 71, 96, 149, 151-2, 157, 170, 252, 316; Loyd, *My War Gone By*, 63, 72-3; Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour*, 5, 19, 28, 37, 39, 41, 44, 45, 46, 60, 63, 65, 68, 70, 75, 115, 160, 170, 206, 214, 238-9, 242, 246, 262. Most survivor testimonies make three to five specific references to the Holocaust.

⁷⁴ Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 299; Maass, *Love Thy Neighbour*, 63.

⁷⁵ Petar Ramadanović, 'Simonides on the Balkans' in *Balkan As Metaphor*, eds. Bjelić and Savić, 356.

Jean Hatzfeld's trilogy of books about Rwanda provide a case in point: while presented as a collection of testimonies, his own, largely unacknowledged influence on the texts is considerable. The Holocaust defines his approach to the Rwandan genocide: *A Time for Machetes*, particularly, is littered with extended comparisons with the Holocaust – all his own, and backed up with references to Holocaust historians (Browning and Hilberg). Familiar tropes, such as genocide's impact on the survivors' faith in God, stories of 'the Just' who protected innocents at risk to their own lives, and the issues of forgiveness, silence and unspeakability pervade and structure his texts, even where they do not really apply.⁷⁶ Other concerns, which may be closer to lived experience for Rwandans but appear less interesting to westerners, are absent (perhaps too 'current' to be relevant, or too uncomfortable to be included) – such as the nature of Kagame's regime, the tensions across the Congo border, *gacaca* trials, or living with Tutsi returnees and their relations with international aid workers. Hatzfeld is hardly alone in his overwhelming preoccupation with the Holocaust – which also haunts the texts of Gourevitch, Maass, Cain, Gutman and Vulliamy – but he does exemplify the tendency for western protagonists to filter and inflect their accounts of genocide through the Holocaust. Many, then, fall back on established frameworks and impressionistic remarks to 'explain' the violence, couching them in culturally resonant ways, while their own feelings of helplessness, confusion and revulsion may well enhance the overall feeling of inexplicability and alienation conveyed to the audience.

Survivors' Words, Western Voices

Given the 'unexplained force' and quiet power of the survivor's voice in our contemporary culture, and also that the victims of genocide are central to the protagonists in their role as moral witnesses (and also the guarantors of 'never again': see chapter 5), it is worth considering how victim testimonies are presented in these narratives by and of western protagonists. Much recent critical literature (across

⁷⁶ Hatzfeld, for example, insists rather peculiarly throughout his books that survivors of genocide (whether the Rwanda genocide or the Holocaust, which is his main point of comparison and in all likelihood the root of this idea) remain 'silent' after their ordeal, and are reticent or withdrawn in telling their stories: 'At the end of a war, survivors feel a strong need to bear witness; after a genocide, on the contrary, the survivors strangely long for silence. Such withdrawal is disturbing.' (*Into the Quick of Life*, ix; see viii-ix, and 129; *Strategy of Antelopes*, 78-9.) This insistence contrasts with, firstly, the survivors' general willingness to speak with him, and the many times that they refer to speaking about the genocide amongst themselves (e.g. *Into the Quick of Life*, 16, 26, 37, 94, etc.) Perhaps, as he allows, it is more that they are wary of speaking to foreigners (*Into the Quick of Life*, ix), and, as one sees from his comments that this 'silence' is 'disturbing' or 'unsettling', it is more of a personal issue for him.

several disciplines) has been concerned with the issues of ‘voice’ and silencing, of ‘ethnographic authority’ and of who has the ‘power to narrate’.⁷⁷ As some have noted, however, much of this work has tended to move in heavily textualised domains, somewhat abstracted from the hard reality during discussions of ethics, morality, and structures of power.⁷⁸ While it would be very easy to follow the dominant line of criticism and argue, within its ethical rubric, that the western protagonists’ self-confident and assertive narratives ultimately overpower and silence the victims’ words, thus condemning these autobiographies and films outright, it is more productive to consider how these voices are mediated and presented, how they function within the protagonists’ narratives, and whether they can still be said to operate in the same way as, for example, Saul Friedländer claims for the voices used within his own work.⁷⁹

The victims feature in these books and films in diverse ways: sometimes almost completely in the background, hardly appearing at all in films such as *Behind Enemy Lines*, *Harrison’s Flowers*, *The Hunting Party* and *Savior*, and only rarely being quoted in the autobiographies of Bell, Bowen, or Adie. In some, like *Welcome to Sarajevo*, the heartfelt but slightly patronising enthusiasm of the western protagonists rather swamps the victims into the role of needy subject. Others, though, such as Vulliamy, Maass, and Gourevitch, allow the victims to narrate their stories alongside their own voices, or structure their texts entirely around the survivors, like Hatzfeld. By and large, they cannot escape the problems which the critical literature has highlighted – of editing and framing the victims’ testimony, and presenting it in overly formulaic ways, as I shall discuss in a moment – but neither are the victims’ voices completely silenced or overridden: the victims of genocide are, perhaps, less silenced, than allowed to speak only in particular ways.

Certainly, many have observed that testimony, while increasingly cherished, appears to be ‘esteemed in the abstract’, acclaimed rather than listened to.⁸⁰ As Wendy Hesford argues, survivors and their testimonies can function as ‘empathetic markers’, designed

⁷⁷ Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), xiii.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Malkki’s excellent ‘Speechless Emissaries’, 377-404. Malkki finds that in this sort of work, ‘the potential political stakes in having or not having a voice have slipped beyond the immediate field of vision’ (379; also 386-90).

⁷⁹ Again, see Friedländer’s introductions in both volumes of *Nazi Germany and the Jews*. I shall return to a discussion of Friedländer’s work in this context shortly.

⁸⁰ See especially Greenspan, ‘Imagining Survivors’; Greenspan, *On Listening to Holocaust Survivors: Beyond Testimony*, 2nd edition (St. Paul: Paragon House, 2010); Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror*, xii, 154; Hesford, ‘Rhetorical Witnessing’, 104-44.

primarily to elicit sympathy and emotion rather than narrate the story.⁸¹ Amos Goldberg has suggested something similar about Saul Friedländer's use of the voices of victims in his recent work, arguing that in the 'era of the witness', the victims' voices no longer communicate the same sense of shock, disbelief, and excess. Instead,

[T]o a certain extent, in our current culture the excessive voices of the victims have exchanged their epistemological, ontological, and ethical revolutionary function for an aesthetic one. They operate according to the pleasure principle in order to bring us, consumers of Holocaust images, the most expected image of the "unimaginable," which therefore generates a melancholic pleasure.⁸²

Likewise, as Cubilié argues, there is a tendency to present 'stock' stories, which are familiar and therefore somehow already known, and which may foreclose a real engagement with their content:

The iconic representation of atrocity ... serves a spectatorial as much as or more than a witnessing function. This "already knowing" when faced by the visibility of the scar relieves us of the burden of bearing witness to the witness of the survivor. It marks the survivor as supplement, as both excessive to and foundation of the symbolic, and disappears him or her once again through the spectatorial act of distanced identification.⁸³

As she points out, 'we privilege voice and individuality in the face of death and repression, but only in the stories that we are prepared to hear, not necessarily the stories survivors would tell if we listened differently.'⁸⁴ Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith also note the homogenising effect that collections of testimonies edited and published by human rights groups often have:

Although they provide evidence of a range of experiences that particularize the effects of rights violations and government policies and practices on individual lives, they also format, however, the different stories in standardised structures and thematics of presentation. Juxtaposing multiple narratives, they cast a patina of anonymity (even if names are included) and uniformity upon the witnesses. Framed by scholar/activists, they impose frameworks from the cultural location of the editor onto narratives coming from distinctively different locales. And, while they encourage empathetic identification, that identification comes at the potential cost of reducing differences to sameness.⁸⁵

⁸¹ Hesford, 'Rhetorical Witnessing', 105.

⁸² Goldberg, 'The Victim's Voice', 220-37: 231. The designation of our contemporary culture as 'the era of the witness' is Annette Wieviorka's: see her *The Era of the Witness*, trans. Jared Stark (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁸³ Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror*, 154.

⁸⁴ Ibid., xii. She argues (xii, n.2) that survivors' stories function similarly to Zelizer's assessment (in *Remembering to Forget*) of how atrocity photographs have come to function: 'It is not that there is an immense and wide range of stories and photos available to use but that the ones we care to look at ... increasingly follow a stock structure that signifies "atrocity."'

⁸⁵ Schaffer and Smith, *Human Rights and Narrated Lives*, 47.

The difficulty is, then, that when the victims appear in the western protagonists' autobiographies, or alongside them in films, they appear not as individuals with whom we can empathise, but perhaps rather as interchangeable minor characters within the story. We can read these 'stock' stories of people who were chased from their homes, who lost their families, or who were starved almost to death, in a few brief lines, but read them more as generic statements of 'what happened' than searing experiences. This may be because the protagonists' compulsion to 'bear witness' and 'open the world's eyes' leads them to construct a particular picture of genocide victims thought to be most effective in evoking sympathy – 'Compassion is often dependent upon ideal victim images', argues Birgitta Höijer⁸⁶ – but perhaps the compassion evoked is also itself of a rather generic nature. Indeed, a prevalent strand within the literature on testimony has concerned itself with the relationship between the testifying victim and their interlocutors or listeners; many attribute part of the power of testimony to the 'direct address' of the victim, suggesting that an ethical link of obligation is formed by this address. Testimony, for Cubilié, 'exists in a performative relationship of language and action, between the survivor-witness, the witness to the testimony, and what Jacques Derrida has called "the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*." ... [it is a] profoundly political act that demands a performative engagement.'⁸⁷ In this sense, I would argue, the protagonists' filtering, abridgement and mediation of the victims' testimony, and their insertion of it into familiar frameworks, would break this (ethical) connection between the victims and the protagonists' audience: in effect, they report testimony, and we become witnesses through them, if at all.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Birgitta Höijer, 'The Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering', *Media, Culture and Society* 26:4 (2004), 513-31: 512; also Malkki, 'Speechless Emissaries'.

⁸⁷ Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror*, 3, citing Derrida, *Spectres of Marx* (London: Routledge, 1994), xix. See also Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, Greenspan, *On Listening*, and Lawrence Langer, 'Interpreting Survivor Testimony' in *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Berel Lang (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1988), 26-40. The Latin American genre of *testimonio* is explicitly written to provoke political activism for ongoing, current inequalities. See Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror*, chapter 4, 'State Terror and the Ethical Witness'.

⁸⁸ This question of the reader, or viewer, becoming a 'witness' through other texts is knotty and, of course, variable and largely indeterminable (what does witness *mean* here? That the victim's experience sears them enough that they remember it for a long time, or that they are impelled to 'act', and how?). Documentaries also abridge and re-present testimony, although the argument exists that oral testimony can be more affective than written (see chapter 5, n.31). Feature films which give us a fly-on-the-wall perspective of genocide can be said to allow us to 'witness' slightly differently, but it hardly avoids (indeed directly invokes) questions of mediation and construction. Leshu Torchin has written of the formation of 'witnessing publics' in 'Ravished Armenia: Visual Media, Humanitarian Advocacy, and the Formation of Witnessing Publics', *American Anthropologist* 108:1 (2006), 214-20 and her *Creating the Witness: Documenting Genocide on Film, Video, and the Internet* (Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

The interpretive frames through which the protagonists attempt to understand and portray genocide, discussed in the previous section, will guide the avenues they pursue and the questions they ask, which testimony they re-present and, just as importantly, which they discount. As Maass admits, recalling an interview with a Bosnian Muslim woman who had walked to Split from her home town of Foča, in May 1992, before the story of the camps broke later that summer:

During the interview Munevera said Muslim and Croat men were being rounded up in Foča and put into a “concentration camp” on the town’s outskirts (her words, not mine). I wrote down the words and forgot about them. Concentration camps were a Nazi invention, and in 1945 we buried the machine that created them. Munevera was being hysterical.⁸⁹

The ‘editing’ or framing of the survivors’ words, both a function of the outsider’s perspective and part of the effort to communicate these tragedies in ‘already culturally resonant ways’,⁹⁰ is, of course, a largely invisible process. Nowhere is this more true than of Hatzfeld’s three books on Rwanda: as already noted, Hatzfeld exerts a significant influence on the direction, construction and style of his interlocutors’ testimonies, although he does not draw attention to this. As Paul Kerstens observed in his discussion of *Into the Quick of Life* and *A Season for Machetes*, ‘It is important to acknowledge the presence and the role of the writer. Even if the book may be presented as a collection of testimonies, it is in fact a book, written by Hatzfeld, representing testimonies.’⁹¹ Hatzfeld’s more self-reflexive third book, *The Strategy of Antelopes*, clearly responds to his readers’ and critics’ comments, and he reflects:

There were always at least two of us talking in Nyamata, Kibungo or Rilima; in Paris, only one person is writing down what was said back in Africa. At the moment of writing at a desk, the person who spoke in Nyamata inevitably gives way to the sentences now being written. The author works on his words, reworks them, and must of necessity deflect them from their original destination in the act of transcribing them for readers. The words – intact and authentic – change their meaning ever so slightly as he lines them up on paper.⁹²

After a brief paragraph revolving around the issue of unspeakability after the Holocaust and Rwanda, and the survivors’ feeling that they cannot, but must, speak on behalf of the dead (familiar, too, from Holocaust discourses), he continues:

⁸⁹ Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor*, 5. Malkki also discusses how humanitarian workers dismissed the concerns of Hutus who had fled Rwanda in 1994 that they would be killed upon their return as evidence of their ‘hysterical, superstitious, and overdramatic frame of mind’: ‘Speechless Emissaries’, 393-7.

⁹⁰ See Barbie Zelizer, ‘When War is Reduced to a Photograph’ in *Reporting War*, 124.

⁹¹ Kerstens, “‘Voice and Give Voice’”, 103.

⁹² Hatzfeld, *Strategy of Antelopes*, 166.

How do you write down the living words of others? I never really came to terms with this question until I discovered how deeply it preoccupied the readers of my book about the genocide's survivors, *Into the Quick of Life*. How does one trim, choose, edit, construct a text from oral testimony? It isn't easy, it can be quite complicated, but it's a self-evident form of writing when the motivation is essentially literary, and when one is moved by the desire to bring the reader into the genocidal universe and to pass along a story ... so that what was said will make its way from author to reader. The story, the people, the interviews, the words and images, come together in a text that translates what happened in a different way.⁹³

His point, then, is not just that it was necessary to rearrange the oral testimony in order to make it into a readable text, but that it was necessary in order to 'translate what happened' for the reader: 'This kind of literature is comparatively sinuous, slow, belated, metaphorical, inspired, but quite effective for transmitting information from one point to another ... Directing and editing the *giving of evidence* for a book means transforming the witnesses into characters in a book.'⁹⁴ At core, his argument is that his (very literary) input was needed to 'translate' the Rwandans' testimonies into something readable(?) or comprehensible(?) or 'appealing' (?) to the western reader.

Victims and their testimonies often appear in the western protagonists' accounts in an evidentiary, illustrative function, selected and excerpted in order to back up or confirm the narrator's description of events – and in this way, they mirror much news reporting and documentary film-making. For example, after discussing how 'Reporters enter people's lives at their worst moments and intrude deeply into them', and often feel voyeuristic and insensitive, Bowen opens his next paragraph: 'Some strong stories do not make it to air. A girl called Belma...', going on to detail how her arms were blown off by a tank shell, and the deliberations back in the edit room over whether these pictures could be shown.⁹⁵ Or, as Bell relates, while they were gathering shots for a special BBC *Panorama*: 'Jasmina led us to a front-line block of flats near the stadium, where a basement standpipe was the only source of water for the entire neighbourhood. People could shelter all day in their cellars, but they had to come out for water. "We're scared," said one, "of the lack of water, of the lack of water as much as the bullets. The worst thing is the water." The snipers were laying in wait at easy range. While we were there, one of the water-carriers was hit in the leg.'⁹⁶ The 'people' Bell encounters

⁹³ Ibid., 167.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 167, 166. Italics in the original.

⁹⁵ Bowen, *War Stories*, 194-5.

⁹⁶ Bell, *In Harm's Way*, 127.

essentially repeat Bell's own words (or rather, vice versa), backing up his interpretation; they have no other function within his text, and are not afforded the space to communicate their personal feelings, reactions, or experiences. The victims, then, often speak through the voices of westerners, and are most often displaced into an evidentiary function, used to illustrate atrocities rather than give an insight into the very personal impact of the destruction.⁹⁷ This 'evidentiary' function is, I think, different from the way that many scholars (even those attempting an 'integrated' approach) deploy, for example, Levi or Delbo within their texts; these more philosophical testimonies are used to communicate something of the 'essence' or 'meaning' of the event.

As James Dawes suggests in his study of human rights workers, though, 'The moral problem of this sort of traumatic ventriloquism is bounded by two opposing questions... Do I have the right to talk about this? And, do I have the right *not* to talk about this?'⁹⁸ It is important to remember that the protagonists do, to some degree, facilitate the bringing of these stories and testimonies to light. Koff, indeed, sees herself and other forensic anthropologists as people through whom the victims can speak: 'I think of us as interpreters of the skeleton's language.'⁹⁹ And while the problems of editing, abridging and mediating testimony still pertain, in some of these books and films there is a sense that when the victims speak, their words are not merely being used as illustration or evidence to back up the protagonist, but that they are contributing to the narration of their own story. Although Dawes is largely correct to observe that 'in the Anglophone world, virtually all of the genocide's storytellers are outsiders. Whether benevolent or self-serving, they are speaking for Rwanda, not from it',¹⁰⁰ many of the films about the Rwandan genocide do allow the victims to narrate the details and experiences of genocide – in *Sometimes in April*, *Hotel Rwanda*, and in *Shooting Dogs*, where the young English teacher Joe can only learn of the genocide through the voice of Marie, a young pupil who translates her neighbours' desperate

⁹⁷ An interesting counterexample is Sheehy's *Spirit of Survival*, which recounts her adoption of a Cambodian girl, Mohm. She tells Mohm's story of genocide and her adaptation to life in America, mostly in her own words but occasionally mimicking Mohm's halting (and improving) English in passages, until Mohm is able to write herself, near the end of the book. Sheehy does dominate the text, but self-reflexively: as she says, 'Using myself as a character to represent the typically self-absorbed Westerner who is naïve about evils that are quite commonplace in other parts of the world, I have layered the book with my own questions and perceptions about what is happening together with Mohm's questions and perceptions about the same incidents' (x).

⁹⁸ Dawes, *That The World May Know*, 24.

⁹⁹ Koff, *Bone Woman*, 11; see also 33, 112.

¹⁰⁰ Dawes, *That the World May Know*, 24.

tales of their escape to temporary safety at the school.¹⁰¹ Likewise, some of the protagonists, like Vulliamy, include longer sections of quoted speech, or interweave the stories of a few victims throughout the text, like Gourevitch. In this way, the victims begin to lose their positioning as ‘empathetic markers’ or characters, and start to appear to us as individuals with whom we can empathise.

Discussing Friedländer’s use of victim testimony in his *The Years of Extermination*, Confino describes how these voices ‘create images in short stories and vignettes that are not so much connected to what comes before and after, as they are startling in their visualness’:

Thus, following an ordinary historical discussion of the events in Holland under the occupation (the policy of the military administration, the reaction of the public, and so on), Friedländer turns to the diary of young Etty Hillesum. Her experience is not narrated as a means to explain, exemplify, or provide proof for the previous discussion. Friedländer does not begin the short page on Hillesum with a common historical phrase such as “The travail of occupation is exemplified by the story of Etty Hillesum.” Instead, he starts by “Etty (Esther) Hillesum was still a young woman student in Slavic languages in Amsterdam University during these spring months of 1941.” Her story is not offered to provide evidence for a given argument; its meaning lies in its speaking at all ... Her story does not require the historian’s justification (“this source illustrates well my argument that...”).¹⁰²

Gourevitch’s technique is not dissimilar. His paragraphs plunge straight into the survivors’ words and stories; and their opening words are frequently followed by the phrase ‘Odette told me’, or ‘Sergeant Francis told me’, or ‘Jean-Baptiste told me’, or ‘Samuel told me’ – which, while marking out his own discursive authority as the one who gathered this testimony, also clearly respects and privileges the survivors’ testimony within the construction of his text, such that the survivors often appear as co-narrators of the ‘stories from Rwanda’.

¹⁰¹ Interestingly, David Chandler notes that in *The Killing Fields*, ‘the Khmer-language dialogue in the film, none of it subtitled, and much of it evidently ad-libbed, nonetheless deals unerringly with the subjects supposedly being discussed. A speech given at Dith Pran’s work site by a senior cadre, for example, reproduces the phrasing and priorities of thousands of such speeches, remembered by Cambodian refugees and often recorded over radio Phnom Penh between 1975 and 1978.’ In this sense, the film allows the survivors, through their acting roles and words, to testify to their experiences under the Khmer Rouge, although, as he says, ‘It is hard to believe that the absence of subtitles is accidental, because it effectively underscores the inaccessibility of life under Pol Pot – to Westerners at least. Still, the decision strikes me as wrong-headed, for it suggests that what is said when the Westerners are gone is of no intrinsic interest.’ Chandler, ‘Review: “The Killing Fields” and Perceptions of Cambodian History’, *Pacific Affairs* 59:1 (1986), 92-7: 93, 96.

¹⁰² Alon Confino, ‘Narrative Form and Historical Sensation: On Saul Friedländer’s *The Years of Extermination*’, *H&T* 48:3 (2009), 199-219, here 209, 210, and quoting from *The Years of Extermination*, 182.

One of the survivors who appears most frequently throughout Gourevitch's book is Odette Nyiramilimo, and Gourevitch's descriptions of her also highlight how the protagonists' texts need not cast these survivors entirely in the role of stock characters. Telling Gourevitch about her life as a medical student, Odette suddenly recounted the story of a professor who once started 'patting my bottom and trying to set up a date even though he was married'; a story which hung oddly between them as they carried on speaking, which 'reminded me of all that she wasn't telling as she recited her life story. She was keeping everything that was not about Hutu and Tutsi to herself'.

Later, I met Odette several times at parties; she and her husband were gregarious and understandably popular. Together they ran a private maternity and paediatrics practice called the Good Samaritan Clinic. They were known as excellent doctors and fun people – warm, vivacious, good-humoured. They had a charmingly affectionate ease with one another, and one saw right away that they were in the midst of full and engaging lives. But when we met in the garden of the Cercle Sportif, Odette spoke as a genocide survivor to a foreign correspondent. Her theme was the threat of annihilation, and the moments of reprieve in her story – the fond memories, funny anecdotes, sparks of wit – came, if at all, in quick beats, like punctuation marks.¹⁰³

It is perhaps at this moment of self-reflexivity when Odette begins to take on her own individual identity for us, rather than just that of a genocide survivor. The story breaks both the temporal boundaries which, as Schaffer and Smith have commented, often “fix” the life and identity of tellers in their victimhood, often locking the survivors' stories and lives to the past',¹⁰⁴ and also calls attention to the way in which these stories are mediated and presented to us, and the way that we read them, in much the same way that Maass did when he discussed how he (and, by extension, 'we') had dismissed Munevera's mention of concentration camps as 'hysterical'. These episodes also point out that the survivors themselves will react differently to speaking with outsiders of their suffering, and taper their speech to the occasion. While Maass was interrupted in his conversation with Munevera by a tug at his sleeve – “Hey, mister, come here, this man, my cousin, he had seven brothers killed”¹⁰⁵ – others may be more guarded; Odette spoke to Gourevitch explicitly as a genocide survivor, and throughout Hatzfeld's texts, the survivors continue to regard and speak to him as a foreigner, despite his increasing acceptance within the community. The inclusion of this kind of detail, or this manner of presenting the victims' speech, is a way of both

¹⁰³ Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You*, 70-1.

¹⁰⁴ Schaffer and Smith, *Human Rights and Narrated Lives*, 45.

¹⁰⁵ Maass, *Love Thy Neighbor*, 6.

accepting and productively questioning the limitations of ‘being a western protagonist’, whilst attempting to preserve the power of the victims’ testimony.

Ultimately, then, affect may not come from a testimony’s length, or its ‘direct address’, but from the way it functions within these films and books. Certainly, in the majority of autobiographies and films, the survivors can only speak through western voices, and are most often displaced into an evidentiary function, used to illustrate atrocities and the protagonist’s narrative rather than provide an affective insight into the very personal impact of the destruction. But if LaCapra is correct to argue, in the vein of many other scholars, that ‘The importance of testimonies becomes more apparent when they are related to the way they provide something other than purely documentary knowledge. Testimonies are significant in the attempt to understand experience and its aftermath, including the role of memory and its lapses, in coming to terms with – or denying or repressing – the past’,¹⁰⁶ then, as some have shown, victim testimony can still be employed within (and against) the western protagonists’ framework to convey meaning, whether about the event itself or about the ways in which they, and we, apprehend and represent genocide.

Conclusion

In the end, then, these are complex, multi-levelled texts and films which respond, and ask us to respond, to genocide in different ways. Whilst taking centre-stage themselves in narratives which are often seductively presented as a typical adventure story, the western protagonists also present sobering pictures of death and suffering, casting themselves into the role of engaged witnesses. Ultimately, though, these are the experiences of outsiders: it is rare for the protagonists to be able to escape the cultural interpretive frameworks through which they experience and present genocide. Speaking of American journalist Mark Danner, Ramadanović remarks that his

critique of the entity called the West for its hesitation to intervene is not enough to reveal the extent or nature of the West’s involvement in the Balkans. This “West” is not only its governments and NATO; this West is also the liberal, self-conscious but not self-reflective, subject who speaks ... who pretends to know what he sees, and who pretends to be able to use power ... without himself being affected by it.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 86-7.

¹⁰⁷ Ramadanović, ‘Simonides on the Balkans’, 356-7.

These accounts offer a seemingly transparent but largely un-self-reflective perspective on genocide, and maintain a distance or disassociation between their audiences and those actually experiencing the events. The accounts by and of western protagonists largely replicate an externalised, western subject-position, one which has already watched the events unfold on television – to be then replaced by other transitory news stories – where the meaning of the event is always constructed through the lens of western (non)participation.

While various academics have focused on individuals whose style of work they find presents a favoured ‘alternative’ to the problematic interpretive frameworks of others,¹⁰⁸ the problems I have highlighted of narrative, interpretive frames, and voice still largely stand. Unlike the Holocaust, where the victims’ voices are more prominent, a greater proportion of the representations of other genocides are told through the eyes of outsiders, many of whom perpetuate mainstream interpretations. What seems most effective is when this subject-position is explicitly recognised and challenged, as those such as Gourevitch, Loyd and Maass have done at times within their texts: encouraging a self-reflective consideration and acceptance of this western, outside perspective would seem to be one way in which these accounts can decentre complacent western ways of knowing and apprehending genocide. The majority do not, however; and if the Holocaust is now often ‘known’ through highly personal accounts of the individual impact of genocide – and this does help explain the resonance of the Holocaust in contemporary western culture – other genocides, it would seem, remain most often something distantly ‘encountered’ by westerners through these texts.

¹⁰⁸ James L. Aucoin, ‘Epistemic Responsibility and Narrative Theory: The Literary Journalism of Ryszard Kapuściński’, *Journalism* 2:1 (2001), 5-21; Cubilié, *Women Witnessing Terror*, 189-214, discussing Slavenka Drakulić; Karoline von Oppen, ‘Reporting from Bosnia: Reconceptualising the Notion of a “Journalism of Attachment”’, *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 17:1 (2009), 21-33, discussing journalist Marina Achenbach.

Chapter 4

Resolving Genocide: Representations of the Aftermath

No, it's surely not easy for them to bear the burden of human flesh. But don't let him ask me to relieve him of that burden. If you eat somebody else's cow you can give him a calf or buy him another cow. But he cannot replace my child, not even with two of his own. That cannot happen. You wipe your tears, right there on the grass, and then put on a smile. Madness takes on different faces. It can make you laugh, or cry to no end. Some will laugh endlessly and die from laughter, or else withdraw into silence. I'm speaking about suffering. Some express it through laughter, others through tears or through complete silence. Those, you wonder about, whether they've gone mute forever.
Euphrasie Mukarwemera¹

Introduction

Many narratives of genocide, like those of the Holocaust, end with liberation, the crossing of borders, the lift-off of an aeroplane, or cathartic scenes of joy as families are reunited; all provide a sense of resolution, and, we assume, the victims will go on to begin a new life after genocide in stable, 'normal' countries or in their own, rebuilt communities.² A significant number of other representations, though, take the aftermath of genocide as their subject; here, the ending of genocide is the beginning of the process of burying and commemorating the dead, of documentation and justice, of rebuilding and reconciliation. The launching of these processes, and the arrival of foreign aid to support them, marks both a definite end point to the violence, and the setting of society on a western-guided path towards 'healing'. This chapter focuses on these representations of genocide's aftermath, since they, too, are a window on how westerners relate to the process and consequences of genocide. The representations range very widely – from the memorials and museums (themselves part of the aftermath) to François Bizot's recent reflections about Duch and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) trials, *Facing the Torturer*, Jonathan Torgovnik's photograph-and-text work on Rwandan children born of rape, *Intended Consequences* (2009), the focus on the Armenian diaspora and the legacies of genocide in Egoyan's *Ararat*, and brutal films about the depravity of society in contemporary Serbia.³ Of course, there are other representations which are not solely about the

¹ In *My Neighbor, My Killer* (2008), dir. Anne Aghion.

² The final journey to western countries, for survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides, also quietly confirms the western narrative of itself as a place of freedom, tolerance, and opportunity.

³ E.g. Goran Paskaljević, *Bare Baruta* (*Cabaret Balkan*, 1998), Srđan Dragojević, *Rane* (*Wounds*, 1998).

aftermath, but nevertheless portray it in some depth – testimonies and films with a broader chronological scope, or those which comment explicitly from, and about, the present – and they will be included here. Despite this variety, two broad themes emerge: one focuses on the mechanisms now bracketed together as ‘transitional justice’ – international, national, and local criminal trials, truth and documentation commissions, and efforts to encourage reconciliation. The other explores genocide’s legacies, either returning to the sites to document and memorialise the traces of violence, or detailing the lingering effects in the survivors’ lives.

The main thrust of many of these representations is to defuse – make safe – the past in the present. Few engage with what is, in many ways, the more disturbing aftermath: the persistence of structures of violence in post-genocide societies – as ethnic discrimination, nationalism, corrupt and clientelist state structures and economies – whether directly linked to the structures of violence which enabled genocide in the first place, or themselves an outcome or by-product of genocide. Instead, as I will argue, mainstream representations of the aftermath tend to be either forward-looking, presenting a rather uncritical picture of the potential of justice and reconciliation processes to repair society and lead it towards ‘normality’ and democracy, or backward-looking, fixing our gaze on the ruins of the past and allowing the rituals of mourning to take over; in so doing, they bypass some of the less tangible but equally enduring effects of the unresolved past. Both offer a certain kind of resolution – the promise of the resolution ‘of history’ with the former, and the sense of resolution brought by emotional catharsis in the latter.

These palliatives, though, are entirely undercut by those other representations which engage more closely with, and question, the concepts of ‘justice’ and ‘reconciliation’, or refuse to indulge in the uncritical mourning stance vis-à-vis the traces of genocide. Often, I will argue, such representations are able to expose the difficulties in the present by taking a more ethnographic approach to the lives of survivors and others in the aftermath: it is here that the simplistic claims of ‘transitional justice’ advocates are questioned with most clarity, not least because the structures of violence persisting in post-genocide societies are often brought into focus by the figure of the survivor – whether through their economic hardships, their relationships with their neighbours, or their relative powerlessness in the political arena. Indeed, surely part of the irresolution

of the past, for them, is precisely to do with the persistence of these structures into the present, which I discuss in the final section. These themes of the individual, and of ‘resolution’, will be pursued throughout the chapter. The first section analyses representations of justice and reconciliation to show how mainstream representations obscure the complexities of ‘living together again’ in the aftermath, and I discuss a few of the more engaged works in some detail in order to foreground those complexities. The second section considers how the traces of violence are represented, opposing those which direct us to gaze at and mourn a neutralised and depoliticised past, to those which instead use those traces as a starting point for questioning the present. The final section examines the everyday structural violence which persists, more or less intensely, in Turkey, Cambodia, Rwanda, and the former Yugoslavia, and yet is so often occluded in representations of the aftermath – and discusses those representations which, by contrast, expose and critique this violence in ‘post’-genocide societies.

The relationship of these representations with the Holocaust is far less explicit than in earlier chapters: even ‘Nuremberg’ is invoked less frequently than one might expect.⁴ Nevertheless, the structural similarities and resonances between most mainstream representations of the Holocaust and other genocides are often quite apparent, particularly so in discussions of justice and reconciliation. Depictions of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) or the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) tend to reflect and perpetuate the conviction in representations of Nuremberg and other postwar trials that the incarceration of the genocidal leadership is the solution to the problem – that ‘the Nuremberg war trials would put an end to Nazism and alleviate its evil effects.’⁵ But this belief maintains the closed logic that responsibility and agency lies solely with the perpetrators, particularly the leadership. That said, although scholarship often deploys birth metaphors to describe the relationship between ‘Nuremberg’ and the current tribunals – they are the ‘progeny of Nuremberg’, the Holocaust and Nuremberg gave ‘birth’ to modern international law⁶ – some clarity is necessary here, since there is no such unbroken

⁴ In much popular literature on the tribunals, e.g. Elizabeth Neuffer’s *The Key To My Neighbor’s House: Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 2001), ‘Nuremberg’ only appears once or twice.

⁵ Alexander, ‘Social Construction’, 20.

⁶ Steven R. Ratner and Jason S. Abrams, ‘The Progeny of Nuremberg: International Criminal Tribunals’ in their *Accountability For Human Rights Atrocities in International Law: Beyond the Nuremberg Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 187-200; Michael J. Bazyler, ‘The Holocaust, Nuremberg, and the Birth of Modern International Law’ in *Holocaust and Justice: Representation and Historiography of the Holocaust in Post-War Trials*, eds. David Bankier and Dan Michman (Jerusalem:

causal chain. As Bloxham argues, ‘Nuremberg mattered in the “postwar decade” and matters again in the post-cold war world in a way that it did not in the interim.’⁷ Although the postwar trials were, indeed, a stark departure from prior methods of retribution, the current western attitudes towards prosecuting war criminals and reshaping society are a consequence less of ‘Nuremberg’ than of the socio-cultural and generational changes of the 1960s and 1970s.⁸ Recent representations of genocide trials and justice are thus drawing on a much later cluster of ideas about ‘what Nuremberg meant’, rather than the initial 1940s conception.

The 1970s also marked a departure from ‘Nuremberg’ in the sense that ‘retributive’ justice began to be accompanied by ‘restorative’ justice. A series of mechanisms now known as ‘transitional justice’ – truth commissions, reparations, lustration, reconciliation, memorialisation – began to take shape following the demise of a number of dictatorships in Latin America and Africa, and their shift towards democratic rule, and were then galvanised by the so-called ‘third wave of democratisation’ in eastern Europe, following the collapse of the Soviet Union; the Bosnian and Rwandan genocides provided a further ‘engine’.⁹ Representations of justice and the rebuilding of society in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Cambodia thus have a much wider range of processes to contend with: in comparison, there are very few representations which one could describe as being about the Holocaust and ‘reconciliation’, and even fewer on ‘truth commissions’, although some focus on the

Yad Vashem/Berghahn, 2010), 45-58; cf. Kevin Jon Heller, *The Nuremberg Military Tribunals and the Origins of International Criminal Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); for more examples, Donald Bloxham, ‘Milestones and Mythologies: The Impact of Nuremberg’ in *Atrocities on Trial: Historical Perspectives on the Politics of Prosecuting War Crimes*, eds. Patricia Heberer and Jürgen Matthäus (Lincoln/London: University of Nebraska Press, 2008), 263-82: 273-4.

⁷ Bloxham, ‘Milestones’, 263. He notes: ‘At points during the Cold War, all of the “Nuremberg principles” were disregarded of the major protagonists for their ideological war on the territories of smaller, weaker third parties and committed war crimes and crimes against humanity in the process.’ (263). See also Bloxham, ‘Prosecuting the Past in the Postwar Decade: Political Strategy and National Myth-Making’ in Bankier and Michman, eds., *Holocaust and Justice*, 23-44.

⁸ Bloxham, ‘Milestones’, especially 263-7: ‘The legal event did not shape the cultural change; to argue otherwise is to confuse cause and effect’ (267). Likewise, and in line with Samuel Moyn’s argument in *The Last Utopia* that the 1970s brought a shift away from the concept of rights being bestowed by the state towards individual rights transcending the state, there has been a shift in emphasis away from the crime of ‘aggressive war’, which was considered the supreme crime by the Allies, towards prosecuting crimes against humanity, at that point relatively subordinated. See Bloxham, ‘Milestones’, 273, 277, and also Marco Duranti, ‘The Holocaust, the Legacy of 1989 and the Birth of International Human Rights Law: Revisiting the Foundation Myth’, *JGR* 14:2 (2012), 159-86.

⁹ For an overview of this process, and the historiography of the field of ‘transitional justice’, see Alexander Laban Hinton, ‘Introduction: Toward an Anthropology of Transitional Justice’ in *Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence*, ed. Hinton (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010), 1-22. On lustration, see Jens Meierhenrich, ‘The Ethics of Lustration’, *Ethics & International Affairs* 20:1 (2006), 99-120.

return of expropriated artworks and property.¹⁰ Nevertheless, despite these developments since ‘Nuremberg’, mainstream representations of genocide trials still adopt the formula of Holocaust representations, replicating their belief that prosecuting the perpetrators removes the danger of genocide and paves the way for democracy.

Similarly, there are few explicit parallels between the Holocaust and genocide representations which focus on the traces of violence in the present. Since roughly the 1970s – the same time that Holocaust consciousness began to develop, and memorial initiatives started to change the western European cultural landscape – a growing number of artists and writers have sought to record and document the ruins of Jewish life and culture, and the remains of the camps and other spaces of violence. The aesthetic stance in these works is overwhelmingly one of melancholy and nostalgia, tending toward the eulogisation of pre-war Jewish life – epitomised by Roman Vishniac’s *A Vanished World* (1983) or Chris Schwarz’s *Traces of Memory* (2005), a striking set of photographs of the ruins of Jewish Galicia¹¹ – and the poignant depiction of crumbling synagogues and cemeteries, former Jewish quarters, the victims’ possessions, and the survivors themselves. Quite often, this melancholic and almost sacralising stance is also adopted in genocide representations which focus on the human cost of violence: the victims’ possessions are displayed in museums with the same poignancy, the survivors are depicted according to the same visual conventions of sorrow and sadness, and often bodily remains become a focus too. This is far less true of representations which focus on the traces of genocide on the landscape, though: rather than being imbued with melancholy, these scenes often have a subtle quality of unease, and the visible traces seem to evoke the violence itself, rather than inviting us to mourn them.¹² By and large, then, the Holocaust has certainly provided a model for representing the aftermath of genocide; but one also sees subtle differences, in part due to sociocultural, political and legal changes over the postwar period, but also perhaps in part to the growing significance accorded by westerners to the Holocaust.

¹⁰ E.g., *I Was A Slave Labourer*, dir. Luke Holland (1997), Monica Waitzfelder, *L’Oreal Stole My Home: The Secrets of a Theft* (London: Arcadia, 2006).

¹¹ Roman Vishniac, *A Vanished World* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1983); Chris Schwarz, *Photographing Traces of Memory: A Contemporary View of the Jewish Past in Polish Galicia* (Krakow: Galicia Jewish Museum, 2005).

¹² As I will discuss, their underlying sensibility is probably closer to that of the emerging trend of ‘aftermath photography’ than the conventions of Holocaust representation. See Nathalie Herschdorfer, *Afterwards: Contemporary Photography Confronting the Past* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2011); Charlotte Cotton, *The Photograph as Contemporary Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), chapter 6.

Resolving the Past

Although the ‘international community’ has almost always been reluctant to intervene in genocides, it is, these days, generally far more willing to weigh in afterwards – not only with immediate medical and food assistance, but with the rebuilding of physical infrastructure, government, and economy, and, most visibly, with efforts to enact justice, identify and bury the dead, and repair the torn social fabric through reconciliation and forgiveness programmes. The nature of this intervention has changed drastically over the course of the twentieth century – from the refugee camps set up in the Syrian desert for Armenian survivors,¹³ to the writing of the Bosnian constitution and the power the High Representative still has there today – and has proven to be highly dependent upon regional and international politics, hot and cold wars, and also the rise of a human rights culture with real political purchase in the latter part of the twentieth century. As is often noted, international intervention is often about ‘symbolic politics’ and the reaffirmation of the international community’s own morality;¹⁴ it is also self-confirmatory. The centrality of westerners in the process of transitional justice means that the ‘normality’ towards which these societies are being guided is the western ideal of liberal democracy; since this is being held up as the solution, western introspection is even less likely.

The guiding philosophy amongst the western political, judicial, and human rights circles who intervene in the aftermath – certainly since the 1980s or thereabouts – is one of what Payam Akhavan terms ‘judicial romanticism’,¹⁵ which holds justice as the key to social repair. Trials of war criminals, the thinking goes, punish the perpetrators and act as a form of deterrence, whilst also revealing the truth about what happened, and thereby establishing a shared narrative about the past. The airing of this history, and possibly new knowledge about where their loved ones are buried, permits healing or ‘closure’ for the survivors, and therefore the forgiveness and reconciliation that will repair the social fabric. Thus, the former ICTY president Antonio Cassesse argued that

¹³ Raymond Kévorkian, Lévon Nordiguian, and Vahé Tachjian, eds., *Les Arméniens, 1917-1939: La quête d’un refuge* (Beirut: Presses de l’Université Saint-Joseph, 2006).

¹⁴ E.g. Peter Uvin and Charles Mironko, ‘Western and Local Approaches to Justice in Rwanda’, *Global Governance* 9:2 (2003), 219-31: 220.

¹⁵ Payam Akhavan, ‘Are International Criminal Tribunals a Disincentive to Peace?: Reconciling Judicial Romanticism with Political Realism’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 31:3 (2009), 624-54.

Justice is an indispensable ingredient of the process of national reconciliation. It is essential to the restoration of peaceful and normal relations between people who have lived under a reign of terror. It breaks the cycle of violence, hatred and extra-judicial retribution. Thus peace and justice go hand in hand.¹⁶

Likewise, the ICTR's mandate is to 'contribute to the process of national reconciliation in Rwanda and to the maintenance of peace in the region'.¹⁷ These rather blithe calls for justice – vaguely conceptualised – are replicated in mainstream genocide representations, whether as offhand statements or part of a more sustained argument. In this, they follow Holocaust documentaries and films such as Stanley Kramer's *Judgement at Nuremberg* (1961), the 2006 BBC docudrama series *Nazis on Trial* (which depicted the trials of Speer, Göring, and Hess), Yves Simoneau's *Nuremberg* (2000), or Eyal Sivan's *The Specialist* (1999), and books such as G.M. Gilbert's *Nuremberg Diary* (1995[1948]) and the many other trade press publications. Although some of these raise certain questions about the trials – such as Sivan's use of the original footage of the Eichmann trial to suggest the choreography of a show trial (as well as to 'let Eichmann hang himself'),¹⁸ or *Judgement at Nuremberg*'s questioning of the slowing of the trials and denazification in 1948 as cold war diplomacy set in¹⁹ – they generally tend not to consider how justice 'works' in survivor and perpetrator communities, and confirm the usual stale picture of the aberrant war criminal. Indeed, these representations tend to favour the idea of 'didactic trials', which holds that by exposing the genocidal leadership as war criminals, and documenting the atrocities, the rest of the populace will recognise the wrongs and pursue democracy instead. This faith in didacticism ignores how Nuremberg was labelled and rejected as 'victors' justice' in Germany at the time, however, and the parallel perceptions in Serbia and Croatia today (see below).²⁰ There are, of course, exceptions – Arendt's *Eichmann in*

¹⁶ <http://www.icty.org/sections/AbouttheICTY> [accessed 13.12.12].

¹⁷ UN Security Council resolution 955:

<http://www.unictr.org/AboutICTR/GeneralInformation/tabid/101/Default.aspx> [accessed 31.12.12].

¹⁸ Q&A session with Eyal Sivan, Sussex 2010. Sivan edited together *The Specialist* from the surviving reels of the nine-month trial; the film exposes (and accentuates), among other things, the theatricality and manipulations of the Jerusalem court. See Frances Guerin, 'The Perpetrator in Focus: Turn of the Century Holocaust Remembrance in *The Specialist*', *Law, Text, Culture* 10 (2006), 167-95, and Gal Raz, 'Actuality of Banality: Eyal Sivan's *The Specialist* in Context', *Shofar* 24:1 (2005), 4-21. Sivan's editing brought controversy, revolving around the usual debate about historical truth and the manipulation of archives; see the articles by R.S.H. Tryster and Sivan's response at <http://www.eyalsivan.info/index.php?p=written> [accessed 31.12.12].

¹⁹ See Donald Bloxham, 'British War Crimes Trial Policy in Germany, 1945-1957: Implementation and Collapse', *Journal of British Studies* 42:1 (2003), 91-118.

²⁰ Lawrence Douglas, 'The Didactic Trial: Filtering History and Memory in the Courtroom' in *Holocaust and Justice*, eds. Bankier and Michman, 11-22. On Germany, see Bloxham, 'Prosecuting the Past', 37.

Jerusalem (1963) being the famous exception of a widely-read and controversial book which offered, and offers, a much more considered and provocative opinion.²¹

The popular trade books on Milošević are a case in point. Demonising him as a ‘tyrant’ and arguing that he, (almost) alone, was responsible for the wars,²² each accepts the ICTY’s justice without pause for thought and without really considering what kind of impact it might have in the former Yugoslavia. In his *Judgement Day* (2004), Chris Stephen decides that ICTY has been a success, without any supporting evidence: ‘the court has had an enormous impact on making the peace process work. Key warlords have been removed from the system. In Prijedor, north-west Bosnia, 25,000 Muslims, including Nusreta Sivic, who spent several months in the Omarska prison camp, have returned to live among the Serbs.’²³ And although Louis Sell, in his *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (2002), is sensitive to the social effects of Milošević’s rule and offers a more measured assessment of the trials, he, too, largely falls back on the usual clichés in the closing lines:

Nevertheless, bringing Slobodan Milošević to justice is an essential first step towards helping the people of the former Yugoslavia to put the Milošević era behind them. It is, of course, too much to expect that Milošević’s fate will, by itself, prevent other rulers from engaging in similar crimes in the future. If, however, his trial adds a measure of deterrence to future crimes it will have served its purpose, and it will provide a reason for remembering the strange and ugly career of Slobodan Milošević.²⁴

Slavenka Drakulić is no less beholden to the claims of transformative justice in her *They Would Never Hurt A Fly*. Linking the outbreak of wars with the ‘absence of facts’ and politicians’ manipulation of emotions, she notes the same absence of facts and ‘a problem with the truth’ in post-1995 Croatia (and Serbia), where people prefer to forget their complicity and hail war criminals as national heroes, rejecting ICTY as ‘injustice’. ‘There is no justice without truth, and Croatia is still far from such truth’, she writes: ‘...As long as there is so little desire in the societies to uncover the truth,

²¹ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report On The Banality Of Evil* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).

²² E.g. the front flap of Chris Stephen’s *Judgement Day: The Trial of Slobodan Milošević* (London: Atlantic Books, 2004): ‘*Judgement Day* exposes how the actions of one man led to the birth of the world’s first war crimes court.’ See also Stevanovic, *Milosevic*, 212; Doder and Branson, *Milosevic*; Adam LeBor, *Milosevic*.

²³ Stephen, *Judgement Day*, 222. Stephen is an intractable judicial romantic. With the same jubilation, he writes: ‘The success of these trials in jailing senior leaders may also deter budding warlords from committing crimes in potential wars’ (222).

²⁴ Louis Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 361-2.

the bringing to justice of war criminals will continue to be perceived as a threat to the entire community. Until then, justice simply has to come from The Hague or it will not come at all.’²⁵ Her diagnosis of the controversies surrounding the ‘truth’ is well enough made, but she assumes that the ICTY’s truth will be accepted as such in Croatia and Serbia, and justice remains an abstract talisman. Theary C. Seng, a Cambodian survivor who emigrated to America and became a lawyer, includes a more formal reasoned argument for a major tribunal in her testimony (written in 2001, well before the ECCC but when it was becoming a distinct possibility). Her arguments are sophisticated and persuasive, but she also credits such trials with the deterrence of future crimes and with restoring a moral and legal order and ‘democratic governance’, arguing that ‘a legitimate trial allows for individual and collective closure, the sense of finality that all could have been done has been done. This closure in turn provides a necessary precondition for meaningful growth and development.’²⁶ Realistically, then, perhaps the trials fulfil the liberal democratic imperative for ‘due process’ but, as will be argued below, often take the form of a sideshow in post-genocide societies, generating resentment because they are understood as ‘political’ or because they fail to address the victims’ trauma and hardship in the present.

Others acknowledge that the processes of justice and reconciliation are more complicated than simple rhetoric allows for, but ultimately buttress the claims of judicial romanticism. Woodhead’s *A Cry from the Grave* is careful to show the frustration of Srebrenica’s survivors at the speed of the international justice system, their intensely mixed feelings about the process of identification (which could give them certain knowledge and a body to bury, but dash all hope that their sons and husbands might return),²⁷ and also documents the continuing divisions between the Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Serb communities: but the film nevertheless upholds and reiterates the promises of the international processes. ‘The enormity of what happened at Srebrenica in July 1995 overwhelms understanding’, comments the narrator. ‘Now a

²⁵ Drakulić, *They Would Never Hurt a Fly*, quotes 11, 16-17; see 11-17, 172.

²⁶ Theary C. Seng, *Daughter of the Killing Fields: Asrei’s Story* (London: Fusion Press, 2003), 242-4: 243. Cf. Janine Natalya Clark, ‘The “Crime of Crimes”: Genocide, Criminal Trials and Reconciliation’, *JGR* 14:1 (2012), 55-77.

²⁷ Wagner, *To Know Where He Lies*; Wagner, ‘Identifying Srebrenica’s Missing: The “Shaky Balance” of Universalism and Particularism’ in *Transitional Justice*, ed. Hinton, 25-48; Eric Stover and Rachel Shigekane, ‘Exhumation of Mass Graves: Balancing Legal and Humanitarian Needs’ and Eric Stover, ‘Witnesses and the Promise of Justice in The Hague’ in *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, eds. Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 85-103 and 104-20.

bewildered world looks to the methodical processes of international justice to deal with the brutal mess of genocide.’ The healing potential of this justice remains unquestioned, especially since the survivors are portrayed as merely waiting: the focus on their campaign for speedier justice only serves to endorse it. Indeed, Hasan Nuhanović, heading the campaign, affirms: ‘Everybody’s talking about reconciliation, returns... I don’t know how it can go together with this, what we are doing... I think it’s not going to be possible to have the future of this country without first justice.’ Similarly, in the epilogue to *The Graves* (1998), Eric Stover and Gilles Peress note that the process of coming to terms with the past is complex, that The Hague’s distance alters its impact, and that the formation of civil society and democratic institutions are necessary to ensure an enduring peace,²⁸ but their final lines revert to grand claims. Reminding us that this was the century of ‘Never Again’, they argue that ‘unless we accept the moral imperative that acting swiftly to stop genocide and crimes against humanity and punishing those responsible, it will happen again.’²⁹

However, there are also more engaged representations which delve deeper into the complex realities of post-genocide justice, reconciliation, and ‘healing’.³⁰ Few would dispute the need for some form of ‘justice’, or the general desirability of ‘reconciliation’, but as Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein write, ‘the pursuit of criminal justice, as important as it is, should not be held up as some kind of panacea for righting past wrongs or as a “magic bullet” for “healing” victims and war-torn societies.’³¹ Survivors may have vastly differing conceptions of justice:

For many of our informants, justice meant having a job and an income; for others, it was returning to the home they had lost; still others saw justice as the ability to forget the past and move on with their lives. For some, justice was testifying at a trial against the soldiers and paramilitaries who had murdered their families and destroyed their homes. For others, justice had to be exacted by revenge. Some said justice could only take place once their neighbors looked them directly in the eye and apologized for betraying them. Still others said it was finally learning the truth about their missing relatives and receiving their bodies for proper burial.³²

²⁸ Stover and Peress, *The Graves*, 327.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 328. See also 137-8, where they try to establish an academic distance between themselves and the ‘supporters of justice’, but end up reinforcing their arguments.

³⁰ Neither can they be said to fall into Akhavan’s opposite category, that of the ‘political realists’, those who seek peace by appeasing the powerful.

³¹ Stover and Weinstein, ‘Introduction: Conflict, Justice, and Reclamation’ in *My Neighbor, My Enemy*, eds. Stover and Weinstein, 1-26: 5.

³² *Ibid.*, 4. See also Stover, *The Witnesses: War Crimes and the Promise of Justice in The Hague* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); Uvin and Mironko, ‘Western and Local Approaches’.

Together, these representations bear out Stover and Weinstein's point, taking a more ethnographic approach (as against the more abstract and universalising style of the judicial romantics) to show that, at the local level, the meaning of justice and reconciliation refracts, that they are highly individual processes, and equally, that they sometimes sow further discord and division.

That survivors may not share the 'international' concept of justice or reconciliation is often evident. The voices gathered by Hatzfeld in *The Strategy of Antelopes* offer overlapping but sometimes very different viewpoints on reconciliation,³³ for example, and those writing about forensic exhumations in Bosnia and Rwanda emphasise not the contribution towards 'justice' that the identification of the bodies and the manner of their deaths might bring, but the overwhelming importance for relatives that they find their loved ones' remains – in other words, that 'justice' and 'reconciliation' are irrelevant without this.³⁴ Other representations show a stalemate: in Panh's *S-21*, for instance, there is no reconciliation, and certainly no justice; there are few answers, either, since the former guards of Tuol Sleng merely repeat old slogans and justifications, evading Vann Nath's questions. Indeed, this instinctive and instant recourse to the Khmer Rouge mindset – and behaviour³⁵ – has plenty to say about the lack of coming to terms with the past in Cambodia. A similar lack of reconciliation, and continuing divisions between victims and perpetrators, are also palpable in Fethiye Çetin's *My Grandmother: A Memoir* (2008), and Clea Koff's descriptions of working in the field in *The Bone Woman* (2004).³⁶

One also cannot ignore the occasional alternative conception of 'retributive justice' – revenge. Some are tongue-in-cheek fantasies along the lines of Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) – such as *The Hunting Party*, where the three journalists, after tracking down and capturing 'The Fox' (Karadžić) in the forests of Republika Srpska, dump him, hands tied, in the busy market square of Polje, 'one of the few

³³ Hatzfeld, *Strategy of Antelopes*, 198-212.

³⁴ Koff, *Bone Woman*; Courtney Angela Brkic, *The Stone Fields: An Epitaph for the Living* (London: Granta, 2005); Wojciech Tochman, *Like Eating a Stone: Surviving the Past in Bosnia*, trans. Antonia Lloyd-Jones (London: Portobello, 2008).

³⁵ I am referring especially to Him's reenactments; see Deirdre Boyle, 'Shattering Silence: Traumatic Memory and re-enactment in Rithy Panh's *S-21: The Khmer Rouge Killing Machine*', *Framework: The Journal of Cinema and Media* 50:1&2 (2009), 95-106. Cf. the recalcitrance of Holocaust perpetrators, e.g. in Luke Holland's *Final Account* interviews.

³⁶ Fethiye Çetin, *My Grandmother: A Memoir*, trans. Maureen Freely (London: Verso, 2008); Koff, *Bone Woman*.

towns Muslims came back to'. But revenge as justice (whether poetic or bloody) is not uncommon as a serious theme, either: many Cambodian testimonies mention, with more or less detail and varying degrees of revulsion or satisfaction, the killings of lower-level Khmer Rouge cadre during the chaos of the Vietnamese takeover, by their former victims.³⁷ The assassination of Talaat in Berlin in 1921 by Soghomon Tehlirian is the focus of the 1982 film *Assignment Berlin* and Lindy Avakian's novel *The Cross and the Crescent* (1965), while the assassinations of Turkish diplomats in the 1970s and 1980s by Armenian groups features in Egoyan's *Ararat* and Suzanne Kherdalian's 1988 film *Back to Ararat*.³⁸ In Anne Aghion's *gacaca* films, the fear of revenge (whether violent, or through denunciation at *gacaca*) simmers under the surface of social tensions; Rurangwa's testimony seethes with anger and desire for revenge.³⁹

But alongside these particular impulses to sidestep more formal routes for 'justice' are those which engage with the (usually western-imposed) trials in a much more explicit manner. Bizot's *Facing the Torturer* is exemplary: well aware that the workings of international justice wanted to turn man into monster, he constructed his testimony to the ECCC courtroom as a direct refutation and insistence upon Duch's humanity. The book itself is a broader, personal meditation on humanity and killing, but it forcefully critiques the trial as a self-confirmatory distortion, a performed, wilful denial of what is self-evident – that Duch is an entirely ordinary specimen of humanity.⁴⁰ 'The error lies in our determination to consider people from the outside', he writes, criticising the way trials promise 'closure', but in reality reawaken the survivors' pain without being able to resolve it – arguing that this is partly because of the mythologisation of perpetrators.⁴¹

³⁷ Loung Ung, *First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2007), 239-45; Ngor, *Survival*, 734-6, 380, 389-90; Sokreaksa S. Himm (with Jan Greenough), *The Tears of My Soul* (Oxford: Monarch Books, 2003), 96-7; Someth May, *Cambodian Witness* (London: Faber & Faber, 1986), 239-46, 254.

³⁸ Operation Nemesis involved the killings of nine Young Turk leaders in 1920 and 1921; see Jacques Derogy, *Resistance and Revenge: The Armenian Assassination of the Turkish Leaders Responsible for the 1915 Massacres and Deportations* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1990), and Terrence Des Pres, 'Introduction: Remembering Armenia' in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick/London: Transaction, 1998), 9-17: 15-17. In *Ararat*, Raffi's father was a freedom fighter/terrorist; *Back to Ararat* includes an interview with one of these assassins, and extended discussions amongst an Armenian-American family (including an extremely politically active young couple) about the aims and potential achievements of these 'acts', as they are referred to.

³⁹ The issue of revenge is curiously absent from most Holocaust representations and academic literature, although there are documented cases. See Berel Lang, 'Holocaust Memory and Revenge: The Presence of the Past', *Jewish Social Studies* 2:2 (1996), 1-20.

⁴⁰ Bizot, *Facing the Torturer*, especially 108, 114-6, 120-3, 126-8.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 114-5.

Few others deconstruct international justice as explicitly as Bizot. A more workaday critique can be found in Peck's *Sometimes in April*: the main character, Augustin, travels to Arusha – 'The Geneva of Africa', as a sign proclaims on the court buildings – in order to visit his indicted brother, who is the only one with any knowledge of how and where Augustin's family died during the genocide. From his hotel, Augustin rehearses Rwandans' grievances about the ICTR over the phone with Martine, in a scene which relies heavily on dialogue to make its point:⁴² "They get full meals, they get AZT medicine, while rape victims are dying of AIDS. It's like a fucking health club!" ... "We need the tribunals. I know they have their shortcomings, but it's a way to get through it, a way to move on." "It's a way for everybody to wash their hands, so nobody has to feel bad, so we can pretend there was justice. Where is our dignity?" "So how are we going to move on?" This question remains unanswered by Augustin, but he eventually meets his brother and obtains some of the information he needs. Thus, the ICTR's justice is of no help: facts and personal conversations between perpetrator and victim, not distant 'tribunal truths',⁴³ are necessary to begin 'moving on'. These critiques ask their audiences to question the claims of the western justice system, seeing it either as perpetuating the inability to understand perpetrators, or incapable of addressing local needs.

Enemies of the People also strongly indicates how personal reconciliation can be. Sambath had been interviewing Nuon Chea for ten years before Chea began to speak less guardedly about DK; over those ten years, a relationship had formed, based on a certain amount of mutual trust. Sambath had never told Chea that his family died under

⁴² See Uvin and Mironko, 'Western and Local Approaches': they argue that the ICTR and the formal domestic justice system, both 'Western-inspired systems of justice', 'have proven incapable of addressing the needs of Rwanda. The third system, *gacaca*, offers a promising alternative to achieve not only justice, but reconciliation and grassroots empowerment as well. This promise, however, also poses risks' (219). For a sobering assessment of the triumph of those 'risks' over the 'promise', see Lars Waldorf, 'Rwanda's Failing Experiment in Restorative Justice' in *Handbook of Restorative Justice*, eds. Dennis Sullivan and Larry Tifft (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 422-32. See also Max Rettig, 'Gacaca: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Postconflict Rwanda?', *African Studies Review* 51:3 (2008), 25-50; Rettig, 'The Sovu Trials: The Impact of Genocide Justice on One Community' and (for a slightly different perspective) Don Webster, 'The Uneasy Relationship between the ICTR and *Gacaca*', both in *Remaking Rwanda*, eds. Straus and Waldorf, 194-209, 184-93.

⁴³ In this respect *Sometimes in April* argues the opposite from Eric Stover's observations about the gap between the truths the ICTY prosecutors are trying to establish, and the truths the survivors want to hear: 'According to some [Hague] witnesses, "tribunal truth," based largely on facts about individual events, left little latitude for answering the fundamental "why" questions: Why had the defendants set out to destroy communities that had lived in harmony for decades? Why the excessive brutality, the mutilations, and secret burials of victims? Why the denial and inability to accept that what they had done was wrong?' Stover, *The Witnesses*, 117. Neither 'truth' in either location has to be mutually exclusive, of course.

the Khmer Rouge, not wanting Chea to think he wanted revenge; when, near the film's end, Sambath tells him, the scene is not one of accusation or triumphant revelation. Although well aware that he is on camera, Chea does appear shocked and sorry. Sambath certainly believes so, telling us that he 'felt very sad... and he also, very sad too... he almost could not talk when he heard about my family like that. ... He could not talk much about that. I understand about that.' The night before Chea is taken away to trial, Sambath spends the evening with him, joking that that he should have 'taken a long trip somewhere', afterwards saying that 'When he was taken into the aircraft that made me very sad ... not to say that he's a good man... but because we had worked together for almost ten years... I am sad, yeah.' This 'reconciliation' comes not from the formula of an admission of crimes followed by apologies and words of forgiveness, but on Sambath feeling that he has gained an understanding of DK, and, perhaps, of Chea.⁴⁴

However, some of the best challenges to judicial romanticism come from Anne Aghion's four extremely rich documentaries, *Gacaca: Living Together Again in Rwanda* (2003), *In Rwanda We Say... The Family That Does Not Speak Dies* (2005), *My Neighbor My Killer* (2009), and *Notebooks of Memory* (2009). The films follow the *gacaca* process in Ntongwe district, an area where pilot trials were conducted, and they exemplify the kind of ethnographic approach which brings to light the complexities and intricacies – and irresolutions – of life in the aftermath: they are based on quite some time spent in this district (the films were shot over a decade), and Aghion allows the survivors and perpetrators to reflect in their own words and at length,⁴⁵ capturing in the process the awkwardness of the trials and their impact on the community.⁴⁶ Both *Gacaca* and *My Neighbor, My Killer* open with the General Prosecutor of Rwanda explaining the decision to resurrect a modified version of the supposedly traditional justice system: 'When the government asked itself how to rebuild the country it looked for foundations but found only sand. It decided that the only solution was justice. Bare justice, to suit all Rwandans. ... The political law we

⁴⁴ The film also quietly deconstructs ECCC justice – Chea is indicted, but we learn that the other perpetrators we meet, who have discussed their killing in frank detail for the cameras, are exempt.

⁴⁵ Aghion mostly leaves her presence and questions out of the final cut, which, for me, heightens the sense that these are films which allow Rwandans to speak for themselves. (This is not to suggest that, as an ethnographer, she is 'writing herself out of the text' – see the exchange between Euphrasie and Belancilla reproduced in the main text below.)

⁴⁶ Since some of the footage is re-used for later films, and the underlying ethos the same, the films can almost be discussed as a single unit. I will note which film I am quoting from, but most comments will be general and apply to all four.

are setting up aims to unite and reconcile Rwandans and to rebuild the country.’ The films, though, fundamentally challenge *gacaca* as justice and as a reconciliation mechanism. Gathering together the experiences and viewpoints of survivors and perpetrators (and one released prisoner in particular, Abraham Rwamfizi), they subtly raise different opinions, questions, and problems, but refuse to provide answers.

It is easy to see how the trials themselves might create animosity. The government officials are self-important and condescending, both whilst taking prisoner confessions in the lockups⁴⁷ and during the trials, where their aggressive and confrontational questioning cuts into the witnesses’ testimony and sometimes betrays an unfamiliarity with the basic chronology of events in the area.⁴⁸ In *Gacaca*, the villagers agree that their words are circumscribed by the trials’ narrow interests: ‘Much could have been said there, but it was impossible to speak, because it wasn’t a real trial. Why get into a debate with the authorities when their mission is to root out injustice? Neither witnesses nor prisoners could speak ... We couldn’t freely express our opinion.’ Back in the village, Aghion’s camera allows us to see the discomfort and discord which accompanies the prisoners’ release. Many are outraged at the paltry punishment – ‘So we too can kill and ask forgiveness. And we’ll be released even though we’ve killed?’ – and at the attitude of the prisoners who neither show remorse nor try to make amends by helping in the fields or with repairs to the houses destroyed during the genocide.⁴⁹ Indeed, Rwamfizi hums jauntily as he leads the camera to the spot he used to patrol as cell leader, commenting that it feels good to be back; it is clear from his other monologues to the camera that he has managed to renarrate the events to himself in such a way as to exculpate himself. A darker expression flits across his face, though, as he denies again the accusations levelled at him during his trial by Félicité and Faïssa – the murder of Félicité’s children and Faïssa’s husband. ‘Can’t you see, it’s only lies?’

⁴⁷ In *Gacaca*, the official is dismissive, his transcription of the prisoner’s words inaccurate (as rendered by the subtitles), and the camera’s angle accentuates how he looks down on the prisoner from his high desk.

⁴⁸ In *Gacaca* and *In Rwanda We Say...*, a witness recounts an attack: ‘It was Friday the 21st ... they had all taken part in the attack over there’, he says, pointing, and he is stopped by the question ‘Which attack?’ – ‘On the hill over these at Gafumba’, he says, pointing again, and exasperation crosses his face at the questions which follow: ‘At whose place? At whose place? Give me names...’. His answer indicates that the attack is well-known: ‘Many of us were hiding out there. It was the terrible attack of the 21st, they came from there [he points] to go to the other hill [pointing again].’ Likewise, in *Notebooks of Memory*, a dispute over contradictory testimonies and the judges’ attitude provokes exasperation, and a number of those present – all survivors – remonstrate and give advice, until an irritated judge asks, ‘Is Kanyamugara being tried or the court?’. In another repeated scene, the judges miscalculate the remaining prison sentence of one man, and embarrassedly try to correct it without losing face.

⁴⁹ Again – alternative conceptions of justice and reparations, or reconciliation.

he finishes. Outside their own homes, the women are upset and confrontational: 'I know you've been to Rwamfizi's. You've been over there. Did he have you believe that all the people who testified against him were lying?', says Félicité. Faïssa's comment, delivered with pursed lips as she continues her daily chores, draws out many of the issues which fly in the face of the abstract notion of 'reconciliation':

The government wanted the death of the Tutsi and obtained it. Then the current government locked up the killers. Now, they're freeing them. You think a poor farmer has any say in that? If it were you, what would you say? What would you do? You'd have to embrace he who decimated your family. But if I could... If I weren't alone.... Someone who exterminated your children and your livestock... His children have milk, while mine... Then he comes swaggering around... And I must accept it, as he has a large family, he has strength.

As Jennie E. Burnet has argued, *gacaca* not only deepened the cleavages between Hutu and Tutsi in some places, but also made some genocide survivors increasingly mistrustful of the current government.⁵⁰ Faïssa's words convey the sense of many survivors that they have no choice but to accept the return; as Roger Bromley notes, Aghion's films capture a 'wary, perhaps also weary, sense of compromise ... with all its contradictions',⁵¹ but they also convey the persistence of fear over and above mere wariness. 'If you think twice about it, you don't speak', comments one survivor: 'People at the presentation were afraid to speak – thinking, if I denounce someone, will I then be denounced?'. The films show how the prisoners' return has disrupted the *gacaca* process, producing further 'silences'. 'Vengeance is not an option for us. We don't have the stamina for real revenge', says one; 'We must get along with them, they outnumber us', says another; 'We can only hope they'll toe the line, that they won't start up again', comments Euphrasie to her friend Belancilla, and then, in a brilliant exchange, suddenly cuts short and exclaims,

But why are they asking us this? They want to know how we feel about their return? – Who asks us this? – These Whites, they ask us if we are happy, if we feel plenitude... – Why? We are alone, even in our nights. – We wander in solitude! – You wander by day and lie awake at night... – What can we do! – That's just how it is. – Yes, we have no choice... Enough. These Whites ask the strangest questions. They ask if the killers came to greet me! Would Runanira or Iyakaremye greet me?

⁵⁰ Jennie E. Burnet, '(In)Justice: Truth, Reconciliation and Revenge in Rwanda's *Gacaca*' in *Transitional Justice*, ed. Hinton, 95-118: 114. Faïssa is Hutu, so Burnet's distinction between genocide survivors and Tutsi is particularly appropriate in this context.

⁵¹ Roger Bromley, 'After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?: Cultural Representations of Reconciliation in Rwanda', *French Cultural Studies* 20:2 (2009), 181-197: 187.

Indeed, the only ‘reconciliation’ one sees is enforced, in a manner of speaking, by the cameras themselves. One survivor comments that he has not even had a chance to speak to his family’s killers: ‘Nobody’s come to see me!! Next time you come, bring them with you.’ Aghion’s team sets up a meeting between Rwamfizi and Félicité, Euphrasie, and others; some cannot bring themselves even to look at him – especially as he begins with an entirely remorseless rolling and excusatory narrative – but others manage to shake hands and reaccept him. These films, like the other representations discussed here, show that ‘justice’ is contested and reconciliation highly personal, and moreover that these processes do not take place in a political or social vacuum – as the abstract judicial-romantic notions often imply – but are sensitive to and themselves affect other social concerns in the present. These representations challenge the easy mainstream rhetoric which claims that justice and reconciliation can resolve the past in uncomplicated ways, asking their audiences instead to be attentive to the irresolutions in the present – with Blanchot, to ‘keep watch over absent meaning’.

Remnants

Beholden as they are to ‘transition’ and ‘resolution’, the judicial-romantic representations also definitively mark the violence as over. In this, they are joined by the broad and growing set of representations (mostly visual) which document the traces, remnants, and legacies of the past in the present – which has become a major trend in Holocaust representations in the last few decades.⁵² The rich detail of these images of landscapes and overgrown, ruined buildings and other physical traces invites us to study them:⁵³ the landscapes convey abandonment, desertion, and destruction, while the portraits of those who became victims and survivors are elegiac and plaintive.⁵⁴ Others – images of bodily remains – are more shocking and disturbing. But while there is a place for each within the spectrum of representations, it is also

⁵² See Michael Meng’s discussions in his *Shattered Spaces: Encountering Jewish Ruins in Postwar Germany and Poland* (Cambridge, MA/London: Harvard University Press, 2011).

⁵³ Herschdorfer (*Afterwards*, 17) identifies ‘aftermath photography’ as images ‘often taken with a keen attention to composition and the use of colour, on a monumental scale ... more reminiscent of the tradition of sublime painting than that of humanist, black-and-white photojournalism.’

⁵⁴ Alana Newhouse, ‘A Closer Reading of Vishniac’, *New York Times*, 1 April 2010: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/04/magazine/04shtetl-t.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all [accessed 31.12.12]. Newhouse discusses the cataloguing and reassessment of the Roman Vishniac archive by curator Maya Benton, who shows that Vishniac was highly selective of the photographs he published and favoured a ‘plaintive’ perspective which ‘advanced an impression of the shtetl as populated largely by poor, pious, embattled Jews’ – discarding other, sometimes technically more brilliant, images because they did not fit this. Vishniac’s *A Vanished World* (1983) is the epitome of this elegiac style.

important to note that, because they invite us to view and mourn these traces of the past – not to consider and contemplate the violence that brought them – these representations also direct our attention away from ongoing violence in the present. As other artists such as Simon Norfolk or Kathryn Cook show, the contemplative mode can be combined with reflection on present violence.

The display of the victims' belongings – possessions as traces and remnants – is one of the closest points of convergence between Holocaust and genocide representations, in photography and some literature but particularly in museums: in fact, the display of victims' belongings seems to have become an almost compulsory exhibition technique in Holocaust museums and many other memorial museums worldwide.⁵⁵ These displays are intended to communicate the enormity of loss and facilitate identification with the victims – whether through the mimesis of endless piles of shoes, glasses, or suitcases, or the more intimate and perhaps more poignant display of a single item – a pair of glasses, pocketknife, or pipe. The most famous, of course, are the rooms full of hair and belongings at Auschwitz and other camp museums, which are replicated on a smaller scale in the USHMM and IWM. These two, and Yad Vashem and the Ort der Information underneath Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, also display possessions individually – glasses, shoes, trinkets, letters and diaries. The same is true of the Potočari Memorial Museum:⁵⁶ the photographs and short biographies of fifteen men and boys are displayed with a single possession. Similarly, in the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, a few sets of clothing have been washed and hung in glass cases, dramatically backlit in an otherwise dim room, and in other memorials around Rwanda, clothes, cooking pots, books, and bibles are displayed; in Tuol Sleng, a glass cabinet holds the neatly folded clothes of victims, underneath a large photograph on the wall of a huge mound of clothing.⁵⁷ In these museums, the personal possessions are displayed separately from analytical and explanatory sections – unlike in the IWM or USHMM, for example, where they are often more integrated, or indeed the Jewish

⁵⁵ See Williams, *Memorial Museums*, chapter 2; Bickford and Sodaro, 'Remembering Yesterday to Protect Tomorrow', 66-86. Belongings are also exhibited, for example, in the National 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York and the Peace Museum in Hiroshima.

⁵⁶ See Bardgett's description in 'Remembering Srebrenica' (as I noted, Bardgett and staff from Westerbork were involved in the design of Potočari).

⁵⁷ Personal objects are rarer in Armenian genocide representations, given the nature of the deportations and the theft that occurred en route – although old family photographs often feature, since these were frequently the only surviving possessions, as in Egoyan's *Ararat*: see in this context Nefissa Naguib, 'Storytelling: Armenian Family Albums in the Diaspora', *Visual Anthropology* 21 (2008), 231-44. Again, because of the nature of Khmer Rouge rule, Cambodian victims have fewer surviving possessions, and these clothes are the only real such exhibit.

Museum Berlin's 2008-9 temporary exhibition 'Looting and Restitution', which displayed artworks, books, and musical instruments alongside many original documents, including legal ones, all integrated into a comprehensive narrative.

These personal traces reappear in photographic works and literature, especially those concerned with Rwanda and Bosnia: close, intimate photographs of keys, clothing, copies of the Koran, and family photographs are interspersed throughout Peress' photographs in *The Graves*, in Paul Lowe's *Bosnians* (2005), Christian Schwager's *My Lovely Bosnia* (2007), Wojciech Tochmann's *Like Eating a Stone* (2008), and Koff's *The Bone Woman*. Pieter Hugo focuses on the belongings strewn around Ntarama church in *Rwanda: Vestiges of A Genocide* (2004), echoed in Peress' *The Silence* (1995) and Norfolk's *For Most of It I Have No Words*. As I will discuss in chapter 5, these personal possessions carry an emotional charge – accentuated by the way they are represented – and they invite us to contemplate and mourn, through these metonyms, the fullness of the lives that were lost. As well as these poignant reminders, though, are much more disturbing remains: bodily remains, and the instruments of torture and death left by the killers. The images from the camps' liberation in 1945 of piles of corpses are well-known, and these are echoed in representations of other genocides. Noticeably, though, in the case of the Holocaust and Armenia, these bodies are only encountered in images – whereas in Rwanda and Cambodia at least some remains are on display in most museums and memorials, even in the Kigali museum, where, given the overall aesthetic feel of the museum and its emphasis on the respectful burial of victims in mass graves, one might not have expected them to be displayed.⁵⁸ The vast majority of films and photographic monographs about the aftermath – mainstream or otherwise – show human remains, and some also focus on the killing instruments: piles of machetes in Rwanda, wooden clubs in Cambodia, the omnipresence of guns in the Balkans. These representations intend to disturb – they graphically foreground the violence, even without directly showing it – and they command a very different sort of attention and emotion to the melancholy of the personal belongings. Their ubiquity in the western media – stories about genocide are almost always accompanied by an image of bones or bodies – and their prevalence in

⁵⁸ The nature of the killing (the deportations of Armenians and the burning of many of the Nazis' victims), and, now, the temporal distance means that there are few bodies to recover. There are no remains on display in Bosnia, though the graveyards offer a symbolic representation (especially at Srebrenica). In Cambodia and Rwanda, human remains are most prominently on display at national genocide memorials, and less conspicuous at local sites: see Meierhenrich, 'Topographies of Remembering and Forgetting', and my discussion below.

these representations suggests a western fascination with and fixation on these remains. Jens Meierhenrich has argued that in Rwanda, the RPF has instrumentalised precisely this dynamic in order to divert attention from its authoritarian practices: bones predominate at the national genocide memorials, and ‘it is indeed difficult to formulate critical questions about the legitimacy of the postgenocidal regime when one is face-to-face – both literally and figuratively – with the legacies of the genocidal regime that preceded it.’⁵⁹ In part, this argument can apply more generally to representations of bodily remains; the artists or journalists are hardly following a government policy, but in focusing attention on the macabre, they ‘facilitate a forgetting of the present’.⁶⁰

And in fact, if one takes a survey view, the prevalence, even dominance, of these images of human remains in representations of the Cambodian, Rwandan, and Bosnian aftermaths marks a distinct difference from the spectrum of representations of the Holocaust’s aftermath. Since at least the 1980s, a major trend in Holocaust representation has concentrated on uncovering and documenting the vanishing traces of Jewish pre-war life and the sites of extermination across the European landscape. From Lanzmann’s *Shoah* to Shimon Attie’s projections of old photographs of Jewish homes and shops on Berlin facades,⁶¹ from Chris Schwarz’s strikingly colourful photographs of disused and destroyed synagogues, cemeteries, and homes in his *Traces of Memory* (permanently displayed at the Galicia Jewish Museum) to Christian Boltanski’s *Missing House*,⁶² from the numerous photographic monographs which document the ruins of the concentration camps network across Europe to the *Stolpersteine* embedded in pavements across Europe,⁶³ these projects map, fix, and

⁵⁹ Ibid., 289.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ See James E. Young, ‘Sites Unseen: Shimon Attie’s Acts of Remembrance’ in *At Memory’s Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁶² Schwarz, *Traces of Memory*. The travelling exhibition has also been at the Manchester Jewish Museum, the Museum of Jewish Heritage, New York, and elsewhere. A similar project (in black and white) is undertaken by Jeffrey Guskis in *Silent Places: Landscapes of Jewish Life and Loss in Eastern Europe* (New York: Overlook Duckworth, 2003). On Boltanski’s *Missing House* (a site-specific installation Berlin, for which he researched the names, professions, and tenancy durations of the individuals who had lived in 15/16 Grosse Hamburgerstrasse before it was destroyed by Allied bombs in 1945 – both Jewish and, after their deportation, non-Jewish – and placed plaques on the remaining walls), see Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty*, chapter 4, and Abigail Solomon-Godeau, ‘Mourning or Melancholia: Christian Boltanski’s *Missing House*’, *Oxford Art Journal* 21:2 (1998), 1-20.

⁶³ For example, Dirk Reinartz, *Deathly Still: Pictures of Former German Concentration Camps* with Christian Graf von Krockow, trans Ishbel Flett (Göttingen: Scalco, 1995); Reinhard Matz, *Die unsichtbaren Lager: Das Verschwinden der Vergangenheit im Gedenken* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1993); Mikael Levin, *War Story* (Gina Kehayoff Verlag, 1997); Erich Hartmann, *In the Camps* (New

preserve what remains of the past. Like Vishniac's *A Vanished World*, these representations offer an elegiac, nostalgic, and melancholic view of the remnants of Jewish life: the texts are suffused with words like 'lost', 'absence', 'vanishing', 'ruins', and 'traces', and the images cohere into tours of crumbling ruins and reused buildings, former graveyards, and the quiet, empty spaces of former camps.

But this melancholic and nostalgic approach is almost entirely absent in the representations of other genocides.⁶⁴ Instead, the images of landscapes and ruins are intended to unsettle, and some use them to point to the irresolution of violence in the present.⁶⁵ Quite common in representations of the Bosnian aftermath are photographs of leafy paths through woods, quiet fields, and narrow country lanes – but they show deserted spaces, without a clear subject of interest, and so often convey a subtle unease – before the caption informs the reader that this was a route taken by those fleeing Srebrenica, or is the site of a mass grave.⁶⁶ Other traces are visible in some – a disintegrating Koran, a boot, a skeleton. Similar to these are Pieter Hugo's images of mass grave sites in Rwanda, Rob Lemkin's exploration of spatial memories in rural Cambodia in *Enemies of the People*, and Simon Norfolk's more subtle evocations of the Armenian deportations through the curving paths of trees winding through the snow in Anatolia. Some photographers focus on the ruins of houses – but here, the

York/London: Norton, 1995). Susan Silas' project *Helmbrecht's Walk* traces the route of a former death march; see Kaplan, *Landscapes of Holocaust Postmemory*, chapter 5. On the *Stolpersteine* – small brass plaques hammered into the pavement outside former Jewish houses, with the name, birth and death dates (if known), and place to which they were deported engraved into them – see <http://www.stolpersteine.com/> [accessed 31.12.12].

⁶⁴ Sarajevo, especially the National Library, is often shown in this mode – which is presumably to do with the western European adoption/romanticisation of the city. Many Armenian testimonies evoke pre-genocide life – e.g. Bertha Nakshian Ketchian, *In the Shadow of the Fortress: The Genocide Remembered*, ed. Sonia I. Ketchian (Cambridge, MA: Zoryan Institute, 1988); Marderos Deranian, *Hussenig: the Origin, History and Destruction of an Armenian Town*, trans. and ed. Hagop Martin Deranian (Belmont: Armenian Heritage Press, 1994). Some churches in present-day Turkey, especially Akhtamar, are occasionally shown in this melancholic mode, as is Ararat, and a new website is dedicated to pre-genocide Armenian life (www.houshamadyan.org/en/home.html) [accessed 31.12.12].

⁶⁵ There are, of course, some Holocaust representations which do this – Gusky includes photographs of Polish antisemitic graffiti in *Silent Places*, pointing towards the persistence of structural violence in the present, as do Claude Lanzmann's interviews with Polish villagers in *Shoah*. Others, in a slightly different vein, aim to critique the melancholic presentation of Holocaust landscapes: James Friedman's project *12 Nazi Concentration Camps*, for example, takes a notable stance against the archetypal, iconic visualisations of the camps with images of everyday scenes – delivery trucks, children playing on the parking lot, local maintenance workers. See Dora Apel's analysis of Friedman (and Hartmann, Reinartz, Levin and Silas) in *Memory Effects*.

⁶⁶ These are not unlike the images of former camps analysed by Ulrich Baer in 'To Give Memory a Place', 38-62. See Stover and Peress, *The Graves*, and Peress, *Farewell to Bosnia*; Schwager, *My Lovely Bosnia*; Samarah, *Srebrenica*, text Emir Suljagić, trans. Saba Risaluddin (Sarajevo: Ministarstvo kulture, obrazovanja i sporta Federacije BiH, 2005) – online at <http://tariksamarah.com/thumbs.htm> [accessed 31.12.12]; Paul Lowe, *Bosnians* (London: Saqi, 2005); Simon Norfolk, *For Most Of It I Have No Words and Bleed*.

aesthetic is not one of melancholic beauty, but one which foregrounds recent violence and the *selective* nature of that violence, and perhaps also points to the failure of returns policies and the lack of money to rebuild.⁶⁷ Kathryn Cook has recorded the traces of the Armenian genocide in her photographic project *Memory Denied* (2008) – crumbling churches and houses, remains of refugee camps and orphanages, desolate landscapes once heavily populated by Armenians – placing these alongside images of virulent Turkish nationalist demonstrators, of Armenians who prefer to keep their identity quiet, and of the funeral of assassinated Armenian-Turkish journalist Hrant Dink.⁶⁸ But Simon Norfolk also uses these traces in *For Most Of It I Have No Words* to make a deeper point about the prevalence of genocide in the twentieth century, and the gradual downward drift of forgetting:⁶⁹ as he comments, ‘Anybody interested in the effects of war quickly becomes an expert in ruins’.⁷⁰ Beginning with the familiar images of skulls and bones in Rwanda and Cambodia, as he works backwards through the century the images gradually become more allusive, culminating in the meandering curves of the Anatolian plains and the desert sands of Namibia.

But the fascination with the traces of genocide is not limited to these physical objects: it can also include survivors – who are often represented as ‘*she’erit hapletah*’ (‘the surviving remnant’),⁷¹ as ‘leftovers of the sword’, ‘remnants of the killing fields’, ‘lost’, ‘demoralised, outcast, “demolished”’.⁷² Each of these terms connotes (at least now) brokenness, trauma, and sorrow – which involves a certain framing of the survivor. The newly-emerging body of research on the Displaced Persons camps in Europe shows that the self-identified *she’erit hapletah*, as well as trying to come to terms with their experiences and mourning the loss of their families, also actively and

⁶⁷ See Samarah’s images and those in Koff’s *Bone Woman*, Lowe’s *Bosnians*, and Aghion’s films.

⁶⁸ Unpublished: online at

http://www.agencevu.com/visa2008/Cook_Memory_Denied_Turkey_and_Armenian_Genocide/index.html [accessed 31.12.12]. Cook’s captions are very important in establishing meaning, since they convey a lot of the information her photographs cannot. This is especially true of the rather repetitive images taken on the Berlin-Baghdad railway, and some others which are aesthetic but seem a little less relevant.

⁶⁹ Michael Ignatieff in Norfolk, *For Most Of It I Have No Words*, n.p.

⁷⁰ Simon Norfolk, ‘Et in arcadia ego’, <http://www.simonnorfolk.com/pop.html> [accessed 31.12.12].

⁷¹ The Hebrew term ‘*she’erit hapletah*’ was employed to describe Holocaust survivors, especially in the European displaced persons (DP) camps. See Yehuda Bauer and Avital Saf, eds., *She’erit hapletah, 1944-1948: Rehabilitation and Political Struggle* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1990).

⁷² ‘Leftovers of the sword’ was used to describe Armenian survivors: Çetin, *My Grandmother*, 102; ‘Khmer are viewed as remnants of the killing fields’: May M. Ebihara, Carol A. Mortland and Judy Ledgerwood, ‘Introduction’ in *Cambodian Culture Since 1975: Homeland and Exile*, eds. Ebihara, Mortland, and Ledgerwood (Ithaca/London: Cornell University Press, 1994), 1-26: 4; ‘the women of Srebrenica are lost’, Irfanka Pašagić, quoted in Stover and Peress, *The Graves*, 193; Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, viii.

consciously set about trying to rebuild their societies and cultures; the camps quickly boasted cultural and educational activities, various political organisations, ORT's⁷³ efforts to prepare people for a new life in Palestine, and, more simply, a desire to return to 'normality' (there were many marriages and births, for example).⁷⁴ However, in 1945 and since, survivors have often been portrayed (and portray themselves) as burdened by their experiences, still alive but irreversibly marked. This discourse of grief and trauma locks them into the past, sifting only the painful memories and continuing nightmares from the mixed everydayness of their post-genocide lives, until they themselves become vestiges of the genocide. 'I survived and many did not; I lived on in the same way that they died. There is no difference between their death and my survival, for I remained to live in a world that has been permanently and irreversibly marked by their death', Emir Suljagić opens his *Postcards from the Grave* (2005); 'I was born here, and I died here ... life is just an imitation', says Jasna Ploskić; 'April 1994. A hillside in Rwanda, where they killed me: me and all my family. But I am not dead', writes Rurangwa.⁷⁵ Or, as Stover recounts: 'I asked Rehija if the children ever celebrated birthdays or holidays. ... 'No, never,' she replied. "Not while our husbands and sons are missing. It wouldn't be right."'⁷⁶

It is not just this sense of living death, or the heavy burden of the past, which echoes Holocaust testimonies: one also sees the classic indications of trauma in survivors' lives – in Ngor's admission, for example, that 'If I thought too much in the daytime about what had happened, I had dreams that night. Huoy died in my arms over and over and over. I saw my father tied to the tree and trying to tell me something, but afraid to speak. It didn't take much to set off my nightmares – the sound of water dripping from the faucet was enough' – or in Balakian's recounting of how his grandmother had a breakdown when the US joined World War II: 'The news of Pearl Harbor, the news of war, set her off. She thought it was happening again. Her house burned down; her family killed; death marches into the desert. She thought the *zaptieh*,

⁷³ See <http://dpcamps.ort.org/about-us/> [accessed 31.12.12].

⁷⁴ E.g. Bauer and Saf, *She'erit Hapletah*; Avinoam J. Patt and Michael Berkowitz, eds., *"We Are Here": New Approaches to Jewish Displaced Persons in Postwar Germany* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2010).

⁷⁵ Emir Suljagić, *Postcards From the Grave*, trans. Lejla Haverić (London: Saqi Books, 2005), 11; Jasna Ploskić quoted in Tochman's *Like Eating a Stone*, 97; Rurangwa, *Genocide*, 11. There are plenty of other examples, and they all resonate strongly with Holocaust testimonies.

⁷⁶ Stover and Peress, *The Graves*, 185.

the Turkish military police, were coming.’⁷⁷ But trauma is perhaps most eloquently manifest in the testimony of Félicité and Euphrasie in Aghion’s *Gacaca*:

Félicité: ‘During the war I trembled with fear... Do you think my voice sounds human? I tremble all over all the time. When I have to hurry, I tremble.’

Euphrasie: ‘Can you imagine someone who... I can still feel how they grabbed my baby off my back, over my shoulder... [she brings a piece of cassava over her back and throws it onto the dirt] flung it on the ground and beat it to death.... I curl up into myself, neither living nor dead. As you see me here, I have no heart. It beats endlessly like this [she beats a quick thud with her hands]. The slightest noise in the house and I startle. Because of the sound of the machetes, *puy* [she imitates the sound of a machete], when something falls I think they’ve returned.’

The aesthetics often used to portray survivors reinforces this sense of trauma, grief, and loss. Certain visual conventions are often used and immediately recognisable: one is the portrait shot of a survivor in mute sorrow, with downcast eyes and head turned slightly to one side, exemplified by Alain Kazinierakis’ photograph of a Rwandan survivor named Eugénie, the deep scar on her forehead accentuated by this classic pose, on the front cover of Yolanda Mukagasana’s *Les Blessures du silence* (2001);⁷⁸ other examples can be found in Peress’ *The Silence* and Tochman’s *Like Eating a Stone*, and the photograph of five child survivors on the front cover of Hatzfeld’s *Into the Quick of Life*. In other images, survivors stare directly into the camera – almost expressionless but perhaps ‘mournful’, perhaps ‘accusing’, it depends on the viewer – but with a gaze which silently signifies ‘all that they have been through’, as in Torgovnik’s *Intended Consequences*, Stover and Peress’ *The Graves*, or Alfredo Jaar’s 3-minute film *Epilogue*.⁷⁹ Some of these portraits are extreme close-ups, as if inviting us to consider what these faces – and eyes – have seen, like Tarik Samarah’s photographs of Srebrenica survivors or Ruben Malayan’s photograph of an aged Armenian survivor on his activist poster ‘Still Waiting for a Fair Trial’,⁸⁰ although this is taken furthest in Jaar’s *The Eyes of Gutete Emerita*.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ngor, *Survival*, 472; Balakian, *Black Dog of Fate*, 185 (183-91 for the entire conversation about survivors and memory). Some testimonies discuss trauma openly, e.g. Rurangwa, *Genocide*, 79-88; Himm, *Tears of My Soul*, 111-27.

⁷⁸ Yolanda Mukagasana and Alain Kazinierakis, *Les Blessures du Silence* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2001).

⁷⁹ Torgovnik, *Intended Consequences*; Stover and Peress, *The Graves* (see the photographs of survivors in the second half of the book); Jaar, *Let There Be Light*, n.p.

⁸⁰ Samarah, *Srebrenica*, especially photograph 57 at <http://tariksamarah.com/thumbs.htm>; <http://armeniangenocideposters.org/2011/>; Jaar, *Let There Be Light*, n.p. In this they mirror the stares in Jeffrey Wolin’s pictures of Holocaust survivors in his project *Written in Memory*, although without his intriguing display of their testimony around them. There is also an echo here with the gazes of the Cambodian victims photographed at Tuol Sleng.

⁸¹ See chapter 1 above.

Alternatively, survivors are shown in states of extreme distress; Peress' sequences of Bosnian Muslim women covering their faces with their hands, anxiously awaiting information about their husbands, and close-ups of their wringing hands (and wedding rings) in *The Graves* are archetypal. Many documentaries also include scenes of survivors breaking down completely – both *A Cry from the Grave* and Eric Kabera's *Keepers of Memory* (2004) have extended scenes in which female survivors weep openly; there is also a particularly haunting sequence in the IWM's Crimes Against Humanity film in which a Cambodian survivor visits the stupa where her relatives' bones are on display. (Tears are rarely seen in Aghion's films, and indeed, when Félicité does cry at a *gacaca* meeting, she hides it with her *pagne*.) Unsurprisingly, there are similar scenes in feature films and literature – all corresponding, of course, to cultural narratives of grief surrounding survivors.

These modes of representation, if they are the only ones used – as is true of Stover and Peress' *The Graves*, Hatzfeld's *Into the Quick of Life*, and Tochman's *Like Eating a Stone* – reduce the survivors to remnants of genocide. However, it is also quite common to see another mode of representing survivors, one which returns some agency and individuality to them.⁸² Many representations contain both modes – in the contrast between, for example, Vann Nath's calm authority and Chum Mey's distraught tears in *S-21*, or between the characterisation of the survivors in Jean Hatzfeld's two books *Into the Quick of Life* and *The Strategy of Antelopes*: in the first, they are ghostly, traumatised; in the second, resourceful, brave, tenacious. Zumra Sahomerović's intensity and poise as she delivers her testimony in *A Cry from the Grave* sets her apart from the other women in the film, who we mostly see consumed by grief; and, despite the sorrowful aesthetic of the cover image of Eugénie (and some similar images inside), many of the survivors in Mukagasana's *Les Blessures* are photographed by Kazinierakis in mid-speech, eyes blazing and gestures animated, hands emphasising their point. In fact, Eugénie is also interviewed in *Keepers of Memory*, where her manner is strident and forceful, quite the opposite of the aesthetic here; speaking of her scar and the disfigurement on her neck which Kazinierakis'

⁸²My emphasis on 'agency' is intended to counter Greenspan's binary opposition of 'heroic witnesses' and 'silent victims ... guilty, ghostly, and estranged' (*On Listening*, 30). Greenspan contends that 'we have tended to identify survivors with one side of the other and make it whole' (29-30), but I would argue that one can easily find both simultaneously in many representations. Importantly, discourses of 'heroism' still lock survivors into the past, bypassing the everyday details of their efforts to start afresh in favour of focusing on *what* they had survived or resisted. The heroic is thus also not a narrative which easily accommodates the lives of the *she'erit hapletah* in the DP camps.

photograph hides, she says, scathingly, that ‘I sometimes tell people who want to look at me that I can stop long enough for them to stare... One time they asked me to permanently wear a scarf in public in order to hide this scar. I refused. Did I bite myself? Let them ask me and I will tell them what caused it.’

The ‘two sides’ of Eugénie brings out very well the ways in which survivors, and their words, are easily crafted to fit cultural narratives (or mass markets). Aside from Hatzfeld’s interventions, a particularly good example of this – one which engendered plenty of criticism and controversy – is the western seizure and recasting of Paul Rusesabagina’s story into the heroic narrative of an ‘African Schindler’, ‘a man who fought impossible odds to save everyone he could’ (as the DVD case has it).⁸³ But there are other representations which seem far less concerned to make survivors ‘fit’ these categories: some simply allow us to see the agency survivors have – Çetin’s grandmother’s tenacity and her adaptation to what life threw at her; the determination Bou Meng and Chim Math show in *The Conscience of Nhem En*; Alma’s determination to be independent as a young widow in Aida Begić’s beautiful film *Snijeg* (*Snow*, 2008) – and they show that survivors, too, are more than capable of asking hard and acute questions about genocide and its residues in the present. In *S-21*, Nath adopts the role of interrogator and judge of the five former guards, asking sharp questions and refusing evasive answers;⁸⁴ and as I discussed above, some of the survivors in Aghion’s documentaries are not afraid to challenge the camera and the questions of the ‘Whites’, as well as the perpetrators’ confessions, and sometimes the court itself. Finally, in a remarkable scene in Kabera’s *Keepers of Memory*, one of the survivors of Bisesero fixes the camera with his gaze and says, ‘We have been here for nine years. I have the impression that you are journalists. You come and ask us questions and you go back. Many of us are dying. Why do you ask all those questions?’

⁸³ Rusesabagina insists in *An Ordinary Man* that he only did the ‘ordinary things that an ordinary man would do’, and puts his achievements to his use of words, ‘ordinary words’ (xviii, xvii). At an explicitly textual level, he thus denies the label of ‘hero’, but I would suggest that at other levels (the narrative framing, the mode in which his resourcefulness is told) there is a coy encouragement of it. One should also note that this book was published by a western publishing group, and after the success of the film, and so may have had editorial input towards this direction more than other survivor testimonies. In Rwanda, by contrast, Rusesabagina is *persona non grata*, because he has begun to speak out against the authoritarian politics of Kagame and because his narrative of the genocide runs counter to the official version (i.e. that Hutu were also targeted and could also be saviours; he has thus been accused of harbouring the ‘double genocide theory’). See Alfred Ndahiro, *Hotel Rwanda, Or, The Tutsi Genocide As Seen By Hollywood* (Paris: Harmattan, 2008).

⁸⁴ See also William Guynn’s analysis of *S-21* in *Writing History in Film* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 186-96, especially 189-91.

The way I see it, you are not of any help to us. When will you come to be of help? Can you not see how old we are? Do you want to wait until it's too late?'

There are, then, some relatively well-worn conventions within Holocaust representations which tend to document the traces of the past as objects to be mourned and eulogised. In this sense, they 'resolve' the past through initiating or encouraging the mourning process (and even they acknowledge the irresolution of the past for traumatised survivors, typecasting them within certain narratives, and the insistence that they provide 'legacies', means that audiences do not leave unsettled). Certain of these conventions are also followed by genocide representations, but fewer have the same melancholic air. Rather, the more graphic and disturbing remains of the past tend to predominate, but there is also a current amongst more engaged representations which focuses on these traces (and which encourages survivors to, too) in order to point out the irresolution of the past in the present.

The Persistence of Violence

There is a difference between the legacies of genocide which linger in everyday life – the grief of personal loss and trauma of violence done to the self, the marks on the landscape, the processes of justice and 'coming to terms with the past', the commemorative practices – and the persistence of undemocratic and discriminatory structures in society and governance after genocide. Each case has its specificities, of course, but there is a general pattern of continuity in state or military personnel, in authoritarian structures of government, in the political culture or social values which previously provided fertile soil for genocidal violence, and the continuing discrimination against the group(s) targeted during the genocide (or the deepening of divisions between groups which genocide itself solidified). As I have indicated, the vast majority of representations – especially those by westerners – consistently reduce the aftermath to highly visible legacies, and thus obscure the various ways in which violence, or violent structures and politics, persist in post-genocide societies; dwelling upon these rather more 'resolved' pasts safely absolves the audience from having to consider more difficult and disturbing aftermaths. This section discusses the persistence of violence in each case, and also draws out how some representations – often (though not always) made by those living with these irresolutions – work to

illuminate the persistence of violence in the aftermath. In this, they echo the critical works of West German literature and cinema which, from roughly the 1960s onward, aimed to expose the structural continuities from the Third Reich in politics, culture, and society – Peter Weiss’ play *Die Ermittlung* (*The Investigation*, 1965), Michael Verhoeven’s *Das schreckliche Mädchen* (*The Nasty Girl*, 1990), the writings of Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, and so on.⁸⁵

Taner Akçam has confronted these issues head-on in his writings about contemporary Turkey. Quoting Norbert Elias – that ‘It is always amazing to ascertain the remarkable degree of persistence with which certain patterns of thinking, feeling and acting can endure in one and the same society over many generations, even though the members of that society do make specific adjustments to changing circumstances’ – he writes:

This is also my thesis with reference to Turkey. If, for example, we examine the arguments that are being advanced with regard to the Kurds, we can recognise evidence of the surprising degree to which the state of mind, the model of thinking that dominated in the decade after 1910, persists today.⁸⁶

He argues elsewhere that the roots of these contemporary problems stretch back to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923.⁸⁷ The most infamous of these are the Armenian, Kurdish, and Cyprus ‘issues’, but they are accompanied by much broader human rights abuses, including freedom of the press and speech, the treatment of women, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, and of minorities more generally.⁸⁸ While the possibility of joining the EU has pushed Turkey into adopting certain democratic procedures and relaxing some laws, true reform – and the changing of normative values – is hampered by a strong nationalism and the so-called ‘deep

⁸⁵ These works are often criticised for making ‘insufficient’ reference to Holocaust victims (see e.g. William Collins Donahue, ‘Pretty Boys and Nasty Girls: The Holocaust Figured in Two German Films of the 1990s’, *New England Review* 21:4 (2000), 108-24) but, to return to my discussion of Alexandra Garbarini’s argument, one might question whether it is always necessary, or even most effective, to include detailed representations of the victims’ histories in what are essentially critiques of present society, especially when these discourses may still be highly politicised or taboo, or be read as an accusation (see especially my discussions of Turkey).

⁸⁶ Akçam, ‘The Silence of the Turks’ in *Studies in Comparative Genocide*, eds. Levon Chorbajian and George Shirinian (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), 126-46: 128, citing Elias, *Studien über die Deutschen* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980), 165.

⁸⁷ Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (London: Zed Books/Zoryan Institute, 2004), 11. Fatma Müge Göçek dates them to the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, rather than the treaties of Sèvres (1920) or Lausanne (1923): Göçek, ‘Through a Glass Darkly: Consequences of a Politicized Past in Contemporary Turkey’, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617:1 (2008), 88-106; Fatma Müge Göçek, *Deciphering Denial* (forthcoming).

⁸⁸ For a good overview, Zehra F. Kabasakal Arat, ed., *Human Rights in Turkey* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

state', the invisible yet formidable source of ultimate political authority which resides in the military and police forces, and which has 'established red lines that the elected visible government dare not cross if it wishes to remain in political power.'⁸⁹

More deeply, these 'red lines' are to do with how Turkey would rather see itself – its conception of nation and nationhood – and perhaps more importantly, the fear that internal divisions might bring about the dissolution of this Turkey.⁹⁰ The legal rights of the three largest non-Muslim minorities, Jews, Greeks and Armenians, have not always been protected (smaller Christian groups, including Syriacs, Assyrians, and Nestorians, have no minority rights); Muslim minorities are not even recognised *as* minorities.⁹¹ The penal code's insistence on the 'indivisible unity of the nation', along with its controversial prohibition on 'insulting Turkishness', has thus been used for anything from banning the use of Kurdish in public, or parents from giving their children names 'not appropriate to our national culture', to closing down political parties (mostly those on the left on the basis that they cast workers as a minority and/or structure the nation by non-religious categories) and prosecuting various journalists, writers, academics and intellectuals under Article 301:⁹² it was in this context that the Turkish-Armenian activist, journalist and intellectual Hrant Dink was assassinated in 2007.

As Kathryn Cook has captured in her *Memory Denied*, quite clearly, then, not only are the legacies of brutal nation-making during 1915-23 still at issue in Turkey today – the 'hidden Armenians', the physical traces of Turkey's persecuted minorities, and the convoluted 'politics' of this past – but brutal nation-making still continues. Few representations explicitly link the Armenian genocide with these present structures of violence, but there is a critical strain in contemporary Turkish literature and film which, although quiet, engages its audiences in questions of identity, difference, and belonging as a way of alluding to the silences – unspoken discrimination – in contemporary Turkey, often using tropes of erasure, concealment, and haunting.⁹³ Elif

⁸⁹ Richard Falk, 'Foreword' in *Human Rights in Turkey*, ed. Arat, xii-xviii: xii.

⁹⁰ Baskin Oran discusses these as being part of a 'Sèvres syndrome', Sèvres being the treaty which divided and parcelled out the Ottoman Empire: 'The Minority Concept and Rights in Turkey: The Lausanne Peace Treaty and Current Issues' in *Human Rights in Turkey*, ed. Arat, 35-56: 52-3.

⁹¹ See Oran, 'The Minority Concept', and also Sule Toktas and Bulent Aras, 'The EU and Minority Rights in Turkey', *Political Science Quarterly* 124:4 (2009), 697-720.

⁹² Oran, 'The Minority Concept', 54.

⁹³ This 'quietness' is not necessarily because the authors and filmmakers do not want to be explicit – indeed, Orhan Pamuk has spoken very baldly, earning him a court case (subsequently dropped) – but perhaps because more subtle evocations of the issues might be more effective in prompting thought

Shafak's novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) is the most outspoken about the genocide, being a story about an Armenian-American girl, Armanoush, who travels to Istanbul to stay with her Turkish stepfather's family and try to understand Turkish denial for herself. She discovers a society far more diverse than expected, becomes firm friends with Asya, a girl her own age in her stepfather's family, and both engage with each other's culture; the novel's revelation is that the two families are in fact connected by a common Armenian ancestor, something which would resonate with (and inflect) the cultural experience of the ordinary Turks who have discovered 'hidden Armenians' in their family in the last decade or so. Shafak thus complicates (without resolving) 'the past' and human attachments to it, exploring a variety of subject positions on both 'sides'.⁹⁴ This theme of concealed identities runs through a number of works: Çetin's *My Grandmother*, which intersperses Çetin's own memories of her grandmother with the truer story, related to her by her grandmother near the end of her life, of her deportation, abduction, and life as a Turkish wife; Yeşim Ustaoglu's film *Bulutları Beklerken* (*Waiting for the Clouds*, 2003), centred on the story of a Pontic Greek woman who has lived for the past half-century pretending to be Turkish, exiled in her own homeland; and Serdar Akar's film *Dar Alanda Kısa Paslaşmalar* (*Offside*, 2000) where, near the end, it is revealed after his funeral that the local football coach (a main character) who had unexpectedly died was Armenian, not Turkish. The dead man's brother and his Turkish friends make light of the irony of his Muslim burial, but as Asuman Suner writes, it also 'reveals the ordeal that the main character might have gone through, having to conceal his identity throughout his life. ... Beneath the appearance of a harmonious community life lies the silencing of cultural difference.'⁹⁵ Others foreground the *absence* of Armenians; in his novel *Snow* (2004), Pamuk relatively frequently refers to the huge, empty Armenian mansions which seem to haunt the town of Kars, although *Snow* also offers a less subtle indictment of Turkish politics, the overly militarised police force, the discrimination against its Kurdish minority, and Kars' small-town (and authoritarian) culture of

amongst audiences than polemical broadsides against longstanding taboos. See, generally, Catharina Dufft, *Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory: "Multiculturalism" as a Literary Theme after 1980* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 2009); Asuman Suner, *New Turkish Cinema: Belonging, Identity and Memory* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010).

⁹⁴ Elif Shafak, *The Bastard of Istanbul: A Novel* (London: Penguin, 2007). Shafak uses the devices of an Armenian-American chat room and a Turkish café to explore a variety of political (including Turkish nationalist (and closet nationalist)) viewpoints.

⁹⁵ Asuman Suner, 'Silenced Memories: Notes on Remembering in New Turkish Cinema', *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 7:1 (2009), 71-81: 76.

surveillance.⁹⁶ Çetin's book likewise makes quiet references to ingrained nationalism, and discrimination against family members because they were descended from a *mühtedi*, a convert.⁹⁷

In Cambodia, the most obvious persistence of violence was the Khmer Rouge's 'second life', which lasted until the late 1990s.⁹⁸ With the leadership still intact, they established and controlled an area by the Thai border, engaging in smuggling and sporadic attacks on the Vietnamese forces whilst building up their political and military strength. Their opposition to the Vietnamese earned them full support and financial aid from the west, China, and much of south-east Asia, retaining their seat at the UN whilst an international embargo was put on the government in Phnom Penh,⁹⁹ which was itself consolidating an antidemocratic grip on the country.¹⁰⁰ However, with the end of the cold war and the Vietnamese withdrawal, in 1991 the Paris Peace Agreements (PPA) provided for a UN force to oversee 'free and fair elections' in Cambodia. Although they profited from the PPA's protections and concessions, the Khmer Rouge refused to abide by the cease-fire, disarm their troops, or demobilise, trying to sabotage the elections by killing UN peacekeepers and over 100 ethnic Vietnamese residents in Cambodia.¹⁰¹ Throughout the election campaign, the incumbent Cambodian People's Party (CPP) – whose leader, Hun Sen, had defected from the Khmer Rouge before 1979 to the Vietnamese, and became Prime Minister in 1985 – also engaged in political repression and violence, especially against the largest oppositional party (FUNCINPEC).¹⁰² In a political move which surprised few

⁹⁶ Orhan Pamuk, *Snow*, trans. Maureen Freely (London: Faber & Faber, 2004).

⁹⁷ See especially 62, 79-80, 83, 85, 101-2.

⁹⁸ Kelvin Rowley, 'Second Life, Second Death: The Khmer Rouge After 1978' in *Genocide in Cambodia and Rwanda*, ed. Cook, 201-25.

⁹⁹ See Ben Kiernan, 'Introduction: Conflict in Cambodia, 1945-2002', *Critical Asian Studies* 34:4 (2002), 483-95; 487-9, and Kiernan, 'The Inclusion of the Khmer Rouge in the Cambodian Peace Process: Causes and Consequences' in *Genocide and Democracy in Cambodia: The Khmer Rouge, the United Nations, and the International Community*, ed. Kiernan (New Haven: Yale Council on Southeast Asia Studies, 1993), 191-272.

¹⁰⁰ Evan Gottesman, *Cambodia After the Khmer Rouge: Inside the Politics of Nation Building* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003).

¹⁰¹ See Kiernan, 'Conflict in Cambodia', 490, and Steve Heder and Judy Ledgerwood, eds., *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence in Cambodia: Democratic Transition under United Nations Peace-Keeping* (New York/London: M.E. Sharpe, 1996).

¹⁰² Judy Ledgerwood, 'Patterns of CPP Political Repression During the UNTAC Period' in *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence*, eds. Heder and Ledgerwood, 114-133.

specialist observers, Hun Sen elbowed his way back into power after effectively losing to FUNCINPEC (and did so again in 1998)¹⁰³ – and is still Prime Minister today.

As Steve Heder and Judy Ledgerwood note, the underlying political realities of Cambodia were thus unchanged by the UNTAC-administered ‘transition’.¹⁰⁴ Cambodia has long been characterised by elite authoritarianism, narrow vested interests, and deeply entrenched systems of patronage and clientelism;¹⁰⁵ corruption – one of the reasons ordinary peasants turned to the Khmer Rouge in the first place – is still an all-pervasive fact of life.¹⁰⁶ The CPP is thoroughly embedded within the state, and power is decisively held by the ‘political juggernaut’ of Hun Sen and his entourage in a melding of bureaucratic, military and economic power: the old Vietnamese-built state, writes Heder, ‘is now a vastly elaborated, more western-looking but still substantively empty shell, a vehicle not for good governance, but for serving the interests of Hun Sen and his entourage, a maze of patronage, corruption and repression.’¹⁰⁷ Rithy Panh’s *Un soir après la guerre* (1998), set in 1992, brings this out very clearly. Narrated in flashback by the main female protagonist, Srey Poeuv, she tells us that after the elections ‘For the first time, we talked about peace, reconstruction, and freedom’, but the story of Savannah and Poeuv shows the deep effects of decades of conflict and the deadlock of a deeply corrupt society on an entire generation of young Cambodians, where ‘No one respects the law, only money and power. You can’t become someone, you have to be born someone.’ Returning from the Anlong Veng front, Savannah and the other soldiers – all survivors of DK who lost most of their families – find that they have no money, training, or means to start life afresh; Poeuv cannot escape the ring of prostitution which has ensnared her. Money and power are recurrent themes, but more deeply what we see is a downward spiral of abuse in Cambodian society, each rigid social class exploiting and extorting those below – rich young men exploiting poor girls, the landlords their tenants, the political

¹⁰³ David Roberts, ‘Democratization, Elite Transition, and Violence in Cambodia, 1991-1999’, *Critical Asian Studies* 34:4 (2002), 520-38: 524-5; Duncan McCargo, ‘Cambodia: Getting Away With Authoritarianism?’, *Journal of Democracy* 16:4 (2005), 98-112: 99.

¹⁰⁴ Heder and Ledgerwood, ‘Politics of Violence: An Introduction’ in *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence*, eds. Heder and Ledgerwood, 18.

¹⁰⁵ Roberts, ‘Democratization’, 520.

¹⁰⁶ McCargo notes, ‘Top positions in institutions ranging from the military to Buddhist monasteries are openly bought and sold. The heads of the national police, for instance, have never attended a police academy. ... A national survey showed that people view the Ministry of Justice as the most corrupt government agency.’ McCargo, ‘Getting Away With Authoritarianism?’, 102. See also Gottesman, *Cambodia*, 321-3.

¹⁰⁷ Steve Heder, ‘Hun Sen’s Consolidation: Death or Beginning of Reform?’, *Southeast Asian Affairs* (2005), 113-30: 114.

elite the rest of society – where individuals quickly resort to physical violence in order to break free, to survive, or to return upstarts to their ‘correct’ rank, or simply because it is an accepted norm in an abusive society. *The Conscience of Nhem En* also gestures towards the endemic corruption and culture of legal impunity:¹⁰⁸ the script notes that En, who sports a gold watch and nice shirt, is now the deputy mayor in a former Khmer Rouge stronghold; during the interview, we see En’s expression change from an arrogant defensiveness into simpering as he answers the phone to a high government official, who seemed to be monitoring the filming.

As well as these political, bureaucratic, and economic structures of violence which leave most Cambodians in dire and often deepening poverty, one should also note the persistence of ethnic nationalism and discrimination against groups ‘who lie inside Cambodia’s borders but find themselves on the outside of the conceptual Cambodian nation.’¹⁰⁹ Ethnic Vietnamese, Chinese, and Cham were disproportionately targeted by the Khmer Rouge, but this discrimination also pre- and post-dates Democratic Kampuchea. The Khmer Rouge’s tactics managed to cause roughly 10,000 to flee during the 1993 elections, but Cambodian self-definition has always been strongly ethnic and strictly exclusive in its definition of who may be Cambodian, and ‘outsiders’ (the US, Vietnamese, Chinese) regularly blamed for the country’s problems depending on the political context.¹¹⁰ Compounding the persistent abuses of state power and corruption, Cambodia also has a highly restrictive constitution which denies basic citizenship to those labelled non-Khmer, and the virulent and very present discourses of treacherous enemy and favoured friend, which persist in the post-genocide period, indicate that the cultural mechanisms which justified some of the violence and paranoia of DK are still very much alive today.

‘For a long time’, Filip Reyntjens noted in 2006, ‘it was not considered politically correct to acknowledge that the RPF has not brought liberation, inclusiveness and democracy, but oppression, exclusion, and dictatorship.’¹¹¹ There is now a strongly critical current in the academic literature, though, with scholars such as Scott Straus

¹⁰⁸ McCargo, ‘Getting Away With Authoritarianism?’, 104. Hun Sen himself could technically have been indicted under some of the trials’ draft remits, but managed to sidestep it.

¹⁰⁹ Penny Edwards, ‘Imagining the Other in Cambodian Nationalist Discourse Before and During the UNTAC Period’ in *Propaganda, Politics, and Violence*, eds. Heder and Ledgerwood, 50-72: 51.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹¹¹ Filip Reyntjens, ‘Post-1994 Politics in Rwanda: Problematising “Liberation” and “Democratisation”’, *Third World Quarterly* 27:6 (2006), 1103-17: 1104.

and Lars Waldorf decrying the ‘deft authoritarianism’ of the RPF – who justify their restriction on political parties, civil society, and the media as necessary to guard against further ethnic violence;¹¹² these scholars note a ‘striking continuity from the pre-genocide to the post-genocide regime in Rwanda’, or the route ‘from genocide to dictatorship’, as Reyntjens puts it.¹¹³ Rwanda still enjoyed great support amongst the international community until recently, becoming astute at maintaining support by skilful information management, careful wielding of the ‘genocide credit’, and adopting the discourse of international donors and implementing certain (politically unthreatening) reforms.¹¹⁴ The signs are that this is changing: the media coverage of Rwanda turned ‘sharply critical’ in 2010 in response to shadowy assassinations and increased repression,¹¹⁵ and many of Rwanda’s international donors look set to suspend aid to the country following the release of UN reports in October and November 2012 which provide evidence of Rwandan state support for the M23 rebels operating in the DRC. Perhaps the ‘genocide credit’ is waning, but the work of those such as Gourevitch, Kinzer, or Peress, who present all Tutsi as morally irreproachable victims and all Hutu as genocidal extremists – aided, as Jens Meierhenrich has shown, by the use of shock tactics at the memorials – will presumably continue to shape ordinary westerners’ imaginaries of Rwanda.¹¹⁶

Most forms of structural violence in present-day Rwanda – authoritarianism, exclusion, population control – are direct continuities from before the genocide. These include an authoritarianism ‘whose mechanisms vary from heavy-handed repression to

¹¹² Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf, ‘Introduction: Seeing Like a Post-Conflict State’ in *Remaking Rwanda*, eds. Straus and Waldorf, 3-23: 4.

¹¹³ Filip Reyntjens, ‘Rwanda, Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship’, *African Affairs* 103 (2004), 177-210: 208.

¹¹⁴ On information management, see Johan Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda*; the term ‘genocide credit’ is Reyntjens’, in ‘Rwanda, Ten Years On’; on aid, see Eugenia Zorbas, ‘Aid Dependence and Policy Independence: Explaining the Rwandan Paradox’ and Rachel Hayman, ‘Funding Fraud? Donors and Democracy in Rwanda’ in *Remaking Rwanda*, eds. Straus and Waldorf, 103-17 and 118-31.

¹¹⁵ Straus and Waldorf, ‘Seeing Like a Post-Conflict State’, 17, n.7.

¹¹⁶ As Johan Pottier notes, Gourevitch’s book deserves praise for conveying the horror of the killings and bringing together some deeply touching survivor testimonies, but he is also ‘overly keen to toe the RPF-functional line and thus reproduces the view that all Hutu refugees are genocidal extremists who collectively deserved their fate in eastern Zaire in late 1996’ (Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda*, 56-7, and 148-50); he notes much the same for Keane’s *Season of Blood* (64). This cultural willingness to turn a blind eye to (or even tacitly support) crimes against demonised perpetrator communities under the pretext that they ‘deserved it’ is also explored in Robert Hayden, ‘Schindler’s Fate: Genocide, Ethnic Cleansing, and Population Transfers’, *Slavic Review* 55:4 (1996), 727-48. As he argues, this sentiment is none too distant from the mentality of the former perpetrators themselves.

subtle cooption':¹¹⁷ political opposition and dissenting voices are not tolerated, and those who do espouse viewpoints which diverge from the RPF line are often accused of 'genocide ideology', risking imprisonment. Exclusion persists in Rwandan society – of peasants, youth, Hutu prisoners, and Tutsi survivors: the officious and condescending legal clerks and judges in Aghion's films certainly hint at contemporary power relations, as do the comments of Eugénie and the Bisesero survivor in Kabera's *Keepers of Memory*, and the stories in Torgovnik's *Intended Consequences*.¹¹⁸ The government has also embarked upon a programme of social engineering which involves the inculcation of a new ideology of "national unity and reconciliation" (in 'solidarity camps' and 'civic education training'), new regulations on personal hygiene and appearance, imposed villagisation, and an economic developmental agenda which has involved extensive interference in farmers' livelihoods to promote land consolidation, land tenure reform, and mono-cropping. Finally, the RPF enjoy impunity for their war crimes and crimes against humanity during the 1990-94 civil war and in DRC – the ICTR, unlike the Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone tribunals, has not sought prosecutions on all sides.¹¹⁹ As Reyntjens ominously argues, 'such conditions constitute a fertile breeding ground for more structural violence, which "creates anger, resentment and frustration" and may well eventually again lead to acute violence.'¹²⁰ Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are very few representations which directly engage with these structural violences – Rwandan artists may fear censorship or worse, and westerners tend either to be in thrall to the regime or must keep their references to contemporary violence oblique, if, like Aghion, they wish to be allowed to return to Rwanda to continue their work.

Structural violence persists in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, often in similar ways, although their trajectories also differ. The most visible have been the belligerent politicians and other figures who came to power on the eve of the wars they started, and remained in power after the Dayton accords – especially Milošević, Karadžić, and Tudjman – but gathered around them were the former principal actors in the nationalist

¹¹⁷ Straus and Waldorf, 'Seeing Like a Post-Conflict State', 10. The remainder of this paragraph is also drawn from their excellent introductory summary, especially 8-13.

¹¹⁸ *Intended Consequences* is not particularly good – the interviews are a little formulaic, the testimony presumably heavily edited by Torgovnik, the aesthetic cloying – but it does nevertheless make plain that these children and their mothers are marginalised and unaided.

¹¹⁹ See also Reyntjens, 'Rwanda, Ten Years On'.

¹²⁰ Reyntjens, 'Rwanda, Ten Years On', 210, citing Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (West Hartford: Kumarian Press, 1998), 110.

and war-economic structure, who used comprehensive privatisation to seize large parts of the states' wealth in the aftermath,¹²¹ and ensure the persistence of corrupt economic and power networks into the postwar. Perhaps the most pervasive effect of the wars, and the victory of nationalists on every side, has been the total ethnicisation of politics and everyday life, from the constitutions and the notable dearth of non-ethnic political parties, to the returnees' fears and the split geographies of Mostar and other cities.¹²² Finally, one can point to the continuing mythologisation of history, where the issues of war crimes, guilt, and responsibility are avoided and indicted 'national heroes' are eventually handed over in return for economic or political rewards rather than because their war crimes are now considered inexcusable.¹²³

These processes are most evident in Serbia, which was (and still is) profoundly shaped by the Milošević era. While in formal terms Milošević's power was limited, 'his informal power was considerable, and included the corruption of the political process, the corruption of elections, the corruption of the economy and outright seizure of the bank accounts of private citizens, the serious curtailment of press freedom, and elements of the cult of personality.'¹²⁴ Milošević grouped around himself a political, economic, and criminal elite which in time suffused the state bureaucracy, economy, judiciary and media: amidst fervent nationalism, the mafiaisation of economy and society (and the EU sanctions) brought with them massive unemployment, the pauperisation of society, and a criminal gang culture which held normality to ransom.¹²⁵ Srđan Dragojević's film *Rane (Wounds)*, (1998) captures all too well the cult of dealers and smugglers which became the aspirations of a generation of schoolchildren: 'My universities were the street and the cemetery', says Pinki, one of the Belgrade youths initiated into the life of crime, drug abuse and gun-wielding by a

¹²¹ See Vedran Džihic and Dieter Segert, 'Lessons from "Post-Yugoslav" Democratization: Functional Problems of Stateness and the Limits of Democracy', *East European Politics & Societies* [henceforth *EEPS*] 26:2 (2012), 239-53: 243-4, and below for examples.

¹²² See Džihic and Segert, 'Lessons from "Post-Yugoslav Democratization"', and Torsten Kolind, 'In Search of "Decent People": Resistance to the Ethnicization of Everyday Life among the Muslims of Stolac' in *The New Bosnian Mosaic: Identities, Memories and Moral Claims in a Post-War Society*, eds. Xavier Bougarel, Elissa Helms and Ger Duijzings (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 123-38.

¹²³ See Eric D. Gordy, 'Postwar Guilt and Responsibility in Serbia: The Effort to Confront It and the Effort to Avoid It' in *Serbia Since 1989: Politics and Society under Milošević and After*, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet and Vjeran Pavlaković (Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 2005), 166-91.

¹²⁴ Sabrina P. Ramet and F. Peter Wagner, 'Post-Socialist Models of Rule in Central and Southeastern Europe' in *Central and Southeast European Politics Since 1989*, ed. Ramet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9-36: 26.

¹²⁵ See generally Vjeran Pavlaković, 'Introduction: Serbia as a Dysfunctional State' in *Serbia Since 1989*, eds. Ramet and Pavlaković, 3-10.

war-profiteering neighbour.¹²⁶ A number of other Serbian-made films construct a similarly severe critique of Serbian society in the 1990s and early 2000s – Miroslav Momčilović's *Sedam i po* (*Seven and a half*, 2006), Srđan Golubović's *Klopka* (*The Trap*, 2007), Goran Paskaljević's *Bare baruta* (*Powder Keg*, 1998)¹²⁷ – continuing the work of the rich counterculture which set out to provide an alternative voice to the Milošević regime before and during the wars.¹²⁸ These films are full of characters immersed in these all-pervasive structures of violence, and show how this violence directly affects the whole of society – through poverty, or through exposure to violence if only as a passer-by.

Despite the hopes for change following the 'bulldozer revolution' of October 2000, there has been little substantive normative change in Serbia. The issue of EU integration – involving reforms which would dispossess the criminal elite of their power, and, more controversially, the handing over of war criminals to The Hague – became (and has remained) a political flashpoint, accompanied by entrenched and often misinformed opposition from a large proportion of Serbs.¹²⁹ Political wrangling between Đinđić and Koštunica over the depth of reforms during the 'transition', the staunch opposition from within the state, military, and political elite – themselves entrenched within the extensive criminal networks – and Đinđić's assassination in 2003, all meant that the opportunity for a radical overhaul of state and society was lost. Certainly this is the feeling communicated by Åsne Seierstad's *With Their Backs to the World: Portraits of Serbia* (2004); whether pro- or anti-Milošević, the lives of each of the thirteen Serbs she interviewed between 1999 and 2004 seemed to have deteriorated irreversibly by the end of the period. For some, the heady sense of possibility following Milošević's arrest and becoming Prime Minister had been replaced by despondency, while others mourned the loss of Milošević's leadership as their living conditions continued to decline around them. Seierstad's achievement is to show how

¹²⁶ See James Gow and Milena Milchalski, 'The Impact of the War on Serbia: Spoiled Appetites and Progressive Decay' in *Serbia Since 1989*, eds. Ramet and Pavlaković, 143-65.

¹²⁷ See Andrew Horton, 'We All Live Two Lives: Serbian Cinema & Changing Values in Post Yugoslavia' in *Civic and Uncivic Values: Serbia in the Post-Milošević Era*, eds. Ola Listhaug, Sabrina P. Ramet, and Dragana Dulić (Budapest/New York: Central European University Press, 2011), 195-220.

¹²⁸ See Gordy, 'Postwar Guilt and Responsibility'. These include the famous B-92 media station, and the Center for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade.

¹²⁹ Jelena Subotić, 'Explaining Difficult States: The Problem of Europeanization in Serbia', *EEPS* 24:4 (2010), 595-616; Patrice C. McMahon and David P. Forsythe, 'The ICTY's Impact on Serbia: Judicial Romanticism Meets Network Politics', *Human Rights Quarterly* 30:2 (2008), 412-35; Stefano Bianchini, 'The EU in the Values and Expectations of Serbia: Challenges, Opportunities, and Confrontations' in *Civic and Uncivic Values*, eds. Listhaug, Ramet, and Dulić.

everyday life is touched or constrained by these structures of violence – whether gang crime, the suppression of dissent, or silences reminiscent of those in Turkey – thus, the exposure of the structural through the personal.

The elections following Đinđić's death indicated a strong normalisation and relativisation of war crimes and their perpetrators.¹³⁰ Despite increased pressure from the ICTY, certain indicted war criminals continued to live openly in Belgrade and some, like Vojislav Šešelj, remained active in politics for years after the fall of Milošević.¹³¹ The new constitution in 2006 represented some clear steps backwards – 'so much so that the new constitution in many areas amounts to a political continuation of the Milošević era'¹³² – and also made it legally impossible for Serbia to recognise the independence of Kosovo. Structures such as the Orthodox Church, the media, and continuing rampant nationalism – galvanised by successive crises and Kosovo – continue to be a barrier to fundamental normative change, although there are indications of loosening in some areas.¹³³ In Serbia, then, the removal – or indictment – of the figureheads of power did not really destroy the system that they built, and may even have the opposite effect of further entrenching attitudes hostile to reform.¹³⁴

Croatia was barely any different throughout the 1990s. The initial organisation of government after Tuđman's HDZ (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica*, Croatian Democratic Union) won power in 1990 allowed for a slide towards authoritarianism during the war, which 'was institutionalised and in fact strengthened afterward, allowing for a system plagued by corruption and nepotism.'¹³⁵ This was the 'false dawn' of democratisation: the state continued its illiberal practices, Tuđman purged the

¹³⁰ Jelena Subotić, 'Explaining Difficult States', 601.

¹³¹ Pavlaković, 'Introduction', 32-4. As Subotić remarks ('Explaining Difficult States', 609), since the abuses committed during the previous regime were *state crimes*, not isolated incidents by a few soldiers but a constitutive part of Milošević's policies, the new government immediately encountered a lot of resistance investigating perpetrators, as the old state security apparatus almost seamlessly transitioned into the new regime.

¹³² Subotić, 'Explaining Difficult States', 606. 'For example, the constitution gives parliament the power, in extraordinary circumstances, to restrict all guaranteed rights'.

¹³³ See Klaus Buchenau, 'Orthodox Values and Modern Necessities: Serbian Orthodox Clergy and Laypeople on democracy, Human Rights, Transition, and Globalization'; Izabela Kisić and Slavija Stanojlović, 'The Post-2000 Media Situation in Serbia' in *Civic and Uncivic Values*, eds. Listhaug, Ramet, and Dulić, 113-44 and 163-94.

¹³⁴ As many of those writing on the ICTY's effect in Serbia argue – see especially Subotić, 'Explaining Difficult States', and Eric Gordy, 'Serbia after Djindjić: War Crimes, Organized Crime, and Trust in Public Institutions', *Problems of Post-Communism* 51:3 (2004), 10-17.

¹³⁵ Marius Sørberg, 'Croatia Since 1989: The HDZ and the Politics of Transition' in *Democratic Transition in Croatia: Value Transformation, Education and Media*, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet and Davorka Matic (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 55.

opposition from the government, military, and judiciary, manipulated elections, and engaged in serious and widespread corruption which, as in Serbia, extended throughout the state bureaucracy. Again, key assets were transferred during the privatisation process to Tuđman's family and inner circle, including in all likelihood members of the diaspora who had supported Croatia and the HDZ financially during the wars,¹³⁶ and the HDZ also took control of the majority of Croatian media.¹³⁷ However, a centre-left coalition gained power from 2000-2003 after Tuđman's death, which represented a second start and a transition 'from corrupt popular pluralism with democratic legitimacy to fledgling liberal democracy.'¹³⁸ The constitution was amended to reduce the president's power, steps against corruption were introduced, and other necessary reforms began to be implemented in order to meet the obligations for EU membership; this continued after the HDZ regained power in 2003 under Ivo Sanader. Corruption has not entirely been eradicated, however – Sanader himself was arrested in Austria in 2010 because of alleged corruption – and ethnic Serbs resident in Croatia continue to face discrimination, with higher levels of unemployment, some discrimination in terms of jobs and housing, social ostracism, and some physical attacks.¹³⁹ While the aftereffects of the Tuđman period and the continuing problems of corruption and xenophobia are evidence of the persistence of certain types of structural violence in Croatian society, Croatia is making the reforms Serbia has yet to.¹⁴⁰

The problems are related but distinct in Bosnia and Hercegovina. Corruption and the persistence of wartime clandestine economies in peacetime still pose a huge everyday problem,¹⁴¹ but the Federation also faces fundamental challenges to its existence through the trenchant ethnicisation of politics and the instability of its Dayton-agreed

¹³⁶ Sabrina P. Ramet and Marius Sørberg, 'Challenges Facing Croatia Since Independence (An Introduction)' in *Croatia Since Independence: War, Politics, Society, Foreign Relations*, eds. Sabrina P. Ramet, Konrad Clewing, and Reneo Lukić (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 2008), 11-30: 16. On the diaspora's contribution, see Sørberg, 'Croatia Since 1989', 40, and Brad K. Blitz, 'Democratic Development, Judicial Reform and the Serbian Question in Croatia', *Human Rights Review* 9 (2009), 123-35.

¹³⁷ Sabrina P. Ramet, 'Politics in Croatia since 1990' in *Croatia Since Independence*, eds. Ramet, Clewing, and Lukic, 31-58: 47.

¹³⁸ Sørberg, 'Croatia Since 1989', 50.

¹³⁹ See Carolin Leutloff-Grandits, 'Croatia's Serbs Ten Years After the End of the War' in *Croatia Since Independence*, eds. Ramet, Clewing, and Lukic, 141-70. Igor Prickett has documented these refugees' lives in his photography: see www.ivorprickett.co.uk/story-storm.html [accessed 31.12.12].

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Ramet's somewhat oddly-written 'Croatia and Serbia Since 1991: An Assessment of Their Similarities and Differences', *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 27:2 (2011), 263-90.

¹⁴¹ Amra Festić and Adrian Rausche, 'War By Other Means: How Bosnia's Clandestine Political Economies Obstruct Peace and State Building', *Problems of Post-Communism* 51:3 (2004), 27-34.

constitution. Bosnia survived as a weak state: the Bosnian Serb entity was hardly satisfied with the wars' conclusion, and throughout the nineties Croat nationalists operated a para-state within the Bosnian-Croat entity known as Herceg-Bosna – in reality a third entity committed to unification with Croatia.¹⁴² More to the point, the system of government erected by Dayton has in effect institutionalised a link between ethnicity and territory and given predominance to ethnicity, a move which has made little space for cross-entity and cross-ethnic politics and dialogue.¹⁴³ Its political structures require the election of equal numbers of Serbs from Republika Srpska, and Bosnians and Croats from the Federation – which in fact excludes many citizens from the political process, as Florian Bieber notes (i.e., a Serb from the Federation cannot be elected to the state presidency)¹⁴⁴ – and the requirement of consensus in governmental decision-making has in reality functioned as a mechanism for preventing decision-making, as Robert Hayden points out.¹⁴⁵ 'In essence', he writes, these 'structures for ensuring the equality of the peoples of Bosnia reproduce the mechanisms that fostered political deadlock, collapse of the constitutional systems, and war'.¹⁴⁶ The slow and poor working of governmental institutions has brought political apathy at loss of confidence in the state, and the existence of shadow institutions indicate something of the depth of the constitutional and institutional crisis, along with the regular and heavy intervention of the international community to make it work.¹⁴⁷

While many observers agree that the Dayton constitution has reached the end of its utility as a transitional instrument in postwar Bosnia, the persistent ethnic divisions do not bode well for successful democratisation.¹⁴⁸ As Hayden puts it, can there be a democracy without a demos? Few of these problems are tackled directly in representation of the aftermath of Bosnia, but they do convey a sense of social malaise and stagnation as the backdrop to their overriding concern – how the wars still affect everyday life in the present. Economic hardship hovers in the background in films such

¹⁴² See Tom Gallagher, 'Bosnia: Redesigning a Flawed Peace Process', chapter 6 in his *The Balkans in the New Millennium: In the Shadow of War and Peace* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), 136-9 for Republika Srpska and 132-4 for the Croat activities; Festić and Rausche, 'War By Other Means'.

¹⁴³ Florian Bieber, 'Bosnia and Herzegovina since 1990' in Ramet, ed., *Central and Southeast European Politics since 1989*, 311-27: 322, 315.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 315.

¹⁴⁵ Robert M. Hayden, '"Democracy" Without a Demos? The Bosnian Constitutional Experiment and the Intentional Construction of Nonfunctioning States', *EEPS* 19:2 (2005), 226-59: 251.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 252.

¹⁴⁷ Marius Sørberg, 'The Quest for Institutional Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *EEPS* 22:4 (2008), 714-37.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 714, 717.

as Begić's *Snow*, Zbanić's *Grbavica*, Pjer Žalica's *Gori Vatra* (*Fuse*, 2003) and his *Kod Amidže Idriza* (*Days and Hours*, 2004), and Srdjan Vuletić's *Ljeto u zlatnoj dolini* (*Summer in the Golden Valley*, 2003); *Grbavica*, *Summer in the Golden Valley* and *Fuse* also depict networks of organised crime, prostitution, and racketeering with direct links to the wars. *Summer in the Golden Valley* is the most despairing – it follows the prospectless lives of two young Sarajevan teenagers who aid a corrupt policeman in kidnapping the daughter of a rich Bosnian for ransom, in order to raise cash for a debt to a gangster that, in the end, we find out the gangster had fabricated; the gangster gambles away the €50,000 within a matter of minutes and the boys are left to return to their usual activities of sniffing glue and chasing girls. But most of these films are centred around the lives of survivors in the aftermath – in *Grbavica*, Esma's attempt to keep from her adolescent daughter that she was conceived in a rape camp; the town of Tusanj's desperate attempts to create a vision of inter-entity reconciliation for the impending visit of (and prospect of money from) Bill Clinton in *Fuse*; and the inability of fathers to accept the losses of their sons in *Fuse* and *Days and Hours*, which depict the same inability to move on as in the tiny hamlet almost entirely composed of surviving women in Begić's *Snow*. Yet in each of these films, the focus on the survivors also allows us to see the structures of violence which permeate or hover around the fringes of everyday life.

The works discussed above are rich but relatively few, then, and noticeably tend not to originate in the west but in the societies in the grip of these structural violences. They also reignite my discussion in chapter 2 of how different mediums can represent history (here, contemporary history), and particularly how they might be able to represent social structures as well as human lives and losses. While those working with words (or captions) are able to expose the persistence of violence most pointedly – as Seierstad, Pamuk and Ugrešić show – what unites these otherwise very diverse works is that they convey these structures of violence by showing how they are manifested in ordinary individuals' lives. Sometimes these works convey the extent of this violence by pointing to other characters in similar situations (Esma's friends from the Women's Centre in *Grbavica*, for example), or show how gang cultures and criminal elites affect parents, neighbours, and those who simply happen to live in the same city, as in *Wounds*, or *Summer in the Golden Valley* – but in each, it is the sheer ordinariness of these lives which confirms that these are deep, structural societal problems rather than

individual dramas. It is worth concluding, though, by considering Simon Norfolk's broader project to document the manifestations of military conflict on the global landscape. *For Most Of It I Have No Words* and *Bleed* are only 'chapters' alongside his acclaimed *Afghanistan Chronotopia* (2001) and many other series focusing on 'the battle space' (from the Hebrides and Normandy to Yemen and Beirut) and 'technologies' (Ascension Island, supercomputers, data centres, missiles).¹⁴⁹ 'Et in arcadia ego' mixes images of sites of exception which impinge upon ordinary life – the surveillance centre that is Ascension Island, high-security data rooms, US military encampments in the Afghan desert – with images of ordinary spaces affected by that violence – cities, social and cultural infrastructures, raw landscapes scarred by violence – to suggest how violence transcends particular spaces and times, and continues to shape daily existences around the globe.

Conclusion

This focus on the ordinary, and how it is still tinged by violence in the aftermath – in survivors' lives, in the uncertain eeriness of landscapes, in the silences and democratic deficits which continue to affect ordinary people's lives – point towards the irresolutions of the past in the present. The majority, though, insist on genocide's resolvability – and its resolution – when they represent the processes of justice and reconciliation as being able to 'overcome' the past, or when they instigate the processes of mourning too uncritically, without pointing to the ways in which violence persists, in often very explicit ways, in the present. The next chapter picks up these themes of the everyday and the extreme, of mourning, and of the resolvability of genocide in its discussion of the emblematic western response to genocide – 'Never Again'.

¹⁴⁹ Again, see <http://www.simonnorfolk.com/pop.html>.

Chapter 5

Responding to Genocide: Attitudes and Platitudes

I think that foreigners tend to show all too comparable pity towards people who have suffered misfortunes not at all comparable, as if the pity were more important than the misfortune. I also believe that should any foreigner take a close look at what we suffered during the genocide, they shall never get beyond that pity. It is perhaps for this reason that they look at us from a distance. But it seems all in the past.
Marie Louise Kagoyire¹

Introduction

‘Never Again’ is the rallying cry around which contemporary public responses to the Holocaust congregate and mobilise. Along with exhortations to ‘never forget!’, to learn the ‘lessons of the Holocaust’, and the idea that we remember in order to prevent future genocides, over the past few decades ‘never again’ has become a ritualistic slogan endlessly deployed in visitor comment books, at commemorations, in public speeches, and on the internet. This chapter argues that Holocaust mantras such as these have helped to establish a normative framework for responding to the Holocaust – to Holocaust films, testimonies, photographs, and museums – and that this framework is now extended to define and delimit how the western public responds to other genocides.

These ‘responses’, though, are in fact precisely the opposite: non-responses, in the sense of embodying any real intellectual or ethical engagement with genocide and its implications, and, in the end, they only signal and solidify the disconnect between audience and event. While expressions in the vein of ‘never again’ may be heartfelt, they remain problematic: for in expressing a resolve to prevent future genocides (and commemorate past ones), they simultaneously short-circuit the questions of how and why genocide happens – and thus how prevention might be possible. In this sense they are non-responses, since they avoid precisely the kind of engagement which they themselves seem to demand – and I discuss them here as ‘attitudes and platitudes’. Nevertheless, it is important to bear in mind how deeply such ‘responses’ inform the experiences and interpretations of those who visit a museum or pick up a testimony – or indeed their motivations for doing so in the first place – and equally that, for those

¹ In Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, 94.

who voice them, they can strongly affirm a sense of personal ‘morality’, and also confer social acceptance. This chapter is about these attitudes and platitudes, how they operate within western society, and what they signify about western public engagement with genocide as process and event. It consolidates and builds upon the insights of the previous four chapters to argue that, as with the Holocaust, mainstream representations of genocide not only permit but actively invite and encourage such responses. Although the underlying goal of many, as Louis Bickford and Amy Sodaro have explored in relation to memorial museums,² is to raise awareness about a specific case and to impart clear moral lessons with the aim of helping to prevent future genocides, I argue that the manner in which they represent genocide in fact forecloses this as a possibility, and that the platitudinous ‘responses’ they elicit instead stand in for this failure.

These attitudes and platitudes are, it is important to note, a socio-cultural phenomenon. The changes in social interpretations of the Holocaust over the postwar period accompanying its ‘rise to consciousness’, along with the development of an international culture of human rights and ‘cosmopolitan conscience’,³ helps to explain why so many westerners (including, or especially, those with no personal connection to the events) now feel compelled to visit sites of mass atrocity as part of their holiday itinerary, attend human rights film festivals, or read ‘unpleasurable’⁴ testimonies. As Sharon Macdonald argues, these kinds of ‘moral witnessing’ are now generally undertaken within a framework of meaning-making which stresses remembrance of and education about the past in order to prevent future genocides, emblematised in the phrase of ‘never again’ (the most frequently-written response in visitor comment books, she notes):

Making visits to sites associated with atrocity is ... for many people a means through which they can perform their own commitment to remembering and, thus, to helping to avoid bad history being repeated. ... The idea that the past can provide lessons for the present and future is, then, pervasive among those visiting this heritage site and widely socially institutionalised. In most cases, how this lesson provision might work more specifically or what kinds of precise content it might provide are not

² Bickford and Sodaro, ‘Remembering Yesterday to Protect Tomorrow’.

³ Paul Williams, ‘Hailing the Cosmopolitan Conscience: Memorial Museums in a Global Age’ in *Hot Topics, Public Culture, Museums*, eds. Fiona Cameron and Lynda Kelley (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2010), 227-44. On human rights, see Moyn, *The Last Utopia*; Levy and Sznajder, *The Holocaust and Memory*; and Ross Poole’s critique of Levy and Sznajder, ‘Misremembering the Holocaust’, 31-49.

⁴ Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 46-7.

spelled out. What is involved, rather, is a more general assumption that history teaches and that knowing about it is in itself a way of making sure that there is less chance of bad events being repeated. This talismanic-pedagogical historical consciousness is, I suggest, widespread and itself implicated in the expansion of heritage visiting.⁵

These ideas and ideals, then, provide a powerful and moralised framework for approaching representations and voicing response. Typically, the phrases and sentiments which form such responses include expressions of emotion (that one feels sadness, shock, horror, or is disturbed); assessments of a film, book, exhibition or memorial as ‘very moving’, ‘powerful’, or ‘meaningful’ (each of which signals an emotional reaction without really explaining why); many also express their feeling, as Macdonald discusses, that it is important to know about and ‘remember’ these tragedies, and that this might help prevent it in the future – ‘never again’.

It also needs to be recognised, however, that as well as tripping easily off the tongue, these attitudes and platitudes are independently powerful because they confer social acceptance and confirm the morality of the person voicing them in social situations: this social aspect is equally crucial to understanding why they are voiced. They are, of course, most often articulated *to* others or when *with* others, whether in visitor comment books, on blogs, when discussing a book or exhibition, or at museums and memorials (‘visiting is almost always co-visiting; and even people who attend alone may have made their decision in relation to others (e.g. a friend who advised them to come)’, notes Macdonald)⁶ – and these can be rigidly policed social situations.⁷ Not only is an ‘appropriate’ response utterly necessary (to not respond at all, or without the expected emotion, opens one up to being thought unaffected or ‘hard-hearted’, or possibly lacking an adequate morality) – but to respond in a way which could be construed as ‘disrespectful’ or ‘irreverent’ (especially when at a site of mass death) is, in this schema, entirely taboo, whereas one achieves a high level of social acceptance

⁵ Macdonald, *Difficult Heritage*, 168-71.

⁶ Ibid., 170. She notes: ‘a significant feature of visiting heritage sites and exhibitions is that other people are also present and that this affords the possibility of viewing and judging how others also behave. This is another dimension of moral witnessing: a witnessing of others and opening of oneself up to be viewed in public. Moral witnessing is always, in some sense, accompanied witnessing’.

⁷ Karyn Ball’s analysis of the enforcement of the ‘protocols of professional scholarship’ in her *Disciplining the Holocaust* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008) provides an interesting corollary. As she argues, these protocols ‘are not only epistemological and logical, but are also social to the extent that they imply a standard of appropriate behaviour’ (3). See also Carolyn Dean, ‘Minimalism and Victim Testimony’, *H&T* 49:4 (2010), 85-99, for similar comments about the scholarly community’s preference for ‘aesthetic and emotive restraint’ (86) and its impact on academic evaluation of victim testimonies.

and ‘morality’ when one responds within the framework of ‘moral witnessing’.⁸ Thus, there are powerful social incentives for responding according to these familiar, ritualised social norms:⁹ but such responses often remain *performances* of (a certain) morality, and involve little serious thought about how ‘never again’ might really be achieved. Such attitudes and platitudes are, thus, reassuring and palliative – itself another incentive to take refuge in them.

The representations discussed in this thesis operate within (and sometimes against) this socio-cultural framework, and the central argument of this chapter is that mainstream representations of the Holocaust and other genocides themselves *encourage* these attitudes and platitudes, guiding our interpretations and responses. Although the main thrust of reception studies has been – quite rightly – to stress the heterogeneity of audience reactions and responses, I would suggest that perhaps in the arena of ‘difficult histories’, a set of strong social boundaries delimits the range of acceptable and likely responses (and, of course, Holocaust mantras are attractive as ready-made and acceptable responses).¹⁰ This is also not to argue the opposite, that responses are entirely determined by the representations themselves – which, for instance, is the underlying argument of those who explain western inaction or indifference in the face of other genocides and atrocities through notions of either ‘shock’ and ‘numbness’ caused by the content of atrocity photographs, or ‘compassion fatigue’ (or ‘the CNN effect’) as the effect of repeated exposure to them.¹¹ Instead, representations deploy

⁸ Obviously, there is a certain level of flexibility: what a visitor feels comfortable saying may differ depending upon the company they are in; perhaps less appropriate views can be expressed as long as the general thrust of one’s response is solidly within the expected framework. Nevertheless, my argument is that the responses of the mainstream part of society will not step too far outside these attitudes and platitudes.

⁹ And of course – who wouldn’t like ‘never again’ to be true? In this sense, those actually challenging these ‘attitudes and platitudes’ might come up against what Taner Akçam has called a ‘wall of morality’ (*From Empire to Republic*, 42).

¹⁰ Such responses are of course not controllable or guaranteed, as per the much publicised reaction of black students to *Schindler’s List* in a US high school: Hansen, ‘*Schindler’s List* is not *Shoah*’, 294-5.

¹¹ Barbie Zelizer, in *Remembering to Forget*, offers perhaps the most developed rehearsal of this ‘compassion fatigue’ theory in relation to images of the Holocaust and other atrocities, arguing that repeated viewing ‘undoes our capacity to respond’ (220). Facetiously, I could note that the two are entirely contradictory – one proposing a freezing/impossibility of any engagement through numbness, the other proposing that we continually engage and empathise until, in the end, we get fed up. Both, in the abstract, have a common-sense ring to them – and probably do happen – but the arguments as a whole are rather too ahistorical, taking little account of social, political, and cultural changes and influences. ‘Compassion fatigue’ makes more sense as an argument if the ‘we’ of ‘we have become inured’ refers to an older generation who may indeed have viewed and re-viewed these images over perhaps the entirety of the postwar period. There have, of course, been plenty of other explanations for apathy – e.g. Elaine Scarry, ‘Watching and Authorizing the Gulf War’ in *Media Spectacles*, eds. Marjorie Garber, Jann Matlock and Rebecca L. Walkowitz (Routledge: New York/London, 1993), 57-73; John Berger, ‘Photographs of Agony’ in his *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon, 1980).

particular techniques and manipulations to encourage certain interpretations and responses, or, in Johannes von Moltke's words, 'particular historical "constellations" of affect'.¹² Each medium has its own methods of directing interpretation, understanding, and response: film uses plot, character, and the deeper levels of film form to direct the gaze, position the viewer, create affect, and structure interpretation;¹³ the cultural authority and 'eyewitness' perspective of survivors gives an unchallengeable weight to interpretations;¹⁴ photographs can visualise and emblematised, focus attention, and attempt to position their viewers in relation to the subject matter;¹⁵ museums can be 'culturally generative; they construct frameworks for social understanding'.¹⁶ That these mediums, and individual artists, have the potential to challenge entrenched apathy and create a political and self-reflective engagement as well as 'merely' affect, emotion, and response is, of course, the underlying premise of many of the artists themselves and much of critical cultural studies. I will explore each medium's particular methods in more depth throughout the chapter, but my point here is to signal that each has the potential to invite certain kinds of engagement with genocide and, in the absence of any challenging stance, can lend themselves very easily to this palliative 'constellation' of responses.

My argument throughout is that these representations distance genocide in some ways whilst allowing certain kinds of engagement in others, and in so doing, help to produce these 'attitudes and platitudes'. Alongside the other distancing mechanisms I have outlined in earlier chapters – presenting the perpetrators as aberrant monsters, positing a definitive end point to genocide, and narrating it as an exceptional event – representations of the Holocaust and other genocides also enforce the separation verbally, describing them as 'hell', for example (phrases which, as I will discuss later, are themselves platitudes), and spatially, presenting genocide remarkably consistently as something which takes place in bounded, contained spaces – '*l'univers*

¹² Johannes von Moltke, 'Sympathy for the Devil: Cinema, History, and the Politics of Emotion', *New German Critique* 34:3 (2007), 17-43: 19.

¹³ See *ibid.*; Robert A. Rosenstone, *History on Film/Film on History* (Harlow: Pearson, 2006), especially 16. I agree with Andrew Horton's claim that 'Film has the power to inspire, to incite, to provoke, to change the way we think': 'We All Live Two Lives', 195.

¹⁴ James E. Young, *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust: Narrative and the Consequences of Interpretation* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988); Greenspan, *On Listening*.

¹⁵ Möller, 'Rwanda Revisualised'; David Levi-Strauss, 'A Sea of Grievs is Not a Proscenium' in Jaar, *Let There Be Light*.

¹⁶ Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Interpretation of Visual Culture* (London/New York: Routledge, 2000), 20. See also Rhiannon Mason, 'Cultural Theory and Museum Studies' in *Companion to Museum Studies*, ed. Macdonald, 17-32.

concentrationnaire' – and cannot seep into our own. As I have noted throughout, these are distancing mechanisms which shore up the preferred western vision of genocide as an entirely aberrant, exceptional event which has nothing to say about the potentials of western 'civilisation', and this distancing – or enforced disconnection – in a sense allows for the disengagement inherent in these kinds of 'responses'.

However, it is also important to consider the various ways in which representations encourage their audiences to *approach* genocide and find meaning in it – even if, as I will argue, these modes of approaching genocide ultimately distance it further. Historical realist films and 'authentic' museal spaces ostensibly allow visitors to see 'what it was really like' – and while the emotions such films and places can elicit might indeed give a certain understanding of the past, they also create a rupture between 'then' and 'now', 'here' and 'there'. Similarly, representations now often seek to have an emotional impact upon their audience, to encourage them to identify with the victims, and to draw clear moral lessons from what they have seen or read (linked to the overarching goals of 'never again'): again, these mechanisms can bring genocide much 'closer' and make it more 'meaningful' to westerners, but they often avoid the messy complexities and challenges which characterise genocide as a process and an event. In encouraging emotional over cognitive responses, I argue, representations often foreclose critical or engaged thinking about the roots of genocide, and lend themselves to the familiar and trite responses of 'I can't believe they did that', 'This should not happen again', and 'Younger generations must be educated about this'.¹⁷

Of course, there are also representations which challenge these attitudes and platitudes. Together, they show that 'emotion' need not be opposed to 'thought' – indeed, that emotion can powerfully structure thought, but that in order to challenge the familiar platitudinous responses, representations also need to ask their audiences to think differently about genocide. This might mean directly challenging stereotypes about perpetrators, or drawing parallels between genocidal violence and the violent histories of one's own nation – but the point in each is not merely to add new facts to audiences' pre-existing understandings of a genocide, but to challenge and reframe these understandings. In fact, as I will explore in this chapter, some of the most effective at

¹⁷ That the west should intervene is another frequently-expressed belief, but this most plainly opens up the questions of the political will/geopolitical interests of the political elite, of apathy and transient interest on the part of publics, and the influence upon both of how exactly atrocities are reported as they occur.

challenging mainstream understandings are comparative representations – because they often discard the usual ‘explanations’ and, instead, ask their audiences to reflect on the common roots of violence. Perhaps comparative thought also has the potential to give some plausibility to ‘never again’, since it could then be uttered not just as a post-hoc expression of sympathy, but on the basis of an understanding of how everyday violence escalates into genocide.

The first section discusses some of the highly polarised debates around ‘appropriate’ responses to the Holocaust, especially around distance and identification, emotion, and pedagogy, and argues that the binary oppositions are largely unhelpful: emotion and identification can be underpinned by cognition. The second and longest section traces how representations of the Holocaust and other genocides both distance the events and permit certain kinds of engagement with them, arguing that the effect is to encourage audiences to respond with these ‘attitudes and platitudes’. The third section examines the attitudes and platitudes themselves, showing that the phrases and approaches usually wielded in response to the Holocaust have also become the dominant framework for responding to other genocides; towards the end I discuss some of the representations which challenge these attitudes and platitudes by destabilising familiar categories of interpretation, and provoking deeper and more comparative thought.

Responding to the Holocaust: identification, emotion, and ‘lessons’

The ethics of representation and response have been (and are) hotly debated within Holocaust Studies, from the commandment that silence is the only appropriate response, to a deep-seated suspicion of ‘beautiful’ or ‘sublime’ representations, to the appropriateness of the term ‘Holocaust’.¹⁸ While, certainly, these debates have

¹⁸ Many other issues of contention could of course be mentioned, among them the debate that evolved from Adorno’s famous ‘Poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric’, the vilification (and defence) of ‘postmodern’ interpretations and representations (see Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*), or the propriety of laughter (see Terrence Des Pres, “Holocaust Laughter?” in *Writing and the Holocaust*, ed. Lang, 216-33). On silence, George Steiner, ‘The Hollow Miracle’ in his *Language and Silence: Essays on Language, Literature and the Inhuman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 95-109, and André Neher, *Exile of the Word: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1981); on ‘Holocaust beauty’ see Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty*; on ‘sublime’, Zachary Braiterman, ‘Against Holocaust-Sublime: Naïve Reference and the Generation of Memory’, *History and Memory* 12:2 (2000), 7-28; on the use of ‘Holocaust’, Jon Petrie, ‘The Secular Word HOLOCAUST: Scholarly Myths, History, and 20th Century Meanings’, *JGR* 2:1 (2000), 31-63. More generally, see Friedländer, ed., *Probing the Limits*, Steiner, *Language and Silence*, and Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow: In the Aftermath of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996).

evolved, often key even now is the incompatibility in approach between those who are concerned to guard and protect a ‘proper’ Holocaust memory – and, at base, to preserve an essential mystical core, or sacredness and ‘unknowability’ in the Holocaust – and those who are less concerned with prescribing and policing forms of remembrance and representation, than with studying and evaluating them.¹⁹ The issue of audience identification with the victims (and the presentational styles, melodramatic or otherwise, which enable it) has proven to be an important part of this debate, since it involves, at least potentially, the ‘illicit “grasping”’²⁰ or ‘usurpation’²¹ of the victim’s (entirely incommensurate) experience – and thus its ‘domestication’ or ‘normalisation’.²² Such ‘grasping’ has been sharply criticised by those who, in the words of Primo Levi, would like to ‘erect a dike against this trend’.²³ As Robert Eaglestone explains,

For Levi and others, this is not simply an epistemological problem about other minds: it is an ethical concern. For Wiesel, Delbo and others, it is both that identification *cannot* happen in any meaningful way (‘a wall that cannot be pierced’, a code that ‘cannot be broken’, ‘all of those I met since I came back do not exist... they belong to another universe and nothing will allow them to rejoin ours’) and that it *should not* happen.²⁴

Alongside the force of these statements by survivors, various scholars have weighed in with condemnations of what they term ‘over-identification’,²⁵ ‘unearned identification’,²⁶ or, with even clearer moralistic undertones, ‘promiscuous identification’.²⁷ Young, Langer, and Hartman have argued over whether one particular

¹⁹ See Introduction. Geoffrey Hartman and George Steiner, among many others, can be identified with this position, which is closely related to debates about ‘unspeakability’ and ‘unrepresentability’. For an excellent critique, see Mandel, ‘Rethinking “After Auschwitz”’. At root, this divide can also be seen as stemming from identity politics (see Stone, ‘Beyond “Uniqueness” and Ethnic Competition’).

²⁰ Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 22.

²¹ Diana Fuss, *Identification Papers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 4, 8-9.

²² Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 22-3. A sub-stratum of this debate has (self-)interrogated scholarly identification with victims, and Dominick LaCapra’s call for ‘empathetic unsettlement’ is probably the best-known discussion of this: *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, especially chapter 2. See also Ball’s discussion in *Disciplining the Holocaust*, chapter 1 (‘Disciplining Traumatic History: Goldhagen’s “Impropriety”’); Goldberg, ‘The Victim’s Voice’, 220-37; Samuel Moyn, ‘Empathy in History, Empathizing with Humanity’, *H&T* 45:3 (2006), 397-415.

²³ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. Raymond Rosenthal (London: Abacus, 1988), 128, cited in Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 22.

²⁴ Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 22.

²⁵ E.g. Marianne Hirsch, ‘Marked by Memory: Feminist Reflection on Trauma and Translation’ in Miller and Tougaw, eds., *Extremities*, 71-91: 74-5, 77.

²⁶ Amos Goldberg, ‘The “Jewish Narrative” in the Yad Vashem Global Holocaust Museum’, *JGR* 14:2 (2012), 187-213: 206, paraphrasing LaCapra.

²⁷ Susan David Bernstein, ‘Promiscuous Reading: The Problem of Identification and Anne Frank’s Diary’ in *Witnessing the Disaster: Essays on Representation and the Holocaust*, eds. Michael Bernard-Donals and Richard Glejzer (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 141-61: 143. For David Bernstein, this means ‘crossing borders in this process of reading without due notice, without heeding distinctions between the “I” that reads and the autobiographical “I” that is consumed in the act of

form (diary, memoir, or video testimony), or mode of narration (a closed, redemptory narrative versus an open-ended, unresolved one) is more likely to invite or resist audiences ‘grasping’ the events (or thinking they have);²⁸ Eaglestone has argued that testimony has a ‘doubleness’, which both attracts and repels at the same time.²⁹ However, most of these particular moral condemnations rest on a narrow conceptualisation of identification as one where the reader or viewer unproblematically incorporates or absorbs the victim’s identity and experiences as their own. More theoretical studies of identification suggest that while it can include this ‘colonising’, it is usually a much more variegated process: the viewer may identify with ‘that which is to be found already in him or herself’, identifications can happen on different levels, can fail, and can retain an awareness or acknowledgement of the other *as other*.³⁰ What also needs to be considered here, I think, is that identification can depend as much on the individual survivor, and how they express themselves, as on any cultural or testimony-specific proclivity – or indeed on the reader or viewer.³¹

In general, the academics who eschew issuing moral directives have taken up far more nuanced positions regarding both conceptualisation of identification and its potential benefits and problems. They tend to see no *inherent* problem with identification – in fact, in certain cases, seeing it as (having been) crucial in making the Holocaust *communicable* to the public, and raising ‘Holocaust consciousness’ – but recognise at the same time that it can bring with it simplifications, distortions, and overly facile responses. That they are not uncritically positive is evident in the suspicion, relatively frequently voiced, that identification may be pleasurable: for example, Amos Goldberg

reading’ (146) – ‘consumed’ is important here. (See Carolyn J. Dean, *The Fragility of Empathy After the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) on this kind of moralised condemnation). For an excellent analysis, and ‘identification’ more generally, see Jaimey Fischer, ‘Home-Movies, Film Diaries, and Mass Bodies: Péter Forgács’s *Free Fall* into the Holocaust’ in *Visualizing the Holocaust*, eds. Bathrick et al., 239-60, especially 241-8, and Fuss, *Identification Papers*.

²⁸ All are concerned to preserve the ‘strangeness’ of testimony, to defamiliarise it from the reader’s experience. See Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 28-31 for a discussion; Eaglestone argues that identification will always be present – with which I agree – although he does not really allow for differentiated types or degrees of identification. Cf. Fischer, ‘Forgács’s *Free Fall*’, 241-4 for a critique of the argument that the medium itself (here, film) determines the degree of identification.

²⁹ Eaglestone, *Holocaust and Postmodern*, 43, 47, et al.

³⁰ Fischer paraphrasing Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World* (London: Routledge, 1996), in ‘Forgács’s *Free Fall*’, 242; Fuss, *Identification Papers* (especially her section on Judith Butler, 6-7).

³¹ Of course, some survivors (e.g. Charlotte Delbo) have deliberately built in textual devices aimed at disrupting identification, but I mean, more prosaically, that some are better at expressing their experiences in writing than others (style and tone surely affect identification), or are ‘better storytellers’ with oral testimony. The testimony of Edith P., part of the Yale Fortunoff collection, has always seemed to me to be an excellent example of this:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=gbaSloeuWQ&list=PLE129969D102584DD&index=10&feature=plpp_vid_eo [accessed 31.12.12].

argues that in our (western) culture, the voices of the victims now ‘operate according to the pleasure principle in order to bring us, consumers of Holocaust images, the most expected image of the “unimaginable,” which therefore generates a melancholic pleasure.’³² Nevertheless, as most recognise, identification can potentially open up historical events to different kinds of understanding by audiences.

Andreas Huyssen, for example, discussing the impact of the NBC miniseries *Holocaust* in West Germany, noted that, indeed, ‘its narrative strategies, manipulation of images, use of music, stereotypes and clichés, betrays very clearly and often unnervingly its origins in the culture industry’.³³ However, he argued, the emotional identification with the German-Jewish Weiss family that these melodramatic aesthetics elicited meant that, for the first time, Germans could lay aside the paralysis caused by decades of ‘rhetorics of verbose amnesia and universal rationalisation’, and begin to empathise with the victims.³⁴ Arguing that ‘[t]he emotional explosion that took place in Germany in the week when the four instalments of “Holocaust” were telecast shows how desperately the Germans needed identification in order to break down the mechanisms of denial and suppression’, Huyssen’s essay also quietly suggests that *Holocaust*, as an ‘event’, facilitated the process of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* in West Germany. Writing much later, Alison Landsberg takes a more straightforwardly positive view of identification, particularly in the context of cinema and museums, as enabling viewers to ‘engage both intellectually and emotionally with another who is radically different from him or herself’, which in turn ‘might condition viewers to see and think in ways that could foster more radical forms of democracy aimed at advancing egalitarian social goals’.³⁵ More critically, however, Thomas Elsaesser notes that even in more self-aware productions which, ‘in the face of narcissistic forms

³² Goldberg, ‘The Victim’s Voice’, 229. See also, e.g., Dean, *Fragility of Empathy*, 13-14; Picart and Frank, *Frames of Evil*, 20; Wulf Kansteiner, ‘Success, Truth, and Modernism in Holocaust Historiography: Reading Saul Friedländer Thirty-Five Years After the Publication of *Metahistory*’, *H&T* 48:2 (2009), 25-53: 36. Kansteiner contrasts the ‘overdue identification with the victims’ he argues Friedländer’s *Nazi Germany and the Jews* encourages, with the ‘dubious illicit pleasure of temporarily identifying with the perpetrators’ occasioned by Guido Knopp’s TV documentaries. The fact that this is also Garbarini’s criticism – that historians take pleasure in identifying with perpetrators – underscores the importance of establishing to what ends identification is being put. Kansteiner’s argument is that Knopp TV produces an unthinking, rehabilitative identification with the themes of German honour, fate, myth, heroism, and military pride amongst the German public (Kansteiner, *In Pursuit of German Memory: History, Television, and Politics after Auschwitz* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2006), 165-6). If historians do identify with perpetrators, it is in pursuit of historical explanation.

³³ Huyssen, ‘The Politics of Identification’, 117-36: 119

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 135.

³⁵ Alison Landsberg, ‘Memory, Empathy and the Politics of Identification’, *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 22:2 (2009), 221-9: 221; see also her *Prosthetic Memory*.

of identification in conventional narrative and fictional dramatization’, attempt to ‘break through any coherent and thus comforting subject position and shock spectators into recognition’,

such strategies of shock, increasingly used to convey the suffering caused by human or natural disasters, also imply the deeply ambiguous modes of address typical of news broadcasts and current affairs programmes: soliciting (emotional) response, while disempowering (civic, political) action.³⁶

Elsaesser is joined in his problematisation of representations which solicit emotional responses – whether shock, sadness, or horror – by many others. Some question the purpose of ‘sensationalism’ and ‘shock value’, asking, like Elsaesser, to what end shock is put: referring to showings of liberation newsreel footage and atrocity photographs, most argue that they are used to grab attention, rather than as stepping stones to probe the events further – leading Susan Crane to suggest we ‘choose not to look’.³⁷ But ‘emotion’ more generally is pitted against information and cognition in academic writing,³⁸ as part of the critique of melodramatic aesthetics, ‘Americanisation’ or ‘universalisation’, and decontextualized horror. Writing from the Australian context, Bain Attwood has articulated these fears nicely, discussing how victim testimony was used to communicate the Stolen Generations narrative to the wider (settler) Australian population:

The most significant problem associated with the increasing dominance of testimony in the public sphere lies ... in the way its expression of emotion and an audience’s subsequent identification with the past endanger historical knowledge by threatening to overwhelm the articulation of thought and analysis.³⁹

If one agrees with Karyn Ball that the scholarly community strongly prefers an ‘appearance of restraint’ within academic writing – and she does have a point – then this would also contribute to the academic community’s general suspicion of emotion

³⁶ Thomas Elsaesser, ‘Subject Positions, Speaking Positions: From *Holocaust*, *Our Hitler*, and *Heimat* to *Shoah* and *Schindler’s List*’ in *The Persistence of History: Cinema, Television and the Modern Event*, ed. Vivian Sobchack (New York: Routledge, 1996), 145-86: 172. Elsaesser is discussing the German concept of *Betroffenheit*, ‘which roughly translates as “the affect of concern” but in its root-meaning includes “recognising oneself to be emotionally called upon to respond, act, react.” It thus covers empathy and identification, but in an active, radical sense of being stung into action’ (173).

³⁷ Crane, ‘Choosing Not to Look’. For uses of liberation footage and atrocity photographs, see, e.g., Picart and Frank, *Frames of Evil*, 67; Shandler, *While America Watches*, 26.

³⁸ Elihu Katz and Ruth Katz, ‘Life and Death Among the Binaries: Notes on Jeffrey Alexander’s Constructionism’ in *Remembering the Holocaust: A Debate*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 156-70: 163; Kansteiner, ‘Success, Truth, and Modernism’, 33.

³⁹ Bain Attwood, ‘In the Age of Testimony: The Stolen Generations Narrative, “Distance,” and Public History’, *Public Culture* 20:1 (2008), 75-95: 91.

in the public arena.⁴⁰ However, as I discussed in chapter 2, there are others – mostly film and literature specialists – who defend their mediums against this criticism, and argue that emotional reactions themselves can represent a form of knowledge about the past. Landsberg has written in this context about the potential of museum architecture to create a feeling of vulnerability within visitors:

To experience, if only for a flash, the way it feels to have your personhood or agency stripped away, may be the grounds for understanding or for having empathy for something totally other and cognitively unimaginable. Perhaps the experience of vulnerability might itself be a form of knowledge about the Holocaust. In other words, the museum functions as a frame within which one might experience a kind of sensually as well as intellectually immersed knowledge – a form of knowledge predicated upon an experiential relationship to history. Certain aspects of the Holocaust are brought into dramatic relief by having one's agency threatened.⁴¹

To attempt a mediation between these two positions, I agree with Landsberg et al. that emotional response can provide a powerful and alternative form of knowledge about the past. However – and to return to the arguments of Elsaesser and Attwood – perhaps emotion needs to be elicited on the basis of (or at least alongside) cognition: a more effective understanding might come if an audience's sorrow was based less on an abstract, universalised victimhood or poignant image, or their shock and horror came not just from baldly presented atrocity images, but more from an understanding of the violent nationalist or other political visions which made them victims, and of the mundane and contingent factors which made some people killers and others their victims. The problem is thus not emotion itself, but – especially if we are to hold these representations to their own ideals of 'never again' – that emotion needs to be linked to cognition and reflection from an empirical and intellectual basis. The same can be said in relation to identification and empathy: *pace* Huyssen, telling the stories of individuals 'humanises' the history for audiences, permits a more personal connection with what can otherwise be a very *impersonal* and top-down narration of world-historical events, and thus can revise audiences' relationships with complex and difficult histories. But again, it seems to me important that identification, however full or partial, be based not on a universalised victimhood but on an understanding of

⁴⁰ Ball, *Disciplining the Holocaust*, 3.

⁴¹ Alison Landsberg, 'America, the Holocaust, and the Mass Culture of Memory: Toward a Radical Politics of Empathy', *New German Critique* 71 (1997), 63-86: 85. Landsberg is discussing the USHMM, which is noteworthy in relation to this opposition between 'emotion' and 'cognition'. Throughout the different levels of the exhibition, the more poignant displays (the Tower of Faces, the victims' belongings) are housed on one side of the building, and the historical sections on the other, separated by the bridges looking over the atrium and the steps down to the next floor.

victims as historical individuals: without a passing awareness of the fundamental social, political, economic and ideological reasons for their victimhood, identification can be full of feeling but empty of understanding, and is hardly an exercise in ethical fellow-feeling for ‘the other’.

These arguments can equally apply to the debates over the ‘lessons of the Holocaust’. The idea that there are ‘lessons’ to be drawn, which (along with ‘remembering’) work to prevent genocide in the future, has become a pervasive element within the framework of attitudes and platitudes, and a mainstay of pronouncements about the Holocaust and its contemporary relevance from government officials and public bodies across the west. Typical is Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs Carl Bildt’s statement on the tenth anniversary of the Stockholm Declaration:

our mission, to educate coming generations about the Holocaust, should ... be seen as a preventive war against future atrocities and persecution of minorities. We then use the history as a springboard in our efforts to create a better and more humane society.⁴²

However, various academics have questioned the political adoption of the Holocaust for civic educational purposes, including for Holocaust memorial days, as well as the notion of ‘lessons’ itself – especially since those professing their importance rarely define what they might be.⁴³ The goal of such ‘lessons’ is, presumably, to effect a change amongst museum-goers, schoolchildren, or the wider public, with the idea that lessons of the past will make them more likely to act against genocide and human rights abuses (or less likely – though the idea is infrequently articulated – to commit them themselves). This, too, would seem to require not only emotion and sympathy for the victims – which may produce the *desire* to prevent genocide – but a more critical awareness of both the complexities of genocide and the relative ordinariness of the structures which cause it. Although it is frequently argued that learning about the Holocaust will help us combat racism, intolerance, and the persecution of minorities, as well as other genocides, it is far rarer that links are drawn between the structures of violence underlying the Holocaust and those which underpin other forms of

⁴² Carl Bildt, 26 January 2010, cited by Andy Pearce in ‘Learning the “Lessons of History”? The Holocaust and European Memory Politics in the Early Twenty-First Century’, paper presented 10 March 2011, University of Winchester, 1.

⁴³ Dan Stone, ‘Day of Remembrance or Day of Forgetting? Or, Why Britain Does Not Need a Holocaust Memorial Day’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 34:4 (2000), 53-9; Donald Bloxham, ‘Britain’s Holocaust Memorial Days: Reshaping the Past in the Service of the Present’, *Immigrants & Minorities* 21:1-2 (2002), 41-62; Paul Salmons, ‘Teaching or Preaching? The Holocaust and Intercultural Education in the UK’, *Intercultural Education*, 14:2 (2003), 139-49.

discrimination. Again, an approach which focuses on the process and structures of genocide may better allow people to relate aspects of the Holocaust to the structures of violence they encounter in society, not just the more visible and extreme manifestations of violence which 'look' like the Holocaust: here, too, comparative thinking would seem to be important in opening up alternative ways of understanding genocide. It could, of course, be argued that this cannot be easily digested into neat moral 'lessons' – certainly there is more than a measure of truth to this, since all pre-packaged, mantra-like 'lessons' are rather pedagogically dubious. But perhaps in the end this calls more for a revision of the content and approach, than for the abolition of the standard headline shopping list of discrimination and violence to be combatted.

Distance and Affect

Genocide representations have largely replicated the multitude of subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which Holocaust representations both create distance from the events, and attempt to 'bring them closer' to their audiences. This simultaneous production of distance and proximity is in fact not contradictory, for together they have created the preferred western image of the Holocaust and genocide as events divorced from the normal continuum of western civilisation, but which offer, in the tragic mode, morality tales about evil, suffering, and death. In distancing genocide, representations place it outside their audiences' immediate sphere of concern – thus permitting these more superficial and moralising responses rather than the more urgent and engaged responses of people who feel themselves directly threatened by the same phenomenon. Equally, representations tend to try to bring genocide 'closer' to their audiences in modes which privilege emotional reaction and foreclose thoughtfulness; in this way, representations encourage precisely the kind of attitudes and platitudes I wish to problematise.

When considering the relationship between Holocaust and genocide representations, however, it is also important to bear in mind the traditional (and updated) western conceptions of 'the Balkans', 'Africa', Turkey and Cambodia: all, of course, mark difference and distance in themselves – and permit, in a sense, the offhand 'responses' (dismissals) that in the African 'heart of darkness', tribal warfare just happens; that the Balkans always were one big 'powder keg' full of ethnic hatreds; that 'the Turks'

never were very civilised; or that democracy and development never did take root in Cambodia.⁴⁴ And of course, every representation involves in some way an exposure to difference (whether in images of exotic landscapes or descriptions of unfamiliar cultures; travel *to* such places is obviously a different kind of exposure), which is in all probability approached within the framework of the above western preconceptions – and this in turn serves to mark out and distance those places and cultures as different from our own. Few offer much translation of cultural difference – only Ngor provides an explanation of the Buddhist concept of *kama* and other particularities of Cambodian culture, for example, while Drakulić's *Balkan Express* is one of the few which explicitly tries to interpret and explain the former Yugoslavia to Europeans – meaning that for most audiences, these unfamiliar cultures will reinforce a sense of difference, and clichéd interpretations are less likely to be challenged.⁴⁵

These aside, however, there are strong parallels at a more formal level in how representations of the Holocaust, and other genocides, encourage engagement and effect distance. As many have noted, the Holocaust is very often represented within a framework which severs any connections between Nazism and contemporary western society: in the main, genocide representations also follow this framework. I have already noted in previous chapters that narratives are often chronologically divided into 'before', 'during', and 'after', thus enforcing the idea of genocide as an 'interruption', and how genocide is usually presented as the handiwork of 'evil'

⁴⁴ This is not to say that the spaces of eastern Europe are not also marked (and seen) as 'different' by westerners – more to say that in mainstream representations, these spaces are unseen, replaced instead by the 'familiar difference' of the ghettos and camps, populated by a mix of eastern and western 'Jews'. It is interesting, though, to note the various responses to this problem amongst those who represent genocide. Terry George was very concerned to avoid foregrounding violence in *Hotel Rwanda*, since this would 'only reinforce the targeted Western viewer's stereotypes of Africa as a site of monstrosity and unrestrained violence' (George, ed., *"Hotel Rwanda": Bringing the True Story of an African Hero to Film* (New York: Newmarket, 2005), 58). Conversely, Dina Iordanova notes that 'it no longer takes aloof foreigners to problematise the Balkans, as the region is willingly problematised by insiders, who uncritically adopt and eagerly perpetuate the culturist paradigm', arguing that many films cater to Eurocentric stereotypes and thus contribute to the project of exclusion. Iordanova, *Cinema of Flames*, 46 and chapters 1-3; for a similar argument, Tomislav Z. Longinović, 'Playing the Western Eye: Balkan Masculinity and Post-Yugoslav War Cinema' in *East European Cinemas*, ed. Anikó Imre (New York: Routledge, 2005), 35-48.

⁴⁵ Other Cambodian testimonies, for example, simply use *kama* as a figure of everyday speech, whereas Ngor adopts the narrative stance of someone giving a guided tour. Of course, intended audience needs to be considered here – quite possibly, some were writing with the Cambodian-American community in mind, whereas Ngor already had the experience of explaining the genocide to outsiders whilst playing Dith Pran in *The Killing Fields*. (Ngor's relationship with *kama* is in fact very interesting – as a medical doctor he remains (culturally) Buddhist but believes in scientific explanations for things, but at key moments of loss reverts to the concept of *kama*, and Buddhism, to explain events or to reassure himself that the Khmer Rouge will get their comeuppance. On this and other facets of Cambodian culture during (and as factors in) the genocide, see Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*).

individuals rather than complex, processual events with origins in much broader (and ordinary) political, economic, and social factors. Here I explore how the representation of space helps create and maintain these boundaries between the past and present, in explicit statements and symbolic configurations which often appear in, or underlie, these attitudes and platitudes.

These boundaries can be explicitly verbalised, tapping into familiar cultural discourses to structure the way audiences conceptualise the events, and usually revolve around metaphors of confinement and imprisonment (hence, uncrossable boundaries), hell, or incommensurate experiences: Auschwitz, then, is the ‘other planet’,⁴⁶ ‘*l’univers concentrationnaire*’;⁴⁷ it is ‘Dante’s inferno’, ‘hell’, ‘*anus mundi*’;⁴⁸ and, the adjunct to the ethical prohibition on identification outlined above, others assert that ‘those who did not live through the event will never know it ... between our memory and its reflection there stands a wall that cannot be pierced. The past belongs to the dead and the survivor does not recognise himself in the world linking him to them.’⁴⁹ One does not have to look too far to find similar statements in relation to other genocides: Rurangwa speaks of the ‘circles of hell’, Hukanović titles his testimony ‘The Tenth Circle of Hell’, Cambodia was a ‘world turned upside down’.⁵⁰ Many western outsiders also describe the events with these terms; and while we can assume that the intention is to convey something of the extremity of genocide, these mystifying and quasi-religious phrases are also very effective in enforcing the separation between ‘genocide’ and ‘us’. This is a difficult question; on the one hand, it is to be expected that survivors will try to capture the horror of their experiences in culturally resonant ways, but on the other, the effect is nevertheless to remove the possibility of genocide being a part of our own world, and thus also the need for critical reflection.

⁴⁶ This is Ka-Tsetnik’s [Yehiel Dinur’s] well-known phrase: see Iris Milner, ‘The “Gray Zone” Revisited: The Concentrationary Universe in Ka. Tzetnik’s Literary Testimony’, *Jewish Social Studies* 14:2 (2008), 113-55.

⁴⁷ David Rousset, *L’Univers concentrationnaire* (Paris: n.p., 1946).

⁴⁸ E.g. Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man/The Truce*, trans. Stuart Woolf (London: Abacus, 1979), 118, 28; Wiesław Kielar, *Anus Mundi: Five Years in Auschwitz*, trans. Susanne Flatauer (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982).

⁴⁹ Elie Wiesel, cited in Eaglestone, *Holocaust and the Postmodern*, 16. See Eaglestone’s discussion for more such citations, 16-19.

⁵⁰ Rurangwa, *Genocide*, 13; Hukanović, *Tenth Circle*; Ben Kiernan, ‘Introduction: A World Turned Upside Down’ in *Children of Cambodia’s Killing Fields: Memoirs By Survivors*, comp. Dith Pran (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1997). ‘Nightmare’ is not uncommon.

In Holocaust testimonies and literature, distance is also figured in the inadequacies of language itself to describe, from the ‘smothered words’⁵¹ of Sarah Kofman to Primo Levi’s observation that ‘[w]e say “hunger”, we say “tiredness”, “fear”, “pain”, we say “winter” and they are different things. They are free words, created and used by free men...’ – or Jorge Semprún’s observation that ‘[s]moke: you know what that is, you think you know’.⁵² Interestingly, such comments are rare in survivor testimonies from other genocides: one could point to the lack of writing traditions in Cambodia and Rwanda especially,⁵³ or more prosaically to an author’s unfamiliarity with writing and satisfaction with ‘merely’ telling the story (does this not also apply to the majority of ‘ordinary’ Holocaust testimonies?): or, as Eaglestone observes in relation to what he calls ‘African trauma literature’, perhaps because of a more burning political need, ‘There is no sense that the events themselves, while awful, are actually incomprehensible, as is so often claimed for Holocaust testimony. Indeed, the opposite is claimed ... there is a real sense that there can be comprehension, that a story must be told and can and should be grasped by others in the West.’⁵⁴ Since these texts are ‘western-facing’, often intended to raise awareness and make western readers understand something of their ‘exotic’ contexts, those writing genocide testimonies may also find it counterproductive to create this kind of distance from their readers – in the same way that few follow Wiesel in asserting that ‘those who did not live through the event will never know it’.

The representation of space is also important in creating distance: here, too, metaphors of confinement and imprisonment shape the conceptualisation of the Holocaust and other genocides, suggesting that genocide happens ‘far away’ or ‘somewhere else’. Most Holocaust representations, as is well known, have focused on the network of concentration and death camps which spread across Europe – the ‘concentrationary universe’ – rather than the much more diffuse destruction which took place in the ‘killing fields’ of the East, or the more ordinary street corners and homes in eastern and western European villages, towns and cities, where the victims of the Nazis were

⁵¹ Sarah Kofman, *Smothered Words*, trans. Madeleine Dobie (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998). I have referred to the debate over the ‘unspeakability’ of the Holocaust above; this, too, obviously works as a distancing mechanism.

⁵² Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man*, 129; Jorge Semprún, *Literature or Life*, trans. Linda Coverdale (London: Viking, 1997), 10. I have referred to the debate over ‘unspeakability’ already.

⁵³ See Yamada, ‘Cambodian American Autobiography’, but also Perroomian, *Literary Responses to Catastrophe* on the Armenian literary tradition and responses to genocide.

⁵⁴ Eaglestone, “‘You Would Not Add’”, 81-2.

rounded up. The spaces of violence are thus corralled, separated from us by barbed wire and watchtowers:⁵⁵ Rothberg has noted that barbed wire serves in many Holocaust representations ‘not only as a metaphor that immediately calls up certain well-worn associations of evil but as a metonymy that stands in for a particular topography. As Sidra Ezrahi has shown, such internally chosen, metonymic figures generally function to emphasise the “closed-ness” of the camp world’.⁵⁶ The barbed wire is still up at many of the former camp sites today, including the most visited ones – Auschwitz, Majdanek, Dachau, Sachsenhausen – and so tourists’ experiences replicate this broader cultural representation of the camps as bounded spaces.⁵⁷

In their own ways, the sites of other genocides, and representations of them, echo this spatial imaginary of the Holocaust: in part because the flashpoints of the genocides now function as points on the tourist itinerary, but also because the literature, films, and photographs in the western cultural sphere tend to focus on them.⁵⁸ Tourists will gain little sense of the geographically all-encompassing nature of the war in Bosnia, for example, since most will visit only Sarajevo, Mostar, and Srebrenica: likewise in Rwanda, most will not see the hundreds of mass graves and open spaces of killing across Rwanda’s *mille collines*, but will visit the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre and probably Nyamata and Ntarama (maybe Murambi) before heading off to the

⁵⁵ On the dominance of the camps in public and scholarly conceptualisations, see Dan Stone, ‘Beyond the “Auschwitz Syndrome”’: Holocaust Historiography After the Cold War’, *Patterns of Prejudice* 44:5 (2010), 454-68, especially 456-9. On literature and the ‘concentrationary universe’, see Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism*, especially chapter 3, and the forthcoming publications from Griselda Pollock and Max Silverman’s project ‘Concentrationary Memories’.

⁵⁶ Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism*, 130, citing Sidra Ezrahi, *By Words Alone: The Holocaust in Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 49-66, especially 55. There are, of course, notable exceptions. See, for example, Rothberg’s discussion of how Ruth Klüger uses barbed wire as a metaphor for conveying ‘the complex relationship between past and present, and here and there.’ (Rothberg, *Traumatic Realism*, 130, discussing Ruth Klüger, *Weiter Leben: Eine Jugend* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1994)); or Andrew Hebard’s discussion of how *Night and Fog* systematically subverts the temporal and spatial boundaries erected around *l’univers concentrationnaire*: Hebard, ‘Disruptive Histories: Towards a Radical Politics of Remembrance in Alain Resnais’s *Night and Fog*’, *New German Critique* 71 (1997), 87-113: 94, 100. Cf. Detlef Hoffman, ‘Menschen hinter Stacheldraht’ in *Representations of Auschwitz: Fifty Years of Photographs, Paintings, and Graphics*, ed. Yasmin Doosry (Oświęcim: Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, 1995), 87-94.

⁵⁷ That said, the Operation Reinhard camps (Treblinka, Belżec, Sobibór) – whose infrastructure was destroyed when they closed – remained open, green spaces until recently (in 2004 the Belżec memorial was opened, which overlaid the space of the original camp with a structure filled with this imagery).

⁵⁸ See Doosry, ed., *Representations of Auschwitz*. This is less relevant to Armenia, since there was no killing on the Republic of Armenia’s present territory, and, aside from the fact that there could be no official or noticeable commemoration in Turkey today, the nature of the deportations means that there are few ‘concentrated’ spaces of mass death apart from, awkwardly, Der-el-Zor, where there is a museum and memorial. ‘Concentrationary’ motifs are not uncommon, though; Der-el-Zor is conceived as a vast concentration camp – see Ruben Malayan’s ‘Syrian Desert’ poster on <http://armeniangenocideposters.org/2011/>, and Balakian’s description of the deportation marches: ‘Deportation: a concentration camp in perpetual movement’ (*Black Dog of Fate*, 197).

National Parks; those passing through Cambodia on their tours of south-east Asia will almost certainly see Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek, but are unlikely to come across any of Cambodia's many other stupa. These itineraries generally mean that they miss those places which give different understandings of genocide and its memory – local, unmarked sites of mass death known mostly to villagers, which are a focus of Jens Meierhenrich's website 'Through A Glass Darkly' and *Enemies of the People*⁵⁹ – and also more 'alternative' representations of the genocides, as one might find in Anlong Veng (the last Khmer Rouge stronghold, where Pol Pot is buried, now operated as a tourist venue) or in the Serbian 'genocide museums' just down the road from Srebrenica.⁶⁰ My point is not to bemoan the proclivities of tourists, but to note that those sites they *do* visit reinforce this restriction of genocide into bounded, confined, localised areas.⁶¹ This is often enhanced by the organisation of the spaces themselves: Tuol Sleng, for example, is closed off from the surrounding buildings by high fences and barbed wire,⁶² while most of the Rwandan memorials in churches and other municipal buildings will inevitably invite their visitors to imagine them as inescapable places of entrapment, and the Sarajevo 'war tour' does something similar when it takes tourists into the hills from which snipers and tanks besieged the city, and to the only route of escape, the tunnel under the airport runway.

This spatial configuration is also replicated in representations *of* the museums and memorials.⁶³ Taking a survey view, representations of the Cambodian genocide often take Tuol Sleng as their subject; with Rwanda, there is a focus on the churches, hospitals, stadiums and other collective places of refuge which became sites of mass murder – which, as Madelaine Hron notes, in seeking to capture the shock and horror

⁵⁹ <http://genocidememorials.cga.harvard.edu/home.html>.

⁶⁰ See Timothy Dylan Wood, 'Touring Memories of the Khmer Rouge' in *Expressions of Cambodia: The Politics of Tradition, Identity and Change*, ed. Tim Winter (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006); Paul B. Miller, 'Contested Memories: the Bosnian Genocide in Serb and Muslim minds', *JGR* 8:3 (2006), 311-24. The interpretation of the 90s wars in Belgrade's Military Museum is also somewhat dubious – after a relatively detailed and well-translated room on Serbia's contribution to UN peacekeeping operations in the 70s, the final – smaller – room shows off a few guns captured from 'terrorists' and bits of NATO bombs. This section is badly translated but still manages to make Serbia's 'victimhood' clear.

⁶¹ It is also important to note how, for westerners, travel *to* the country concerned might also generate the sense that genocide occurs in faraway places: of course, tourists also have to travel to get to former Holocaust concentration and death camps, but Armenia, Cambodia, Rwanda and even the former Yugoslavia are much further from the usual western tourist trails, and – particularly in the case of Rwanda and Cambodia – are more likely to be experienced as 'different'.

⁶² This, of course, heightens the sense of Tuol Sleng being a prison-like, separate place. In fact, the operation of S-21 involved a number of other adjacent buildings – including what is now the chic Boddhi Tree restaurant and hotel across the road, where many tourists lunch after visiting Tuol Sleng (it was used for interrogation; see Dunlop, *Lost Executioner*, 310).

⁶³ Again, this is less relevant for Armenia.

of the killings, usually confine the mass murder to concentration-camp-like spaces, places of sanctuary and imprisonment and then ultimately of death.⁶⁴ Equally, most of the testimonies and other literature coming out of Bosnia describe either experiences of the camps or of Sarajevo and Srebrenica;⁶⁵ even those not about the camps per se emphasise a heavy sense of encirclement and entrapment – either by the Serb positions surrounding Sarajevo, or in the so-called ‘safe areas’. The similarities with the Holocaust, then, are quite clear: in each, the actual spheres of violence are reduced to spaces of entrapment, and genocide is firmly located and caged within these bounded – and distant – spaces.⁶⁶ This telescoping of genocide not only obscures how the violence in these spaces is linked with that *outside* the wire,⁶⁷ but also focuses attention on the spaces which, because of the stark victim-perpetrator dynamic, offer the clearest moral position.

In these symbolic and spatial ways, then – and as I have argued throughout – mainstream genocide representations tend to accord with those of the Holocaust in maintaining an unbreachable divide between genocide and western society, and discourage – or even foreclose – audiences from making broader connections or seeing genocide as a potentially ‘modern’ or even ‘human’ problem. This then manifests itself in the disengagement inherent in the common attitudes and platitudes. However, these same representations certainly attempt to bring genocide ‘closer’ to their audiences in other ways, tapping into many of the same methods and mechanisms used by Holocaust representations. Within the broad aims of ‘never again’ – ‘raising awareness’, offering moral lessons, and perhaps forwarding goals for recognition or

⁶⁴ Madelaine Hron, “‘But I Find No Place’: Representations of the Genocide in Rwanda’ in *The Camp: Narratives of Internment and Exclusion*, eds. Colman Hogan and Marta Marín Dòmine (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 196-224; 214. *Hotel Rwanda* is an exception in the sense that the hotel remained a place of refuge throughout.

⁶⁵ See also Joe Sacco’s graphic comic books, *Safe Area Goražde* (Seattle: Fantagraphics, 2000) and *The Fixer: A Story from Sarajevo* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003). Sarajevo is also the setting of *Perfect Circle*, but most feature films by former Yugoslav directors are set elsewhere, in indeterminate Bosnian countryside.

⁶⁶ There is, in fact, an interesting comparison to be made with scholarly writing here. Many also refer to the spaces of genocide in these restricted terms (e.g. Midlarsky, *The Killing Trap: Genocide in the Twentieth Century*; but perhaps Cambodia is the most interesting. At the same time that scholars like David Chandler describe DK as a ‘sealed environment’ (*S-21*, 14), or Alex Hinton as a ‘prison without walls’ (*Why Did They Kill?*, chapter 1), other scholars are picking up the least bounded of metaphors available, initially linked to Cambodia – ‘the killing fields’ – and applying it to other genocides, including the ‘wild east’ during World War II (Hannes Heer, ‘Killing Fields: The Wehrmacht and the Holocaust in Belorussia, 1941-1942’, *HGS* 11:1 (1997), 79-101; Bloxham, *The Final Solution*, 272, 281, 298, 322).

⁶⁷ This telescoping also makes it harder to recognize those forms of violence which take place outside concentrationary spaces – colonial genocides, genocides of indigenous peoples, or cases like Australia’s stolen children – as genocide.

reparation at the same time – these mainstream representations seek to have an emotional impact upon their audiences, through encouraging empathy with the victims, sometimes intending to shock or overwhelm them, and aiming to impress upon them the horror of ‘what it was really like’. However, in so doing, most ‘bring closer’ only a limited and politically circumscribed version of the events.

This is particularly the case with those representations which attempt to create an ‘authentic’ museal space, so that we may visit the past on a day trip from Krakow or Kigali, or historical realist films (or indeed literature), which plunge us into the past for a few hours in a cinema. On the one hand, this only underscores our temporal remove from the events: as Jo Labanyi has written in another context, ‘at the end of the viewing or reading process, we feel a sense of relief on returning to a present free from such barbarism. The realism thus produces a sense of rupture with the past.’⁶⁸ On the other, though, visiting camp barracks reconstructed to look ‘exactly as they were’, shooting films in black and white, and importing authentic artefacts, photographs and documents into museums lets us think we experience the past ‘as it really was’: in reality, though, they give us no more access to it than other representations. Indeed, because such ultra-realist representations self-assuredly present a complete and ‘verified’⁶⁹ vision of the past – one which is inevitably ‘sanitised’ to some degree – and because the ‘experience’ and ‘power of authenticity’ also invites visitors and audiences unquestioningly to experience it to the full, they channel away questions about their own construction. As Omer Bartov wrote, rather caustically, of the USHMM’s great efforts to secure authentic artefacts for their permanent exhibition:

Clearly, this is meant to bring the visitors close to the “reality” of the event and simultaneously to repudiate the challenge of the deniers of the Holocaust. And yet the result is rather to create a false sense of “reality” while trivialising the genocide. Walking through a clean, somewhat rickety freight car, staring at a pile of old shoes, inspecting the symmetrical wooden banks of a concentration camp ... does not bring us “closer” to the filth and stench, brutality and fear, death and cruelty that was the Holocaust; it makes us merely empathise with what is *not* the thing itself, but merely its nicely reordered reproduction.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Labanyi, ‘Memory and Modernity in Democratic Spain’, 103.

⁶⁹ I.e., films which inform viewers that they are ‘based on true events’, or reconstructed or preserved ‘authentic’ buildings and spaces.

⁷⁰ Omer Bartov, *Murder in Our Midst: The Holocaust, Industrial Killing, and Representation* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 182.

Visiting Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek, Srebrenica or Sarajevo, or Ntarama and Nyamata – even if only as part of a more general touristic ‘doing of place’⁷¹ – can likewise conjure a powerful sense of ‘authentic’ location. As Judy Ledgerwood writes of Tuol Sleng, ‘Visitors are invited to visualize what the place was like when it was a prison and torture center’.⁷² Despite the tourists and the exhibitions filling the rooms, little appears to have changed – the makeshift cells remain, the gallows remain, and in the first few rooms of “Block A”, large photographs on the wall show the rooms as they were when they were discovered by the Vietnamese – with bloody bodies strapped to the iron beds in front of which one is now standing. Other objects contribute towards (re)creating the ‘atmosphere’ of Tuol Sleng – the scattered restraints and torture instruments, a board with translations of the rules and punishments for prisoner behaviour, and Vann Nath’s paintings of prisoner beatings and torture. At Choeung Ek, the pits of excavated mass graves are clearly visible – rain often uncovers bits of bone or clothing – and the luridly-phrased signs next to the graves and trees where babies’ heads were smashed impart a gruesome immediacy to it all. At both, there is a slight sense of abandonment and stopped time.⁷³ Rwandan memorials in former churches and municipal buildings can give this same sense of suspended time (especially those which are no longer in use). Although every memorial has seen significant human intervention, from sorting and arranging the bones of the dead, to repairing structural damage and building memorials or special ossuaries – nowhere any longer have these sites been left entirely untouched, with the dead ‘as they fell’, as they originally were at Nyarubuye and Ntarama, and there are still many changes afoot – the marks of violence and the bones of the dead remain, and so these changes do not really affect the intangible but powerful sense of being in a place where ‘something happened’. This sense of immediacy and visiting the past is less frequent in Bosnia, though, I would suggest: there is still plenty of war damage

⁷¹ The phrase is Macdonald’s, *Difficult Heritage*, 168. I include this because I think it important to remember that most ‘dark tourism’ occurs as part of longer trips, sometimes with disjunctive itineraries – hence, ‘genocide and gorillas’ in Rwanda, or the offer many tuk-tuk drivers in Phnom Penh will make of a day trip involving visiting Tuol Sleng and Choeung Ek before going to Phnom Penh’s shooting range, where it costs \$100 to bazooka a cow. In contrast, though, see Rachel Hughes, ‘Dutiful Tourism’, for an excellent analysis of how the ‘shuttling from a tourist subjectivity to that of a humanitarian actor is common among travellers in Cambodia’ (326); also Victor Alneng’s excellent “‘What the Fuck is a Vietnam?’: Touristic Phantasms and the Popcolonization of (the) Vietnam (War)”, *Critique of Anthropology* 22:4 (2002), 461-89. Stephanie McKinney has outlined how the Kigali City tour combines the genocide museum with colonial heritage sites and new business opportunities in ‘Narrating Genocide on the Streets of Kigali’ in *The Heritage of War*, eds. Martin Gegner and Bart Ziino (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 160-76.

⁷² Ledgerwood, ‘Tuol Sleng’, 85.

⁷³ Choeung Ek has now been bought by a Japanese not-for-profit company to be redeveloped as a memorial site, which may well alter this sense of ‘abandonment’.

visible in Mostar and Sarajevo, but the reconstruction of the tourist centres gives more of an impression of *former* war-torn cities. However, the ruined and abandoned houses en route to Srebrenica, and the eerie desolation of the former U.N. compound and battery factory, certainly give this sense of arrested time. Again, seeing the scars of war and, especially, the preserved sites of genocide may give visitors the frisson of having witnessed the place ‘where it happened’, but the atmosphere of authenticity does not encourage them to reflect on how what they are seeing influences their understanding of the events, or on what they may not be seeing.⁷⁴

Many representations of the Holocaust and other genocides also shock and overwhelm their audiences, and indeed some seem quite boldly calculated to do so. At Tuol Sleng, alongside the images of the bloodied corpses and torture instruments and Vann Nath’s uncomfortably detailed paintings of ‘confessions’, there was for many years also a map of Cambodia made from human skulls in Tuol Sleng, the rivers and Tonle Sap lake painted blood red – which, as Ledgerwood describes, was shocking and disturbing, ‘the emotional climax of the tour’.⁷⁵ One can equally surmise that westerners who visit Choeung Ek’s stupa, which houses some 8,000 skulls – or happen across any of the other smaller memorial stupa across the country – will also be unsettled and disturbed, even if prepared by their guide books for what they will see.⁷⁶ Much the same could be said for most Rwandan memorials, the most-visited of which also display human remains (visitors will likewise be prepared by guide books and the internet). The memorial at Murambi, with its rooms of twisted, papery-white cadavers, is probably the most stark example, but the rows upon rows of bones and skulls at most memorials – as well as the clubs, machete blades, and instruments of torture which guides will show visitors – are just as likely to shock.⁷⁷ These types of presentation can provoke

⁷⁴ Cf. Ruth Kluger, *Landscapes of Memory: A Holocaust Girlhood Remembered* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 67-75.

⁷⁵ Ledgerwood, ‘Tuol Sleng’, 85.

⁷⁶ Although visitors will most likely know that they will see human remains, the whole (or the detail) can still be disturbing. Smaller stupa sometimes also have makeshift exhibitions, which usually include graphic images: by the stupa in Siem Reap are a few glass-covered display boards, with old black-and-white images, some familiar from Tuol Sleng, others clearly of more local provenance. 14km from Battambang, at Phnom Sampeau, is a cave into which the Khmer Rouge ‘smashed’ their victims: outside is a six-foot handpainted picture, showing the Khmer Rouge at the top of the cave clubbing victims (with rather gruesome bloodspatters) into the darkness at the bottom – where a collection of skulls and bones are foregrounded: the picture is inscribed ‘for foreigner’. Equally, the much larger memorial 6km from Battambang at Wat Samrong Knong, funded by survivors living in the US, has a succession of pictures and short descriptive texts – in English – carved into the stone base of the stupa, illustrating the crimes of the Khmer Rouge with general and some local specificity.

⁷⁷ Sometimes (and personally speaking), the guides’ explanations of exactly how these objects were used can be more affecting than just looking, and perhaps trying to imagine. That said, there is a point to

quite visceral responses, and, as Sara Guyer suggests, visitors may be left ‘numb and overwhelmed’, and be ‘arrested, rather than informed’ by them.⁷⁸ Reinforcing my earlier point about Cambodia and Rwanda’s perceived ‘difference’, these reactions of shock and horror also dovetail nicely with their governments’ need to justify and quell opposition to their own repressive policies – what Meierhenrich calls the Rwandan government’s “strategy of suffering” vis-à-vis the international community’.⁷⁹ Tuol Sleng was crafted to fit the requirements of the PRK and the Vietnamese ‘liberators’, and opened as a museum of Pol Pot’s crimes to foreign journalists before the rest of the Khmer population: ‘The central message of the government was’, writes Ledgerwood, ‘...you must support us because to fail to do so will result in the return to power of the Khmer Rouge’.⁸⁰ As Guyer suggests, these memorials ‘justify a repressive government by presenting a spectre of past violence as a permanent future possibility, but they also serve as an instrument of repression. Whatever contestation about their legitimacy they generate, the skulls leave visitors speechless.’⁸¹

And as I explored in chapter 4, there are plenty of other upsetting documentary images of the dead and near-dead on display in photography books, literature, films and museums which, singly or cumulatively, can be expected to provoke this sort of reaction. Gilles Peress also uses shock to create a moral position in his images of the uncovered and ‘cleaned’ mass graves in Bosnia and Croatia – a twisted, contorted, interlocked jumble of clearly visible bodies.⁸² Equally, scenes in feature films which show atrocities in graphic, perhaps traumatic, detail are very clearly designed to disgust and shock the viewer, as are the verbal descriptions of atrocities in testimonies and other literature. Others overwhelm the imagination by presenting the victims *en masse* – as names on a wall, or walls full of photographs; at Tuol Sleng, for example, the individuality of each nervous smile, stare, or look of wide-eyed fear asserts itself,

be made about the aesthetics and arrangement of the bones, and possible reactions to them. Rows of neatly ordered skulls and femurs/tibias (smaller spine/hand/foot bones are rare) do, certainly, allow one to count the dead and see the skulls cracked by machetes; they also quietly impose order on death, making it more manageable. There is something much more visceral about the contorted, stiff bodies at Murambi – and something much more upsetting about the big open sacks of totally jumbled, separated, unsorted bones I saw at IBUKA headquarters in Kigali, which had been exhumed from mass graves and were waiting to be cleaned and reburied.

⁷⁸ Guyer, ‘Rwanda’s Bones’, 155-75: 162, 169.

⁷⁹ Meierhenrich, ‘Topographies of Forgetting and Remembering’, 292.

⁸⁰ Ledgerwood, ‘Tuol Sleng’, 91; see more generally 87-91, and Chandler, *S-21*, 4-6.

⁸¹ Guyer, ‘Rwanda’s Bones’, 162. See also Meierhenrich, ‘Topographies of Forgetting and Remembering’, 292; Meierhenrich, *Lawfare: The Formation and Deformation of Gacaca Jurisdictions in Rwanda, 1994-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2013).

⁸² Stover and Peress, *The Graves*, n.p.

again and again, until they begin to blur and the repetitive magnitude of death threatens the imagination. Identification here can undercut itself, proving its limitations.⁸³

Whatever the ethical debate, representations have long sought to foster empathy for and identification with the victims. One of the methods which has particularly gained favour over the last two decades in Holocaust museums and memorials has been the development of what can be termed an 'affective architecture'. The German 'countermonuments' of the 1970s, with their self-conscious, reflexive and conceptual approaches to confronting the past, are quite arguably the forerunners to this trend – but it is the angular walls, the constricted and twisted spaces, and the often abstract aesthetic of the museums and memorials most famously designed by Libeskind, Eisenman, Safdie, and Freed (amongst others) which really characterise this style.⁸⁴ Affective architecture has aimed most of all to disorientate and unsettle the visitor, and thus subtly to structure their emotions and approach towards the museum exhibition and remembrance; to borrow Kansteiner's phrase, perhaps, then, to convey a 'faint echo of the sense of displacement that the victims of Nazi policies experienced as they were cut off from society and rushed through Europe toward their death.'⁸⁵ This trend marks one of the obvious differences between Holocaust and genocide museums, though – partly because of funding, one can assume, but also because so many Holocaust museums are purpose-built in cities, away from the killing sites. Certainly, the dim lighting and somewhat disorienting layout of the exhibition at Tsitsernakaberd echoes the Holocaust museums – although there is nothing of the sharp, twisted architecture; and lighting is used to much the same effect in the national genocide museums in Rwanda, designed with the influence of the UK charity Aegis Trust. Likewise, being underneath either of the huge black square structures which form the exhibition spaces in the battery factory at Potočari might bring a feeling of enclosure and a great weight over one's head. But these are the only real examples of affective architecture being used; the remainder rely on other strategies – and the predisposition of visitors – to elicit identification.

⁸³ Most likely the individuality of each expression assails the viewer more than simply listed names, but in the end I think one feels the same guilt as one speeds up, recognising the futility of trying to examine each. This is part of the power of such presentations, of course.

⁸⁴ In part this has to be linked to the more general shift towards making museums 'experiential' learning spaces (rather than the traditional cold and purely instructive halls of elite culture) – see the essays in Macdonald, ed., *Companion to Museum Studies*. The influence of deconstructivism on this architectural style is not inconsiderable, and the postwar socio-cultural history of artistic commemoration particularly important – see, eg., Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny* and Young, *At Memory's Edge*.

⁸⁵ Kansteiner, 'Success, Truth, and Modernism', 40. Cf. the quote from Landsberg, page 195 above.

Many representations – museums or otherwise – attempt this by individualising the victims, through the displays of belongings, names, or individual and family photographs in museums from Yad Vashem and the USHMM to Tuol Sleng and Kigali; the interweaving of survivors’ stories into museum texts and literature; and films about the victims and their fates. The underlying motivations may be multiple and varied, but most have, at base, the aim of rescuing individuals from the anonymity of mass death.⁸⁶ The presentations are poignant, and invite identification with the victims, often based on very universal, human connections and the themes of loss, suffering, and death. Perhaps the most effective trope in this regard is the narration of genocide as a familial experience, or an emphasis on familial loss: this is almost always present in Holocaust and genocide testimonies, and many documentary films where survivors are interviewed – from the endlessly multipliable descriptions in Holocaust testimonies of the separation of families on the ramp at Auschwitz, to Loung Ung’s obsession with her father’s death in *First They Killed My Father* (2007),⁸⁷ to the very emotive interviews with some of the surviving women of Srebrenica in the film at the memorial museum there. While the use of family photographs in the USHMM’s Tower of Faces is now well-known, the family photograph is also a motif in Egoyan’s *Ararat*, Balakian’s *Black Dog of Fate*, Ron Haviv’s famous image of a family photograph with each face scratched out,⁸⁸ the photos held up by the women of Srebrenica during their campaigns,⁸⁹ and Rurangwa’s *Genocide*.⁹⁰ As Marianne Hirsch argues (speaking of the USHMM), despite national, cultural, linguistic and temporal differences, ‘the conventional and familial nature of

⁸⁶ I say ‘most’ because, as I noted above, the exhibition at Tuol Sleng was originally intended as an ‘atrocity exhibition’ par excellence for the benefit of foreign journalists and delegations. The ‘point’ of the images at this time was thus presumably more about displaying the magnitude of the Khmer Rouge crimes than victim-identified witnessing according to our contemporary human rights culture. Of course, these representations will have different forces and meanings (and differing over time) for Armenians, Cambodians, Rwandans and former Yugoslavs than for unconnected westerners: films, literature and photography will, of course, be read within the context of personal and national narratives, but in a much more direct sense, the copies of family photographs donated to the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, the lists of victims’ names on some Rwandan memorials, in the Potočari cemetery, and the memorial to the children killed during the war in Sarajevo, and the photographs of victims at Tuol Sleng will have a very different meaning for surviving family members (with the dual function, for many, as evidence against denial).

⁸⁷ In fact, family is a strongly recurring theme across all Cambodian testimonies, not just Ung’s (I mention hers because of the extent to which the loss of her father seems to define her experience). This is presumably in part because of the Khmer Rouge’s attempt to upturn and demolish traditional family structures.

⁸⁸ Haviv, *Blood and Honey*.

⁸⁹ Wagner, *To Know Where He Lies*, 71-4 and, for an interesting discussion of this motif in the Balkan film context, Dina Iordanova, ‘Intercultural Cinema and Balkan Hushed Histories’, *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 6:1 (2008), 5-18.

⁹⁰ The photograph is not printed, but is a point of high emotion for Rurangwa, described in some depth and returned to throughout *Genocide*.

the images themselves manages to transcend these distances, figured spatially by the bridge that separates us from the pictures, and to foster an affiliative look that binds the photographs from one another and us to them.⁹¹

Film has its own techniques: the use of close-ups can humanise victims, while point-of-view shots encourage us to experience the events from the victim's perspective. At these points, films use their mimetic strategies to encourage their viewers to feel the same emotions as characters in the film, usually ones we have already clearly been invited to identify with.⁹² To take a famous scene, for example, when the door slams on the naked women in the showers in *Schindler's List*, we are afforded a brief glimpse through the peephole – the perpetrators' vantage point – but the camera quickly swoops to shoulder-level in the midst of the women, its restlessness mirroring their huddled fear, and we too experience darkness as the lights cut out, and are also flooded with relief when the showers release jets of water. The close-ups on their relieved, even joyful faces encourage us to feel the same; such shots are also used to great effect at key emotional moments in, for example, *100 Days*, *Skylark Farm*, and *The Killing Fields*.

Equally, there is a key moment in most mainstream feature films when the lead character first discovers the extent of the killing or the 'true horror' of genocide (which Eaglestone has called 'moments of epiphany' in Holocaust testimonies).⁹³ In both *The Killing Fields* and *Hotel Rwanda*, there comes a sickening moment when Dith Pran and Paul Rusesabagina realise they are amongst the dead, and moreover are in complete transgression of all of the deeply embedded norms of showing deference to and maintaining distance from the dead. While making his escape towards Thailand, in the early mists, Pran's foot slips on top of a muddy paddy dyke and he falls into a slimy pool. Once he rights himself, we see him freeze – and he, and we (close-ups and point-of-view shots are interspersed) suddenly realise that the pool is full of rotting skeletons and fetid water, and we/he slowly look up to see that the path over the entire dyke is covered in skeletons. Pran's character is throughout the film quite taciturn, but here the widening of his eyes, and his shudder, are quite enough to intensify the horror we already feel. The scene in *Hotel Rwanda* is similar enough to be a reference: in the

⁹¹ Hirsch, *Family Frames*, 254.

⁹² See Landsberg, 'Memory, Empathy and the Politics of Identification', 224 for an elaboration on these mimetic strategies.

⁹³ Eaglestone, "'You Would Not Add'", 82.

misty early morning, Paul is being driven to the hotel when the road becomes very bumpy. They stop, and we watch him realise that there are bodies all over the road (though the mists prevent us from seeing them with much clarity); his quick order to turn the van around and the close-up of his ashen face asks us to feel the same sickened horror. In *Shooting Dogs*, we see Joe watching through the fence as some Tutsi try to escape from the compound: point-of-view shots put us in his shoes as he nervously watches their escape, praying that the Hutu will not notice, before they do: we are not spared the scenes of massacre, watching them through his eyes, and the camera then returns to his face to ask us to share his devastation.⁹⁴ The same dynamic is at work in *Welcome to Sarajevo*, when the assembled journalists watch the footage taken at Omarska in absolute silence – in fact all sound is cut from the film and the original footage is used, thus asking us to witness it for ourselves – before the sound returns and the close-ups of the journalists' horrified faces encourages us to feel the same. Finally, during the premiere of the film-within-the-film in *Ararat*, some of the more traumatic scenes are shown to us directly – and then we see the faces of the director and cast in the auditorium, some of whom are crying. Most of these scenes are enough in themselves to make us feel shocked or horrified, but the use of these mimetic strategies directs our reactions even more strongly. Each medium, then, can be very effective in eliciting emotional identification with the victims, and representations of genocide have followed those of the Holocaust in recent years in individualising the victims of genocide.

This is made all the easier by the tendency to portray or cast the victims in very idealised terms – as transparently innocent, without moral complication, and in ways which emphasise that they are very 'like us'. Mainstream representations of the Holocaust tend to give us easy characters to identify with: mostly unproblematic, good people, with equally ordinary lives – whether the Weiss family in *Holocaust*, the largely westernised Jews in *Schindler's List*, Guido in *Life is Beautiful* (1997), Szpilman in *The Pianist* (2002) – interesting because of the 'eastern' European setting, or Anne Frank (the epitome); the victims' Jewishness and/or Jewish culture are not necessarily avoided, but certainly does not mark them out as radically 'different'. As Donald Bloxham writes, the majority of Holocaust victims

⁹⁴ Joe's character is used more than once like this; in another scene at a roadblock, Joe is entreated to look away as a victim is led off to be butchered – but we/he watch it nevertheless, and then cut back to Joe's terror-stricken face.

were not transported across half the continent; they were not Anne Frank, nor Meryl Streep's character in the film *Sophie's Choice*, nor the Weiss family from the television miniseries *Holocaust*; nor were they the (Americanised) Hungarians presented to us recently in Spielberg's documentary *The Last Days*. They were primarily Yiddish speakers from in and around the Pale of Settlement, murdered in the land of their birth.⁹⁵

Such portrayals thus offer little real understanding of victimhood or 'the victims' themselves – especially since, in creating universalised and dehistoricised victims, they often eradicate precisely those supposed 'differences' which the perpetrators created or emphasised. In the Rwandan context, Rusesabagina and his wife Tatiana in *Hotel Rwanda* are a very westernised and middle-class family – as are the central family characters in *Sometimes in April*, *100 Days*, and *Shooting Dogs*.⁹⁶ Although one does meet more 'ordinary' Rwandans in some of the mainstream literature, photography, and museums, more often than not they are approached, as in Hatzfeld's books, through filters which permit only snapshots of their stories and their answers to the (mostly unspecific and banal) questions of how they cope in the aftermath – rather than with an attempt to preserve the fullness of their situation, as, for example, Anne Aghion's films do. Armenians are almost always shown as aspiring, cultured people (especially when seen in contradistinction with their persecutors) – as in *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, *Skylark Farm* and *Ararat*'s film-within-the-film, in most testimonies and literature, and in the display cases in the Yerevan museum which celebrate the community achievements of each pre-war Armenian province. Similarly, since the vast majority of Cambodian testimonies are written by educated former city-dwellers – affluent and even westernised, with large houses, cars, and luxuries – readers can gain quite a consistent picture of people with not dissimilar lifestyles and aspirations, hurled into a system which explicitly targeted precisely these attributes for annihilation.⁹⁷ Likewise, some of the literature from the former Yugoslavia explicitly emphasises its westernness – the American films and music, the smattering of English, the fashions – and, of course, Sarajevo's multiculturalism.⁹⁸ More pointedly, *Zlata's*

⁹⁵ Bloxham, 'Perpetrators and Perpetration' in Donald Bloxham and Tony Kushner, *The Holocaust: Critical Historical Approaches* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 71.

⁹⁶ Leshu Torchin, reviewing *Hotel Rwanda*, wrote that the westernised images of Paul and Tatiana 'displace the standard icons of African crisis – swathed refugees on dusty roads, landscapes of famine – and encourage us to imagine the genocide as something that takes place here and now. While these scenes problematically conjure a sentiment of shared humanity through icons of a western middle class, they also stage an encounter that brings us closer to what we see on screen.' Torchin, 'Hotel Rwanda', 46-7:7. Torchin has a point, but the question still pertains – bring us closer to *what*?

⁹⁷ Indeed, in this case, these victims are even more 'like us' because they have connections with the U.S. – either family or business – or they know how to play the system of visas, travel, and so on.

⁹⁸ E.g. Drakulić, *Balkan Express*; Softić, *Sarajevo Days*, *Sarajevo Nights*.

Diary (1993) is very consciously the story of a perfectly ‘normal’ young girl, full of the things found in any other (western) European childhood⁹⁹ – although perhaps the most cynical bit of engineering is Winterbottom’s changing of the name and ethnicity of the young girl rescued by Henderson in *Welcome to Sarajevo*, from the real-life Nataša, a Serb girl, to ‘Emira’, a Muslim name. In the context of testimonies, it is also worth noting that the vast majority of those more widely available in the western public sphere are written by survivors now resident in the west – whether North America or Europe – and not infrequently involve the collaboration of native speakers as ghost writers or editors. The familiarity of their ‘immigrant experience’ (for many in North America, at least), relatively fluent style and westernised outlook undoubtedly eases identification.

The creation of ideal(ised) victims is facilitated in particular by the avoidance or elision of any moral complications in the identity of the victims (see chapter 1). For example, one of the most widely published and disseminated Tuol Sleng photographs (which also appears in fourteen different places on the museum’s display boards of the victims’ mugshots) is of a mother with a small child in her arms, neat and serious. The image epitomises western cultural constructions of innocence, but the woman was in fact Chan Kim Srun, the wife of a high-ranking Khmer Rouge officer – a moral ambiguity lost on most westerners, who will equally be unaware that most of the others photographed were also Khmer Rouge cadre (victims themselves of the purges and fears of fifth-columnists and counterrevolutionaries, which were especially intense from 1976 and especially so near the Vietnamese border).¹⁰⁰ Likewise, across all of the mainstream representations of the Rwandan genocide – Hatzfeld’s books, the feature films and documentaries, and certainly the memorials and museums – there is no mention of any Hutu victims of the genocide.¹⁰¹ This accords with the highly politicised – indeed, state-directed – interpretation of the genocide in Rwanda, and the entirely depoliticised explanation for it in the west, but of course has the effect of not complicating easy moral categories for western viewers. Paradoxically, one might

⁹⁹ See Hayden, ‘Mass Killings and Images of Genocide’, especially 500-1.

¹⁰⁰ Chandler, *S-21*, chapter 3.

¹⁰¹ See Lars Waldorf, ‘Instrumentalizing Genocide: The RPF’s Campaign Against “Genocide Ideology”’ in *Remaking Rwanda*, eds. Straus and Waldorf, 48-66; 49 and passim. Narrative framings such as Peress’ in *The Silence*, which is divided into three – the first, ‘The Sin’, shows death and destruction in the aftermath of genocide in Rwanda, and the next two, ‘Purgatory’ and ‘The Judgement’, show the horrific living conditions of the Hutu refugees in Goma – reinforce (and moralise) this division. One book which counters this trend is Marie Béatrice Umutesi’s *Surviving the Slaughter: The Ordeal of a Rwandan Refugee in Zaire*, trans Julia Emerson (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004).

argue, this moral whitewashing means that when western audiences are confronted with a messy and complex conflict without a clear right and wrong – as is usually the case in conflict – the ‘moral training’ they have been offered thus far is of no use.

Mainstream representations of the Holocaust and other genocides have become quite adept, then, at encouraging emotional response and sympathy with the victims. Importantly, foregrounding the victims ‘humanises’ these histories – and rehumanises the victims, in a symbolic undoing of the genocidal logic – and can provide a more accessible starting point for audiences unfamiliar with or less interested in the events or political background. However, this emotion and identification is most often invited precisely *without* being accompanied by the sort of empirically informed and critically engaged material which might provoke deeper reflection on genocide as a process and event. In this way, mainstream representations encourage their audiences to take refuge in the traditional platitudes, and lend themselves to redemptive and cathartic interpretations. Goldberg puts this forcefully with respect to the victims of the Holocaust:

perhaps the imperative ... to identify with the Jewish victims, plays a role in turning the Holocaust into a reassuring narrative that disguises modernity’s and the West’s dark side. Instead of historicizing and contextualizing the traumatic events and confronting those catastrophic elements in modern history and in modernity as such, which were the contexts within which the Holocaust occurred, this reassuring narrative reverts to the easy path of a melancholic, quasi-sublime catharsis, achieved by identifying with the horrible fate of the victims of the past.¹⁰²

The double-edged sword of inviting identification through an emphasis upon the *human* – although identification does, of course, rest upon a recognition of a (common) humanity – through individualising the victims, or using the trope of the family, is that it threatens to dissolve the experience of genocide into universal moments of pain and loss common to human experience. Some of Gilles Peress’ photographs of Bosnia and Rwanda are a case in point: he favours close images of hands and of feet, those very human (and anonymous)¹⁰³ attributes, as well as those images of weeping mothers and families which have echoed across countless war zones. In this process, the important questions of how and why these individuals and families became victims can be lost, with the likelihood being that audiences will feel

¹⁰² Goldberg, ‘The “Jewish Narrative”’, 205.

¹⁰³ As ever, a qualification – given the discourses in Rwanda about Tutsis’ physical differences, or the obvious difference in Cambodia between, say, a rice farmer’s feet and a city person’s feet, this works best for westerners, who tend to be unaware of these myths and differences.

sympathy for the victims because they, too, have lost (or fear losing) loved ones, rather than because they recognise them as victims of specific political ideologies and myths that mobilised certain population groups in certain places and times. As Kagoyire puts it in the epigraph to this chapter, ‘I think that foreigners tend to show all too comparable pity towards people who have suffered misfortunes not at all comparable, as if the pity were more important than the misfortune.’ Moreover, humanising these victims – making them more like us – takes audiences even further from understanding the perpetrators’ perspective. In this way, the logic which argues that creating sympathy with the victims of genocide, and forging a sense of a common, shared humanity (as a form of civic education) makes audiences more likely to ‘stand up and speak out’ against genocide – let alone be complicit in the committing of it – is thus a little stretched.¹⁰⁴

The generating of distance through the representation of space (and the process and perpetrators of genocide), and of proximity, through appealing to the emotions and empathy, thus encourages the usual attitudes and platitudes – which are themselves characterised by a certain fleeting and superficial, if well-intentioned, engagement. But our responses are steered perhaps more firmly by the endorsements on the front covers of testimonies, by film reviews, and by descriptions in travel guides when they themselves use the familiar attitudes and platitudes. Told that a book, film or memorial is ‘moving’ or ‘powerful’ or ‘ought to be seen’, audiences are primed as to what to expect, and how they are expected to feel – and offered an (already familiar) framework for interpretation. Endorsements of testimonies and other literature are classic in this respect: ‘extraordinarily powerful, moving and humbling’, ‘vividly told ... will deservedly attract superlatives, tears, and also anger’, ‘makes an unimaginable horror come to life’.¹⁰⁵ Visiting Tuol Sleng, the *Rough Guide* notes, ‘is an inevitably haunting and heart-rending experience’;¹⁰⁶ the *Lonely Planet*’s in-depth section on the Kigali Memorial Centre is the clearest example of a writer trying to direct potential visitors’ reactions with superlatives (I will quote at length to give some sense of this):

¹⁰⁴ Especially when it comes to one’s own group committing genocide – since ‘national enemies’ are never represented as victims in these terms, but rather as terrorists. ‘Stand up and speak out’ is the hookline of Holocaust Memorial Day 2012.

¹⁰⁵ Adam Lebor on the front of Rurangwa’s *Genocide; Time Out* on the back of Pin Yathay’s *Stay Alive, My Son* (London: Arrow Books, 1989); Washington Post Book World on the back of Ngor’s *Survival in the Killing Fields*. I chose these almost randomly from a wide selection.

¹⁰⁶ Beverley Palmer and Steven Martin, *The Rough Guide to Cambodia* (London: Rough Guides, 2008), 99.

... As the visit progresses, it becomes steadily more powerful, as you are confronted with the crimes that took place here. The sections on the cold and calculated planning of the genocide and its bloody execution are particularly disturbing, and include moving testimony from survivors. ... Finally, you are confronted with a room full of photographs of Rwandan victims of the genocide. The effect is very similar to Tuol Sleng, the Khmer Rouge prison in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. You feel yourself suffocating under the weight of sadness and despair, the wasted lives and loves of the nameless people surrounding you. ... There is also a section on Rwandan children who fell victim to the killers' machetes. Young and innocent, if you have remained impassionate until this point, the horror of it all catches up with you here. ... Why did Rwanda descend into 100 days of madness? The Kigali Memorial Centre explains it as best it can, but no one can answer the fundamental question of what it takes to turn man into beast.¹⁰⁷

Certainly, the framing of emotion in this particular piece – ‘if you have remained impassionate until this point’ – also makes it quite clear that visitors are *expected*, indeed *ought to* feel sadness, despair, and to be disturbed (the other guide books are far less explicit about this, but the expectation is nonetheless present).¹⁰⁸

Many also often deploy the familiar idea that reading these books, watching these films, or visiting these memorials is ‘important’ – presumably meaning ‘morally improving’, although again, exactly how is not explained – with books being described as ‘MUST reading’, and memorials being introduced as ‘grim but essential’ in guide books.¹⁰⁹ Many also run with the idea that these representations have the potential to prevent genocide in the future: ‘The terrors of this genocide must be known in order to prevent a repetition of the international community’s failure to intervene. This book should be on every school’s reading list’, writes *Ecologist* of Hatzfeld’s *Into the Quick of Life*, for example.¹¹⁰ In a sense, these endorsements posit the films, testimonies and

¹⁰⁷ Mary Fitzpatrick, Tim Bewer, and Matthew Firestone, *East Africa* (London: Lonely Planet, 2009), 553.

¹⁰⁸ Andrew McGregor’s excellent article ‘Dynamic texts and tourist gaze: death, bones and buffalo’, *Annals of Tourism Research* 27:1 (2000), 27-50, discusses just how deeply guide books ‘tutor’ tourists in how to see and experience place and culture. The Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre audio tour comes replete with its own cloying set of platitudes, which one suspects were the work of the Aegis Trust rather than Rwandans. The most unbelievably saccharine is reserved for a section of the symbolically-designed gardens outside the museum: a stream (‘representing the passage of time’) flows from the ‘garden of unity’, splits in the ‘garden of division’, and rejoins in a pool in the ‘garden of reconciliation’, where ‘the fountain at the centre is built upon rocks, symbolising the process of rebuilding a once divided nation. Each rock represents a piece of Rwanda, brought together as one nation, as with one flow of water. Surrounding the fountain are five circular plant holders symbolising other neighbouring nations. An elephant with a mobile phone is communicating internationally to pass on the lessons to the entire world.’

¹⁰⁹ ‘MUST reading’ is an endorsement of Himm’s *The Tears of My Soul*; ‘grim ... but essential’ is from the Lonely Planet’s *Cambodia* (London: Lonely Planet, 2012).

¹¹⁰ *Ecologist* on Hatzfeld’s *Into the Quick of Life*, from the endorsement pages at the beginning of *A Time for Machetes* (note that the *Ecologist*’s comment is on the book dedicated to survivors; the

memorials as moral manuals – and are themselves also manuals which guide and structure public responses to genocide.

Attitudes and Platitudes

I always thought I would have something interesting and important to tell after the war. But people don't want to hear it, or only in a certain pose or attitude – not as a conversational partner but rather as those who must submit to an unpleasant task with a kind of reverence that easily turns into disgust, two feelings that complement each other. For objects of reverence as with objects of disgust, we keep at arm's length.¹¹¹

The representations I have discussed, therefore, can be instrumental in producing these kinds of attitudes and platitudes, but this production also occurs in a culture which, in the main, values and validates such 'responses'. The ritual display of emotion, and use of palliative phrases, are thus taken as a sign of our 'commendable native moral sentiment, perhaps even of our "fundamental humanity"'¹¹² – precisely because, as I have argued throughout this thesis, these representations challenge none of the common assumptions about 'humanity' or, indeed, western 'civilisation' – remaining hollow and intellectually empty responses. These attitudes and platitudes thus consolidate, and are emblematic of, the distancing mechanisms always at play in encounters with genocide representations.

What one generally sees in visitors' comment books and other public forums is the re-use of Holocaust mantras and the adoption of the same 'certain pose or attitude' in response to representations of other genocides. As has been a core argument in this thesis, this need not be (and rarely is) because of any explicit reference to the Holocaust in these representations: as Rachel Hughes found in her research at Tuol Sleng, tourists 'generally invoked European Holocaust sites in terms of the emotions they had personally felt during their visits, rather than through a discussion of any deliberate curatorial link.'¹¹³ Still, 'never again' (and variations thereof) is the most frequently comment, alongside 'never forget' and 'the international community should have done more': and not only by western or international visitors, since they have

endorsements for *A Time for Machetes* are less cloying. Both of these books feature endorsements from respected commentators on the Holocaust – Susan Sontag and Saul Friedländer respectively – confirming my earlier point about the framing of these books through the Holocaust). A London visitor to Sarajevo's History Museum likewise wrote: 'A very powerful and moving exhibition. It should be seen by every visitor to Sarajevo!' (12th June 2011).

¹¹¹ Klüger, *Weiter Leben*, cited in Kellner, "'Never Again' is Now", 130.

¹¹² Butler, *Frames of War*, 50.

¹¹³ Hughes, 'Dutiful Tourism', 325.

also passed into use in post-genocidal societies.¹¹⁴ The comments in visitor books are, in fact, remarkably consistent across different museums and continents: almost without fail, visitors will write one or a combination of familiar phrases, from ‘never again’ and ‘never forget’ to expressing sadness, that it was a ‘powerful’ or ‘moving’ or ‘thought-provoking’ experience, the importance of learning from the past, their hope for the country’s future (especially with more recent genocides where rebuilding is still evident) and their thanks for the memorial or exhibition.¹¹⁵ There are, obviously, slight variations: for example, visitors to Choeung Ek and the Rwandan memorials which display human remains are more likely to write about shock, numbness, and the difficulty of expressing themselves – with the exception of the book at Bisesero, where many visitors also write of the importance of courage and resistance.¹¹⁶ Equally, what one notices about the visitor comments in the Sarajevo History Museum is the proportion written directly about the city and people of Sarajevo, rather than the exhibition, and in terms which are clearly a hangover of the wartime romanticisation of Sarajevo: many write of the ‘strength’ or ‘courage’ of Sarajevans, of the beautiful city, and wish Bosnia and Sarajevo future prosperity.¹¹⁷ Across different memorial contexts, one also occasionally sees nationally-specific comments written by western visitors – from Germans who write that it reminds them of ‘our history’, from French who simply write ‘*pardon*’ in Rwanda, to the sergeant who wrote, ‘revenu avec une boule

¹¹⁴ E.g. ‘ntibizongere ukundi’ (and variants) in Kinyarwanda, ‘Da se ne zaboravi, da se ne ponovi’ in Bosnian.

¹¹⁵ On the point of consistency, it is important to note how visitor comments on the same page often repeat one another (since visitors often read other comments before writing their own – partly to understand what is expected of them). For example, if the first comment on a clean page uses the word ‘peace’, it may well appear in many of the comments on that page, to be replaced by a trail of ‘sad’ on the next, and so on. At Nyamata, a string of unconnected visitors on 10 and 11 June 2012 wrote, respectively: ‘very sad, but much hope for the future’, ‘very sad place, never forget’, ‘numbing’, ‘something you can’t forget, very sad’, ‘sad but true’, ‘it was a very hard and shocking time’, ‘never again’ (all in English despite some being from Germany, some Rwanda, some the USA). A few days later, the first of one group visiting wrote ‘words can’t describe’; the next ‘there’s no possible way to explain’; they were followed by later by ‘there are no words’ and, again, ‘there is no possible explanation’. This copying reinforces my point that this is a social phenomenon, one which entails watching and being watched in the pursuit of propriety.

¹¹⁶ Based on the visitor comments in Kibeho, Murambi, Ntarama, Nyamata, and Bisesero. There was no comment book at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre at the time of visiting (nor an official one at Murambi, which had very recently opened) – the comments were written on small squares of paper, tacked to a noticeboard), which is unfortunate from the point of view of comparing visitor responses to different memorials/museums in Rwanda. There was also no comment book at Choeung Ek, but a survey of tourists undertaken by Louis Bickford of the ICTJ indicates that visitors react in similar ways there. Bickford, ‘Transforming a Legacy of Genocide: Pedagogy and Tourism at the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek’, online at <http://ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Cambodia-Legacy-Genocide-2009-English.pdf> [accessed 31.12.2012].

¹¹⁷ E.g.: ‘The strength of character and knowledge of good over evil shines through in the people of Sarajevo. Very humbling. This kind of war should never happen’, wrote Debbie from England, 12 November 2011; ‘the city has seen a lot of horror, and so has its people, but it’s truly amazing how this city still breaths [sic] with warmth and optimism!’ wrote Maria from Finland, 6 October 2010.

au ventre. Reposer en paix’ [back with a knot in my stomach. Rest in peace] at the Belgian Memorial in Kigali¹¹⁸ – but in general, the tide of responses conforms entirely to the usual attitudes and platitudes. An important point, though, is that some of those who go beyond these platitudes at these genocide memorials seem to be speaking from personal experience, rather than because the memorial changed the way they think: for example, at Ntarama, one visitor wrote ‘nothing has changed. Tamils understand ☺’ and another ‘We came so close to this in Kenya 2008 – never again – pray never again’. This last comment especially has a sense of urgency, born of experience and understanding, which is absent from most responses – largely due, I am arguing, to the distancing and particular type of proximity produced by mainstream representations.

These sentiments reappear at film showings: documentaries with grisly close-ups of the dead, or scenes of unrepentant perpetrators, usually provoke audible tutting and emphatically slow, disbelieving headshakes. In the Q&A sessions afterwards, questions are usually prefaced by phrases such as ‘thanks, that was such a moving/powerful film’ – a subscription to the convention of thanking directors, but also a confirmation that emotional rather than cognitive reactions are the primary mode of engagement with, and public response to, representations of genocide. Since, as with the Q&A sessions after film showings, responses are also displays of ‘morality’, many visitors to genocide museums ‘appear (and speak of being) concerned to behave appropriately’, as Hughes writes.¹¹⁹ Most are silent for much of their visit or speak only in undertones, and adopt respectful attitudes towards staff and especially survivors; grinning or laughing seems out of place or even forbidden.¹²⁰ The presence of guides and of rules governing behaviour – as, for example, in Rwanda, where one is almost always shown around by survivors, and where there is a strict ban on photographing the dead without an academic or journalist’s permit (or even, occasionally, with one) – also of course affects how visitors negotiate what might be ‘appropriate’ behaviour. Interestingly, though, while visitors usually stick quite closely to *western* codes of behaviour, they can still be quite adept at remaining oblivious to local codes – removing shoes and covering shoulders in Cambodia, not wearing shorts or revealing tops in Rwanda.

¹¹⁸ Another inflection is of obviously religious visitors, who sometimes come in groups (the highest concentration in Rwanda), and whose responses are obviously informed by their beliefs.

¹¹⁹ Hughes, ‘Dutiful Tourism’, 324.

¹²⁰ This is a general comment, although there are signs at Tuol Sleng showing a person laughing, with a large red cross through their smile.

The point here, as throughout the thesis, is that these attitudes and platitudes, and other stock methods of narrating genocide away – labelling the perpetrators as ‘inhuman’ or ‘evil’, the spaces of violence as ‘another planet’, indulging in happy endings whilst ignoring the ways in which structural violence persists, refusing to draw connections between societies which committed genocide and the west – are all ways of not only shielding oneself against the implications of genocide but also actively relegating it to a side issue. These platitudes also act as a panacea, allowing people to perform their sense of global citizenship and assure themselves of their own morality, and feel that they have contributed to preventing genocide – but in reality change little. The mantras of ‘never again’, ‘never forget’, and ‘we must learn from the past to prevent this in the future’ – all reapplied from the normative framework of Holocaust responses – are, in the end, merely ways of displaying morality, rather than engaging with *what* those lessons might be, or what might need to be rethought in order for ‘never again’ to be achieved. Representations of genocide themselves encourage and validate these ways of approaching genocide – in seeking emotional rather than reflective reactions (resulting in the declarations that a film or book was ‘powerful’ or ‘moving’, which require little real thought about genocide itself), whilst perpetuating the familiar and formulaic narrations and visualisation which, ultimately, recasts genocide into a simple morality tale with false resolution. Precisely because they do not challenge entrenched conceptions of genocide, these representations, and the accompanying attitudes and platitudes, thus sustain the western belief in the sanctity of western ‘civilisation’ and political structures – and thus work directly against their own underlying goal of ‘never again’.

I have discussed throughout this thesis many films, books, museums, and photographic works which challenge the mainstream representation of genocide, and therefore also the usual attitudes and platitudes. Because they refuse the easy stereotypes and reframe knowledge, they can open up questions in their audiences’ minds – and the responses can be along the lines of “I found it really interesting that...”, opening space for a discussion with others, rather than the closed loop of “wasn’t it terrible”. Some representations work against specific platitudes – especially those such as “I don’t understand how they could do that” or “I could never do that”; a few, such as Bizot, tackle the human propensity to violence directly, but many, such as Drakulić’s *Balkan Express* and feature films and documentaries such as Dragojević’s *Pretty Village*

Pretty Flame, Tanović's *No Man's Land* or Lemkin and Sambath's *Enemies of the People* focus closely on the ordinary people who participated in genocide for a variety of often very rational and understandable reasons. As Straus and Lyons' *Intimate Enemy* shows, representations do not need to include reams of facts or be especially complicated in order to be effective: the testimony of ordinary Rwandan male after ordinary Rwandan male in Straus' interviews shows, quite simply, how genocide was organised at the local level and the very ordinary reasons why so many took up the role of *génocidaire*. Of course, the usual platitudes in response are still entirely possible, but made much harder by representations such as this.

Such representations challenge their audiences to think outside their pre-existing frameworks of knowledge, and comparative representations are arguably just as effective in this regard.¹²¹ Comparative thought certainly has a role to play in the overcoming of national(ist) narratives and myths – disrupting the perpetrators' claims of the uniqueness of their upcoming task, and indeed the victims' claims of the uniqueness of their suffering – although one does risk, again, universalising the victims (and indeed the perpetrators). But it also has a wider relevance in asking individuals to think more adeptly about the structures of violence in their own community and worldwide, and to consider their own relationship to them.¹²² As I discussed in the last chapter, Simon Norfolk's project as a whole combines contemplation on the effects of violence with contemplation on its diverse sources, reaching beyond the usual explanations to include supercomputers, military intelligence, and the battlefield scars; his two monographs specifically about genocide sites both use the motif of concealment and a gradual fading from consciousness, confronting his audience, perhaps, with the transience of 'never forget' and the scars of genocide which remain on the landscape. Of the three comparative museum exhibitions, Kigali's is the least provocative, moving chronologically through the twentieth century to place Rwanda in the context of other genocides, although the Holocaust is given most coverage and there is little comparison between the sections; the USHMM's exhibition 'From

¹²¹ Obviously, I am speaking of truly comparative representations here, not those aimed at enhancing one genocide in relation to others.

¹²² The free2choose exhibition, part of Anne Frank House in Amsterdam, is worth considering in this respect. After their tours of the Holocaust and Anne Frank's life and death, visitors to free2choose participate in an interactive video session which involves them responding to hypothetical scenarios concerning immigration, racism, religion and so on, examining their own responses in relation to others'. Certainly free2choose's setting within Anne Frank House encourages visitors to link the Holocaust with forms of violence they may encounter on an everyday basis. See Sandell, *Museums, Prejudice, and the Reframing of Difference*.

Memory to Action' covers Rwanda, Bosnia and Sudan thematically, drawing links in a clear visual format and urging visitors to take action.

But the 30-minute film in the IWM's Crimes Against Humanity Exhibition is by far the most wide-ranging and integrated installation, with the experts narrating the film commenting quite directly on the role of national mythologies, crisis, memories of violence, economic factors, and world geopolitics in producing state- and (non-state-) directed genocide. The film's scenes certainly invite sympathy for the victims as well as shock, but this is underpinned with interviews and scenes which gradually stretch the audience's conception of genocide. While the majority of visitors to the museum's Holocaust Exhibition respond that they were 'very moved' and 'learnt a lot' – and 'never again' – the visitor comments for the CAHE indicate a higher degree of engagement with the issues and far fewer of these platitudes.¹²³ Many criticise the exhibition for cases or perspectives it does *not* consider (including, quite rightly, Britain's own perpetration of colonial atrocities), which is a comparative thought of course 'provoked' by the exhibition, but my feeling is that these comments are based on knowledge and positions already held by the visitor. Others, though, seem to show in their phrasing and content a working-through of the issues presented by the exhibition. One visitor in May 2004 wrote: 'It made me look within myself and question views I held and have changed them. I think every person should be shown this film then ask yourself [sic] is it really worth moaning about asylum seekers? I think not.' Another, in November 2004: '... it makes me reconsider many of my views such as fairness, politics, good/bad, deception and fault'. Another, whose comment takes up both sides of the card and is too long to reproduce here, shows a (rather distressed) working-through of his thoughts, including that 'It scares me to consider, should I have been brought up in Nazi Germany for instance, would I have committed genocide and would I hate the Jews? It's easy to state how awful it is and also that I would never do it, but I have been raised this way, my mind knows it's wrong because I have been shown so. But what if I had been shown it to be right???' These comments are often not the most eloquent or incisive in their analysis – those who already have a position on western governments' complicity in atrocities, or the marginalisation of various case studies, usually are – but in their open engagement with the issues and the way that they move past the usual platitudes and distancing

¹²³ Staff at the IWM have already selected and discarded some of the comments cards, so the sample is skewed – although there is, nevertheless, still a fair range of responses.

mechanisms, they suggest that this exhibition does, perhaps, have the capacity to challenge how people think about genocide.

Conclusion

This chapter has drawn upon and consolidated my argument throughout the thesis that mainstream representations of genocide have largely followed those of the Holocaust in depicting genocide as something aberrant within society – something terrible, but unlikely to touch the lives of westerners. Here I show that the attitudes and platitudes with which westerners usually respond to representations of genocide, and indeed the Holocaust, stem *from* those representations and confirm their argument. The power of representations to guide their audiences' responses is confirmed by the more engaged and challenging representations I have discussed throughout the thesis: visitor responses tend to show a deeper engagement with the issues, and expressions of 'never again' achieve a depth of thought behind them.

Conclusion

Paradigms are, often, also normative frameworks, and certainly the Holocaust seems to have exerted a normative pull on the ways in which other genocides are imagined, understood, represented, and responded to in the west. This thesis has argued that mainstream representations of genocide – whether one focuses on their ‘script’, the representation of genocide’s origins and perpetrators, western eyewitness perspectives, the aftermath, or the way westerners respond to genocide – in large part follow the normative framework set down by mainstream representations of the Holocaust. Most importantly, this entails an attempt to humanise the victims and encourage audiences to sympathise with them, but crucially, to distance utterly the spaces and perpetration of genocide from the west, with closed explanations and demonising portrayals. They thereby reiterate and consolidate the central tenets of the western interpretation of genocide: that these are aberrant events, the products of purely domestic problems and extremist political ideologies, foreign to and entirely disconnected from modern liberal democracies. By contrast, I have argued, there are a wealth of other, more engaged representations which question and problematise (whether consciously or not) these oversimplifications; and while they are extremely diverse, covering vastly different times, places, and events, what is striking is that almost all are in some way concerned with ordinary people and their experiences. Here, ‘the ordinary’ is used to explore the transition from everyday life into conflict and genocide, to explore perpetration, victimhood, and reconciliation, in ways which challenge and subvert mainstream interpretations of genocide. These representations do engage with the Holocaust, whether explicitly, as a way of working through their own experiences, or more subtly, as they engage with the Holocaust’s normative legacies. Avoiding the rather blunt analytical approach which only singles out explicit uses of the ‘Holocaust lens’, and opting instead for a more structural and thematic analysis, has allowed me to bring out these more subtle overlaps, and given a much more nuanced picture of the influence of the Holocaust on representations of genocide.

Other thematic areas of enquiry have been threaded throughout, each of which speaks to research questions and debates in both comparative genocide studies and Holocaust studies. Focusing on the opposition between the human and structural in representations of genocide, I have argued that mainstream representations quite

consistently emphasise the human over the structural, beginning with representations of perpetration and victimhood – where agency is almost always embodied in the perpetrators, and violence tends to be shown as violence to the body – and running through to representations of the aftermath, where justice involves the incarceration of the guilty, and images focus on human remains, both ignoring the ways in which structural violence persists in ‘post’-genocide societies. The more engaged representations also focus on the human – but in adopting a more ethnographic stance in their consideration of ordinary peoples’ lives, they often clearly show how structural violence permeates society and everyday life, and in turn how ordinary people, too, drive this violence.

This cuts into the debate around how the perpetrators and especially the victims function in these representations. The victims have become symbols of moral instruction in the discourses surrounding genocide, but, as I have argued, they are often depicted in mainstream representations in ways which invoke sympathy but provide no real model for understanding and action, especially since these representations generally avoid offering their audiences an understanding of the deeper, structural roots of genocide. To argue, as Alexandra Garbarini does, that the victims provide role models for withstanding and resisting genocide¹ is to propose an activism which intervenes far too late in the process to be effective. Rather, an understanding of why perpetrators act (the unravelling of their demonisation) but also, and more importantly, of the deeper domestic and international causes of genocide – from economic crisis and societal tensions to geopolitics, power shifts, and deep structures of violence – would seem more logical an argument. Comparative thought can play a part here, as I argued in the final chapter, since it can ask audiences to be aware of precisely these structural factors and how they drive individuals to act. This, in particular, brings up the distinction between the universal and the particular in these representations, or, perhaps, the difference between representing genocide and *a* genocide. All are representing a common phenomenon, so overlaps and resonances are to be expected, and in part the level of detail that can be included turns on the audience’s prior knowledge and familiarity with the history: but the prevalence of the ‘stock’ characters of faceless perpetrators, weeping survivors and the bodies and bones of the dead encourage interpretation in terms of abstract concepts of evil and innocence, rather

¹ See Introduction, n.68.

than as the product of specific political ideologies and social situations. Universalisation may be thought of as a vehicle for creating concern and sympathy, but as the more engaged representations show, it is more than possible to create empathy for characters anchored in the particular: the ordinary does not have to be replaced by the universal.

Finally, I have suggested throughout that familiarity, and the ‘horizons of expectation’, play a fairly large part in determining the shape of these representations and audience responses to them. Mainstream genocide representations often stretch the borders and boundaries of Holocaust representations, whilst the more engaged tend to seek to reframe knowledge within them. Audience responses, too, tend to replicate the familiar Holocaust mantras, but the fear of transgressing social codes possibly hovers more clearly here. Perhaps the more important point, though, is that if genocide representations conform to mainstream expectations and interpretations, not only do they not challenge their audiences to think more deeply about genocide, with each representation they further *consolidate* the familiar picture of the Holocaust and genocide – thus consolidating each time the Holocaust as paradigm.

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Note: Rather than listing each in alphabetical order, I have divided the primary sources into thematic sections, so that they might provide useful lists for the reader. Each section is then subdivided by case study, in the order of Armenia, the Holocaust, Cambodia, the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and then any comparative examples.

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Pinkas Synagogue, Prague

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), Washington DC

Yad Vashem, Jerusalem

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Children's Memorial, Sarajevo

Sarajevo History Museum, Sarajevo

Jewish Museum, Sarajevo

Potočari Memorial Museum, Srebrenica

Military Museum, Belgrade

Bisesero National Genocide Resistance memorial

Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre, Gisozi, Kigali

Kibeho memorial

Kibuye memorial

Murambi memorial

Ntarama memorial

Nyamata memorial

Nyarubuye memorial

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