

# KNOWLEDGE, AESTHETICS AND PREVENTING GENOCIDE

by

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## Introduction

To prevent genocide, two possibilities must exist: the possibility of knowing the event in advance and the possibility of some party intervening to prevent or mitigate its occurrence. Some theories of genocide entail that genocide is preventable, but genocide cannot be anticipated. Other theories entail that a genocide can be anticipated because the conditions for its emergence are already an integral element of the social fabric, but the same theories imply that the genocide cannot be prevented because there are no existing offsetting forces which can come into play once the socio-political conditions are removed which prevented the emergence of the genocide. In another version of anticipation but little likelihood of prevention, the social dynamics of change are such that they create conditions which foster genocide, but once those social dynamics are in play, there does not seem to exist an equally forceful counter-dynamic which can come into play and prevent the genocide. In either case, though the genocide can be anticipated, there is little realistic possibility of any outsider intervening to prevent it. In these theories of genocide, the horrific events can be either anticipated or prevented but not both.

There are, however, theories which insist that genocide can be both anticipated and prevented. After examining in Part I some theories which entail either anticipation or prevention, but not both, Part II examines theories which claim that genocide can be both anticipated and prevented. The analysis finds that these theories are fundamentally flawed because they are internally contradictory. Part III of the paper then raises the question of what component could be provided which would allow genocide to be both anticipatable and preventable. I suggest that it is an aesthetic theory of genocide and attempt to explain why. In Part IV, I provide an outline of an aesthetic theory which might be able to link knowledge with action to prevent genocide.

In focusing on the prevention of genocide, the emphasis in this paper is on the bystanders. The situations of the victims, potential or actual, are ignored simply because I presume that the victims could do little if anything to prevent the genocide. I do not defend that presumption. Similarly, although the theories focus on the explanation of the role and responsibilities of the genocidists, whether they are decision-makers, organizers, implementers or co-opted parties, there is an assumption that the genocidists would not alter their behaviour on their own. This is contrary to the assumption of many scholars and others concerned with establishing justice and ending a culture of immunity, a culture which allows people like Radovic Karadzic and Rakto Mladic to live their lives in relative freedom. (For example, see William A. Schabas' paper, "Justice, Democracy, and Impunity in Post-genocide Rwanda: Searching for Solutions to Impossible Dreams," *Criminal Law Forum* 7:3 (1996),523-560.) Some of these theorists argue that creating a system of justice to deal with genocidal killers is the best means of prevention, for if the

genocidists are aware that they cannot escape the consequences of their actions, then a major step will have been taken to prevent the recurrence of genocide. Though I applaud the efforts to bring genocidists before the courts of law, I am sceptical that these efforts will or even can contribute significantly towards prevention. However, I do not explore the reasons for that scepticism in this paper, but merely note it and highlight my concern with pre-lookers rather than post-lookers in the study of genocide. In concentrating on bystanders, I am concerned with the possibility of creating a category of pre-lookers who can facilitate the intervention of bystanders in advance, rather than the concern of some scholars with post-lookers who attempt to eliminate cultures of impunity, cultures which confirm the belief of perpetrators that they can escape any punishment for their actions.

Connecting foreknowledge with prevention deals with the link between knowledge and duty, between epistemology and ethics, between Truth and Goodness. Unfortunately, as I will try to show, on its own the linkage is not likely to work. I will try to explain why in both philosophical and practical terms. Then I will attempt to overcome that failure by introducing aesthetic theory.

## **Part I: Anticipation or Prevention**

The prevention of genocide presumes a philosophical framework which makes both anticipation and prevention possible. In some theories, it is possible to anticipate but difficult to prevent genocide. In others, anticipation is unlikely, but prevention is feasible. Four of these theories, two psychological and two political, are unable to provide a theoretical framework which can support both anticipation and prevention.

The first psychological theory is the thesis that genocide is a product of age old tribal, ethnic, or religious hatreds. A current general paradigm for this type of explanation in the Balkan's is to be found in Kaplan's 1993 book (*Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, New York: Random House). If, according to this pattern, one group engages in genocide whenever they gain exclusive power in a state and violent conflict erupts, the only way to prevent genocide is to ensure that they never enjoy exclusive power, or, alternately, if they do, to make sure that their power is never exercised over a minority. This entails one of three possibilities: 1) creating a political structure in which the genocidal party, whether Serbs or Croats in this case, are denied the possibility of self-rule by combining the genocidal ethnic group with other nationalities in a larger state, such as the old Yugoslavia; 2) endorsing ethnic cleansing through the relocation of the minority - the de facto situation in the present; 3) not permitting the genocidal ethnic group to rule themselves at all, but placing them under some sort of international trusteeship. Since the first option proved unworkable, and the third is highly unlikely, the very analysis and its implied moral condemnation lead, paradoxically, to endorsing the very solution that the theory implicitly condemns. Thus, aside from: 1) the weak evidential basis for the thesis, in spite of its popularity among journalists, 2) its inability to construct a falsifiability test, a prerequisite of any genuine theory, and 3) the contradiction between the epistemic claims of the thesis and the moral indignation fuelling it, an effect of this theory is to reduce bystanders to impotence and strengthen the extremists.

A second psychological theory treats genocide as an aberrational event. A genocide is

idiosyncratic, unique, and singular. The perpetrators themselves are victims, not physical victims, but mental victims of a collective madness. Decision elites project their own problems onto another group who are stereotyped and held to be responsible for those problems. The implementers of the genocide are found to be emotionally detached; they behave like automata in their unquestioning obedience to authority. The mad leaders may be assisted in gaining power by the individual psychological weaknesses of those in previous leadership roles who fail to prevent the accession to power. Thus, Franz van Papen's lack of will to power, undermined by Kurt von Schleicher's resentment and treachery, and Paul von Heindenburg's naivete and love of sycophants, may have combined to enable a deviant like Hitler to win the Chancellorship of Germany even though his political support had actually declined. Different behaviour by any one of the three major leaders could have easily prevented Hitler from coming to power these analysts argue. The genocide then would have been prevented, but it is unlikely that it could have been anticipated. Whatever other benefits, the vagueries of serendipity in a "twisted" pattern make anticipation very difficult though prevention was a strong possibility. It is a thesis which suggests that if only the combination of psychological interactions among the leaders and genocidists had been otherwise, the genocide would not have occurred. The paradox of such a thesis is that the genocide is preventable, but no one was around, including bystanders, who are generally not considered, to prevent the genocide.

A third thesis, based more on rational structures than the psychology of irrational group and individual behaviour, shares with the first non-rational thesis the conviction that the roots of genocide go very very deep. It is a thesis which rests not on irrational psychological patterns of group behaviour, but on structuralist theory based on centre-periphery relations. In one version, those on the margins, geographically or politically, of any polity are most at risk because any strong development of identity at the periphery threatens the cohesiveness and strength of the centre. But if that cohesiveness begins to crumble at the same time as the strength of the centre begins to ebb, peoples on the periphery will begin to assert themselves, but with no clear lines of demarcation. Thus, those who describe a crisis as an inevitable response of the ethnic periphery to the problem of a federal system with a powerful centre and a very weak independent civic identity, as in many depictions of the situation in the Caucasus relative to Moscow after the USSR had disintegrated, uphold a theory of anticipation without any ingredient of potential prevention. As the centre weakened in the absence of a strong civic identity independent of the polity, the heirs to a system, which also de-legitimized the significance of borders between national administrative units, as in the Caucasus, seemed to be propelled into ethnic conflict with a Greek inevitability.

In another version of centre-periphery structuralist theory, genocide is a product of *nation*-state development, with the emphasis on the nation as an exclusivist unit with no obligations towards other populations on the territory of the state, resulting in the extermination of other ethnic or aboriginal groups. When a centre is not weakening but rather is growing stronger, the centre may threaten those politically or geographically on the periphery as the nation-state solidifies and both extends its political apparatus to the peripheries while it uses that periphery to solve political and population problems in the ethnic core at the expense of other inhabitants. Norman Cigar's *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of "Ethnic Cleansing"* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1995) provides an example of this thesis. The Serbs with

an ideological “focus on territorial control coterminous with the national religious community” (p. 16) led not only to a Serbian pan-nationalism, but the delegitimization of the Muslims. Some analyses of the persecution of the Jumma in the Chittagong Hill tracts in Bangladesh are also, I believe, examples of this version of centre-periphery structural dynamics in accounting for genocide.

In either version, whether of a disintegrating or a consolidating power at the centre, any effort at prevention within a nation-state system seems very difficult if not impossible. These theories of genocide tend to depict extermination as an almost inexorable by-product of a dynamic process of structural conditions, just as in the theory of mutual tribal hatreds genocide was presented as an inevitable product of psychological conditions. In both the political and psychological versions, the results could have been anticipated but not very likely prevented.

A fourth thesis, again political rather than psychological, stresses the importance of contingent rather than necessary factors. This thesis parallels the one which stresses unpredictable psychological aberrations which, in combination, contribute to a horrific result, but with small variations in behaviour or the presence of a different cast of players, the genocide might have been prevented or mitigated. In the political as well as psychological version, genocide is unpredictable but preventable.

Thus, Michael Marrus in his book on *The Holocaust in History* praises Helen Fein (*Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization During the Holocaust*, New York, 1979) for the insights she brought to the important variations between different countries and regions in the execution of the genocide, but then criticizes the volume for leaving out the two crucial interdependent variables - the Nazi intentions and determination in carrying out their policy and the course of the war itself. As Michael illustrates his point, “Had the war ended a year earlier, for example, Hungarian Jewry might have survived; had it continued for another year or so, there would have been too few Jews left alive in Europe to constitute significant ‘national differences.’ What is really measured in Fein’s work, therefore, is the *pace* of victimization in various places, something determined at least as much by the German’s own priorities and the fortunes of war as by the variables she examined.” (pp. 57-8) Contingent shifts in priorities and fortunes are at least as important if not more important than the constants on which positivist prediction depends.

A theoretical apology for this position was given very early in the modern era by Giambattista Vico. “When it comes to the manner of prudential behaviour in life, it is well for us to keep in mind that human events are dominated by Chance and Choice, which are extremely subject to change and which are strongly influenced by simulation and dissimulation (both pre-eminently deceptive things). As a consequence, those whose only concern is abstract truth experience great difficulty in achieving their means, and greater difficulty in attaining their ends....Therefore, it is an error to apply to the prudent conduct of life the abstract criterion of reasoning that obtains in the domain of science. A correct judgement deems that men - who are, for the most part, but fools - are ruled, not by forethought, but by whim or chance. The doctrinaires judge human actions as they *ought* to be, not as they actually are (i.e. performed more or less at random).” (*On the Study of Methods of Our Time*, 1709, pp. 34-5, LLLA 1969)

In a theory which raises the combination of Choice and Chance to preeminence, there is little, if any, possibility of anticipation, but there existed enormous potential for prevention. Only there is little anyone can do about it.

In the two psychological theories, the patterns are either too deep (when the conflict is an outbreak of ancient tribal hatreds) or too shallow (when the conflict is a result of unpredictable, contingent circumstances). In the first, only massive external coercive intervention would likely be able to prevent the genocide, and that would seem to entail great risk to the intervenor. In the latter situation, external action after the fact might mitigate the genocide. But the theoretical models do little to provide a role for external parties because the models provide no role for external actors in explaining the onset of the genocide. In the dynamic political theories of the development of a centre related to a periphery, whether the powerful centre is in the process of self-destruction with no off-setting centres of clear identity and power, or where the centre is in a process of consolidation and uses peripheries and marginal groups to solve the problems of the dominant national group, it is difficult to grasp where outsiders could realistically intervene to prevent the ethno-conflicts and potential genocide. On the other hand, in political theories which stress the contingencies of policy and the fortunes of war, genocide can theoretically be mitigated and even prevented, but it is virtually impossible to anticipate the genesis of genocide or its course and the effects of such intervention.

However, prevention activities are not usually considered in explanatory theories which cannot allow for both anticipation and prevention. Prevention activities require radically different explanatory theories than the four above, ones which entail **both** foreknowledge and the possibility of effective intervention. I will now explore these theories.

## **Part II: Anticipation and Prevention**

In the last two decades, early warning has been associated with humanitarian actions in contrast to intelligence activities, which are oriented to protecting against threats to one's country's security. The concept started in humanitarian efforts to anticipate food shortages in order to enable supplies to be put in place to prevent famine, and then was extended to anticipating refugee flows in order to have food and medical supplies as well as tents and water in position to mitigate the suffering of refugees who generally flee with minimal supplies. Subsequently, early warning was extended to conflict management to prevent the circumstances which give rise to refugee flows in the first place, or, what is even worse, genocides. Most recently, FEWER, the Forum for Early Warning and Early Response, has defined Early Warning as "the communication of information on a crisis area, analysis of that information, and development of potential strategic responses to respond to the crisis in a timely manner." (FEWER brochure) The assumption built into the definition is that the information and analysis, along with the development of strategic options, would be in time to take action to mitigate or even prevent the crisis.

In order to take such action in a timely manner, risk situations must be monitored and assessed before the conflict becomes violent, refugees start fleeing or genocidal acts are initiated. In one version of

early warning, such situations are monitored to assess whether and to what degree they fit a risk profile. In another version of early warning, using more detailed case material than generalizable models, an effort is made to enter into the mind-sets of the various actors, including key by-standers, to anticipate potential initiatives and to assess the opportunities and effectiveness of utilizing one or a few of the interventionist tools available to the international community. The first version is a positivist model while the second is misleadingly referred to as an empathetic model.

In contemporary philosophy, Carl Hempel has promoted a positivist model of explanation which ties explanation to prediction. (Cf. *Aspects of Scientific Explanation*, New York: The Free Press, 1965) In the hypothetical inductive model of scientific explanation, the collected data is used to develop a lawlike generalization such that if certain kinds of conditions were found, and given other generalizations, then one could infer with a degree of probability that an event would occur. Therefore, the objective of any science, whether it be a scientific study of refugee flows, of genocide, or of violent conflict more generally, is to develop lawlike generalizations of this type whereby such events could be predicted with a degree of probability. True explanatory knowledge of any type of event would also mean an ability to predict that event.

Anthony Oberschall, Leo Kuper, Helen Fein, Ted Gurr, Barbara Harff and others have worked both to develop such models and ascertain whether the model would stand up against detailed evidence that has emerged from other situations of large scale violence that have occurred since the models were first proposed. For example, a model can take into account various circumstances, including pre-existing ethnic differentiation, moderates in charge initially, internal and external events occurring which create a political base for extremists from one group who organize armed militias, threaten and eliminate the moderates, take power and then turn to target the other group which then further polarizes the society into two factions based on ethnicity. This social dynamic model contrasts with Helen Fein's rational decision model (though the latter conforms to a minor degree to the rational decision models so loved by economic theorists which are concerned only with the interests of individuals and not the solidarity of groups), genocide is, "a strategy that ruling elites use to resolve real solidarity and legitimacy conflicts or challenges to their interests against victims decreed outside their universe of obligation in situations in which a crisis or opportunity is caused by or blamed on the victim and the perpetrators believe they can get away with it." Nevertheless, a hypothetical inductive generalization can be constructed to the effect that when elites who have exclusive political power are confronted with crises of solidarity or legitimacy, and they have a propensity to divide the polis between us and them or have gained power by such divisions, then those leaders have a high probability of deciding to play the ethnic card and use ethnic or other minorities as scapegoats to consolidate and retain power.

What is the difference between this model, which insists on a prevention strategy, and the centre-periphery model of a nationalist elite using marginal or minority ethnic groups to consolidate exclusive power in a territory which makes effective intervention seem very difficult if not impossible? Both assume that the policy is deliberately adopted by the group who gains power based on policies of inclusion and exclusion. The key difference is that the latter theory of prevention suggests that the key variable which

allows the genocidists to get away with their actions is the inaction of the bystanders. The model presumes that the leaders only proceed because part of their rational calculation includes the belief that no outside power will do anything to stop them. The model thus presumes that preventive action can be taken by bystanders based on monitoring and assessing groups at risk before genocide develops, raising consciousness among humanitarian organizations and concerned governments, shaming them into action based on scenarios which utilize a range of interventionist tools, the relative effectiveness of which can also have been tested. Further, the causal model has been “aufgehobt” into a rational decision model where both the perpetrators and the bystanders are all rational decision makers and not just vectors in forces tending towards a certain outcome. The decisions of the perpetrators can be altered by actions of the bystanders who, in turn, can be influenced by information and politicking by caring groups.

But that means that in order to intervene, the model adopted for the intervenors presumes a hypothetical imperative and not just a rational choice model. Though there is an analysis of the conditions and circumstances, and the beliefs, norms, goals and expectations of the perpetrators, there is no equivalent analysis of the bystanders. There is no equivalent development of a generalized theory concerning when by-standers are or are not likely to act and intervene in potential genocides. As a result, the theory produces a paradox, relying on a hypothetical inductive model of rational decision making for the perpetrators and a hypothetical imperative model for the intervenors.

Let me clarify the paradox by elaborating on the two models. In the hypothetical inductive model (HI for short), the generalizations includes various sets of conditions such as the division of the polity into ethnic groups, a history of conflict between them, conditions which threaten the hegemony of one group (a crisis rational decision) or provide an opportunity for one group to achieve hegemony (an opportunistic rational decision), beliefs about the conditions and circumstances which foster a conviction that success will result, norms and goals that sanction certain types of behaviour, then the observers and the actors will both presume that actions which lead towards genocide will likely be taken. For the perpetrators, the research and the hypothetical inductive model that emerges lead them to conclude that the action *should* be taken. This is ironic, since the very model meant to deflect perpetrators seems to reinforce their choice. Further, there is nothing in the analysis that combines description and prescription for the bystanders. The beliefs of the latter about sovereignty and the principle of non-intervention, about the likely hazards of such an exercise, their weak commitment to anti-genocidal norms, the absence of such a situation posing a crisis or an opportunity for the bystander, etc. may come together to indicate the probability that they are unlikely to intervene. But these inductive generalizations and the research leading up to them are not part of the research agendas of most of these modellers.

That is why a hypothetical imperative model of rational decision making is imported into the schema. This model states that given the anti-genocide conventions signed and the obligations assumed under them (the strength of commitment to them is left out), and other humanitarian norms, given the conditions and circumstances in the crisis area and the likely outcomes, the thing **to do** for the bystander is to intervene. The generalizations do not follow the form, “If C1, C2, C3...Cn, and L1, L2, L3...Ln, then the probability of E is x,” but rather, “If C1, C2, C3...Cn, and L1, L2, L3...Ln, then the thing **to do** is take

action x.” A moral imperative is applied to the bystanders while descriptive generalizations utilized in rational decision theory are applied to the perpetrators.

An empathetic model rooted in Dilthey and Collingwood and more recently William Dray can also be utilized to account for genocide. Such models are more attuned to the specific beliefs of an individual or a group than the generalized beliefs of the hypothetical inductive model. Cultural models which take into account a specific culture of disproportionate revenge combined with a communist ideology which targets members of a privileged class as enemies then leads extremists to decide to take action to exterminate their enemies. Astri Suhrke and I applied the model to the role of bystanders in the genocide in Rwanda (*Early Warning and Conflict Management: Genocide in Rwanda*, Copenhagen: DANIDA, 1996). We used a critical theory version of such a model. We asked the question what was known, **and** what could have been known based on the information available to anticipate the genocide. In our account, we explained that the bystanders had enough information available to anticipate the genocide, but they did not do so. We explained why, not only because of the lack of a structure to systematically collect and analyze the information, but also in terms of the predispositions to disbelieve, the shadow of the humiliation and ineffectiveness of previous interventions, in particular, the one into Somalia, which made them unwilling to act to intervene, and, hence to see what was coming in spite of the evidence available. Given their beliefs, norms, and goals they anticipated larger scale violence, but not genocide, but also were unwilling to intervene..

If the positivist thesis suffered from a schizophrenia of applying a hypothetical inductive model to the perpetrators, but a hypothetical imperative model to the bystanders, the empathetic model, in this case using critical theory, applies only a hypothetical imperative model. But it uses two versions of the hypothetical imperative model. In one form, it starts with the failure to act to reconstruct the beliefs, norms and goals which led each of the major actors to a decision **not** to intervene until it was too late. In another form, it starts with the ostensible norms and beliefs and values proclaimed since WWII, and the easy potential of gathering the information available to ascertain the conditions which would have enabled genocide to have been anticipated, to conclude that intervention was the thing to have done. Taking into account the beliefs and actual norms and goals and their views of the circumstances, the bystanders determined not to intervene. Taking into account the rhetorical beliefs and norms, the perception of conditions that could have been or were available, and given a different set of priorities, then the thing to have done was intervene. From the empathetic perspective, the hypothetical imperative of what was decided to do is applied to the bystanders. From a superego perspective, a hypothetical imperative is applied to the bystanders to indicate what they ought to have decided had they taken their own ostensible norms seriously and paid more attention to the facts in front of their eyes. Their norms and the information available say they should act, but their restricted perceptual blinkers as a result of existing policies and previous experience make them predisposed not to act.

Boiled down to its essentials, it is the aesthetics of perception that inhibits the intervention, yet the critical case study never went into an in-depth analysis of the aesthetics of perception. The positivists equally ignored the aesthetics of perception. If the HD model of the positivists had been applied to the bystanders, the conclusion would have been drawn that the probability of intervention was low. So if we

are going to reconcile the possibility of anticipation with the possibility of prevention, it will be necessary to go into the aesthetics of perception. As one senior policy person in the Canadian government articulated the problem, “Why should we fund and develop an independent Early Warning system if it may develop scenarios which make us see and impell us to act when we do not want to see and do not want to act?”

Now such a conclusion should not be surprising. After all, at the foundation of modernity, Kant postulated a schizophrenia between reason applied to developing generalizable norms, specifically as they apply to the sensible realm of nature, and reason applied to developing ethical norms and applying them to the supersensible realm of freedom. (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, Introduction) At the foundations of modernist epistemology and ethics, there is a fundamental schizophrenia. Kant attempted to bridge the gap between the two, between the true and the good, between epistemology and ethics, between science and metaphysics, between the phenomenal and the noumenal realms, and between necessity and freedom, by dealing with feelings (pleasure and pain in his case) as intermediaries between cognition and desire. The *Critique of Judgement* was concerned with particulars and the search for the appropriate universal under which they should be subsumed. For Kant, an appropriate telos, a utopian vision, was the prerequisite for adjudicating the divide. And most of us involved in genocide studies are impelled by such a telos which envisions a world in which one group will not try to exterminate another group, a world in which ethnic groups will not try to destroy one another but will live together in peace if not exactly in harmony.

## Aesthetics

In Kant's *Critique of Judgement*, reason is regulative; that is, it does not determine how we view objects (such as in the generalization and a priori conviction that every event has a cause analyzed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*). Instead of yielding knowledge about objects, it suggests the necessary conditions for looking at objects. If description is to be reconciled with normative imperatives, then, for Kant, nature has to be adapted to definite ends or goals. That is why the *Critique of Judgement* is divided into a critique of aesthetic and a critique of teleological judgement. Without the telos, aesthetics lacks a regulative guide. The positivists focused on rational decision theory and the critical theorists concerned with the discrepancy between actual and potential perception who study genocide are united by a regulative guide which envisions a world free of ethnic violence. But such a telos is used to avoid the problems in their respective theories rather than resolve them. For that, they have to revert to a more detailed study of aesthetic theory.

Now it is clear than even in the legal post-examination of genocide as a crime, aesthetics is critical. For the genocidists always attempt to destroy the perception of the crime. They try to destroy evidence and even destroy the mass graves which can serve as testimony of systematic killing. But why should the sensible absorption of genocidal crime be considered under the category of aesthetics? What does aesthetics have to do with genocide?

At the very least, aesthetics is closely connected with the memory wars and the effort to construct

group narratives, commemorative buildings and rituals to ensure that the genocidists do not achieve a post-genocidal victory. A new war, the struggle for memory, will always succeed the old war over bodies in the slaughters of one group by another. The war may have been seemingly lost by the apparently relatively successful elimination from history of such events as those Edward Paulino depicts in the Dominican Republic in 1937, or may be ongoing in the situation which Pamela Ballinger depicts in the Yugoslav slaughter of Italians in Venezia Giulia in the last years of WWII. This paper, however, is concerned with pre-lookers rather than post-lookers, with the aesthetics of sensibility prior to the outbreak of the genocide that inhibit or enhance our ability to see what is front of our very eyes.

But Aesthetics is concerned with the sublime and the beautiful. Art is something consciously produced by the mind of humans. Aesthetics and art seem to be at the opposite end of the spectrum from genocide. The aesthetic of genocide entails what is lowest in human behaviour - images of neighbours killing neighbours (Helen Fein) or, more positively, Skloot's images of the human body, at moments of extreme torture, in the effort to communicate pain and its effects in order to produce an "empathetic response". Or to use the archetypal image evoked in another paper to be presented, a soldier using the grandchild's body to beat the grandfather to death, or the more general image of braining a child on a wall as the central gesture of genocide. But all of this is the aesthetics of post-lookers. Perhaps I can only get at the issue of the aesthetics of pre-lookers through a closer examination of the aesthetics of the post-lookers. Or perhaps I should follow Hornshói-Móller's model and examine the aesthetic images which triggered genocidal actions. However, my concern with bystanders and prevention means that I am concerned with pre-lookers who are bystanders rather than perpetrators. What then unites the aesthetics of post-lookers, pre-lookers who become genocidists, and pre-lookers who are bystanders?

The focus on the body unites them all - counting bodies both dead and living, constructing and ordering the body politic (the rational aspect of the body politic), and the dismemberment of the body (the fire of Molech in Jeanette Smyth's paper) as a mode of destroying the body politic. What is the relationship between the figures and calculations of the membership in the body politic - in a census or in large scale massacres - and the disfigurement and dismemberment characteristic of genocidal killing?<sup>1</sup> A phenomenological perspective is a critical ingredient in understanding genocide. It is the missing link in both positivist and critical theoretical accounts if we are really going to facilitate prevention and intervention. It is through the treatment of our own bodies and the bodies of others that we can grasp the relationship that is at work and how that relationship is constituted.<sup>2</sup> (Cf. John O'Neill, *The Communicative Body: Studies in Communicative Philosophy, Politics, and Sociology*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989, 3.<sup>3</sup>)

In the phenomenology of the body, a self is related to other selves in four ways. Firstly, the self sees the other as a reflection of the self. Secondly, the self projects onto the other that which it rejects in itself. Thirdly, the other may be regarded as totally other, unrelated to the self except as an obstacle. Finally, the self is capable of seeing and respecting the other as an independent other in a mutual and supportive relationship to the self. I refer to these four modes of constituting the other as the Reflective Other, the Projective Other, the Rejected Other, and the Accepted Other.<sup>4</sup> In other words, the self is defined in

relationship to: a) those with whom one identifies - the self as other; b) those with whom one identifies while rejecting that identity - the proximate other as a non-self; c) those whom one defines as the enemy other who threaten one's self; d) those who are strangers but whom one is open to knowing. The first two are basic to a struggle with one's self-identity. The third is characterized in self-interested realist politics. And the fourth is implicit in the vision of humanitarian realism.

From my perspective, the basic interaction is between the communicative body and the corporeal body. These relations are discovered in how we constitute the corporeal subject rather than the *cogito*. Thus, although "human embodiment functions to create the most fundamental bond between self and society,"<sup>5</sup> it is also the mode by which the bonds of society are destroyed. As O'Neill depicts this bonding of the communicative body, we seek out other bodies as mirrors of ourselves. And the communicative body is defined as something radically other than the physical or biological body, an active self rather than a physical object. Thus, the communicative body is analogous to Hannah Arendt's public being who speaks and acts<sup>6</sup>, while the corporeal body is based on needs and labours to meet those needs; the body driven by wants, the working body in Hannah Arendt, represents the product of the dialectic between the corporeal body and the communicative body.

This address is concerned with the study of the genocidist self who defines others in our society as opposites rather than mirrors, with the self who divides the body politic in two rather than creating a united body politic, with the self who splits the vision of the physical body into radically differentiated phenotypes, and then seeks the elimination of the other in the quest for the purity of the self.<sup>7</sup> But it is also concerned with the students of the genocidist self who have the very opposite perspective. The difference between the two groups is that the first, the genocidists, accomplish their task by the treatment accorded to the physical or biological body, the body in which we exist as separate entities, rather than the communicative body which relates to others on whom the scholars of and advocates against genocide focus. When our physical bodies are classified and characterized in terms of group membership, the physical body becomes a tool in the communicative body's quest to destroy communication between one group and another. When physical bodies are subsumed within the communicative body, then communication is facilitated between groups, including the communication between the scholars and the bystanders.

### **Exile and Return<sup>8</sup>, Dreams and Memory**

The split between the corporeal body and the communicative body, between the isolated physical body and the communicative body in relationship with others, is exaggerated in exile.<sup>9</sup> To be at home is to be at home in one's body, where one's body feels at home. To be home means to be able to circulate in the homeland with impunity and safety. To be at home means to be in a place in which the other appears as a reflection of oneself. "Home is, therefore, the association within a homogeneous group and the association of that group with a particular physical place."<sup>10</sup>

To be in exile means to be outside one's country of origin, forcefully banished from one's home, and unable to reenter without permission. Unlike the foreigner, one is barred from reentry to the only place

where one felt an inherited right to circulate freely. Exile also means that one experiences that situation as being outside oneself, since “exile” derives from “ex”, out of, and *salire*, “to leap”. As Joseph Conrad conveyed the experience, it was like taking a “standing jump out of his racial surroundings and associations.”<sup>11</sup> To be in exile is to experience oneself as outside of one’s body, as a permanent spectator of oneself, and, thus, split in two. As Warner put it (1994, p. 168) “The situation of the refugee is the physical incarnation of the rift in being”.

There are only two cures for this rift. Either return home or, very much harder for one’s imagination, find a new home in which one feels at one with oneself. Unless the first appears prohibitively difficult, the thought of return will be an ever-present part of one’s imaginative being. That poses a danger for those who do not want an exile to return. There is only one way to permanently prevent the possibility of an exile’s return - kill the individual before he or she goes into exile.

One manner of killing Hutu refugees in Burundi entailed first splitting a bamboo in two parts and then splitting the body in two by driving the bamboo up through the anus, or taking a hammer and “splitting the forehead in half,”<sup>12</sup> as if the mode of killing was intended to send the spirit of the dead into permanent exile, forever alienated from one’s home so that for evermore that individual could never again dream of recovering the imagined lost land as one’s inland. That is the constant dream of the exile, so that the homeland becomes a dreamland, a paradise unrecognizable in reality, one’s unreal estate. “(T)hat place from which the exile is blocked becomes the model for the place in which he resettles his imagination.”<sup>13</sup> But a perfectly mutilated victim in ethnic massacres is sent into eternal exile from his or herself as well as his or her native land.

For those who survive, the imagination continues, both in the dream of homeland and the nightmares that sent one into flight. Even the spectators from the outside cannot escape the nightmare. I am haunted by the corpses of Rwanda. This was not simply the result of my undertaking the joint evaluation of early warning and conflict management of the genocide in Rwanda with my Norwegian colleague, Astri Suhrke. That was an academic study, a horrific intellectual duty, but nothing that directly assaulted my senses other than written words. But I remain haunted by the 18,652 corpses that I walked among that were laid side by side in room after room in a technical school in the south-west of Rwanda when I revisited Kigali in September of 1996 after the study had been published. Those corpses were recently dug up from a newly discovered mass grave. The vision revisits me several times a day. I expected the sight to just drift away. Fergal Keane described the hope that, “the dead had abandoned me, had mouldered into memory.”<sup>14</sup> But once one experiences a genocide, the smells infuse every pore of the body. The nightmares recur.

I am asleep and become aware of hands creeping up and down my body. They prod and probe until I am awake, and in a startled moment I realize that I am lying at the bottom of a pile of rotting corpses. But they are moving, like a mound of eels at a fishmarket, or like snakes, things that slip and slither. I am being passed up through the layers of the moving dead. That is why the hands are touching me, pulling and pushing me up to the top. But I do not want to go to the top. Because there is a man with a machete. He is looking for me.

He has spent all day looking for me and is sure that I am hiding in that pile of bodies. The corpses are intent on betraying me and I am paralysed with fear. There is nothing I can do. I am helplessly pushed up through the smell of the dead towards the sunlight, where a man is waiting to kill me...If I am lucky the blow will cut my skull in two, massive brain damage, instant death.<sup>15</sup>

Split in two. That is the connection between my nightmare and Keane's. It was his skull that he saw being split in two, his soul divided for all eternity. The corpses weighed on him so heavily that in his nightmares he sought the surcease of death in the wish that the bodies would also deliver him up to the murderers. The action of the murderers was "the violation of the peaceful earth, the trench which was animated by blood, evokes the departed spirits and these, thirsting for life, receive it in the action of self-consciousness."<sup>16</sup> From the perspective of the killers, their act of slaughter disturbed the tranquility of natural existence and divided the unity of Nature. From the perspective of the Spirit of those who died, their thirst for life was expressed through the deliverance of his body from the bloody mound of corpses into the air where Keane could breathe and think, and, more importantly, act on the basis of that thought. Thus, on one side, Keane's nightmare was a fear of joining those who had been killed. But it was also the expression of the possibility of his own redemption through action on behalf of those who had been slaughtered. So Keane suffered in fear and trembling with his spirit divided forever in two as he woke up in a sweat from the dream without deliverance either from the weight of the corpses or the recognition of how he could redeem those who had died.

The killers had done their job. The survivors, even the non-targeted witnesses, live in a Catch-22. They cannot escape the weight of memory of the corpses. But the fear is that death will not bring release either, for they have become spectators of their own bodies and do not know how to accept the responsibility for redeeming those murders in action and in life..

The people were arranged all around that trench and the soldiers shot them. They fell in the hole. After, dust was put on top. The instrument which had dug the hole covered the cadavers. It is an instrument which moves on chains, which goes very slowly. It weighs a lot. This same instrument went on the filled hole [pressing down the earth] so that if by accident there is one still alive, he will not be able to climb out.<sup>17</sup>

My nightmare is not of slithering, slippery corpses grasping at me and passing my body up, but of dried skeletons laid row after row, some with the rotting and decaying flesh still on them after two years because the corpses had been packed so thickly that the flesh had not all decayed. I remember counting - counting and counting to check whether the figures were accurate. But I only got to 7,321 because I could not take the sight of skeleton after skeleton lying side by side anymore. I especially could not take the sight of approximately 200 children's skeletal remains laying in parallel rows in one small room. And I could not take the smell that I can still smell while I write this description. I had been particularly mesmerized by the skeletons with cracks in their skulls, especially those of small children. Or the women whose pelvises were cracked. I wanted to calculate how many of the total had been treated this way. I was not able to count,

as if my whole body and the memory system of my brain revolted against turning the disfigurement of the dead into a calculation, a figure for posterity. I was not able to disassociate enough to focus on the task at hand.

But I am also haunted by memories of misfiguring as well as figuring and disfiguring. In the study that Astri Suhrke and I undertook on Rwanda, in the draft report we wrote that approximately 500,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. For the published report we were able to change the number to “500,000 to 800,000.” Before December of that year, after the report had gone to press, a group of scholars meeting to publish an edited book on Rwanda agreed that the actual figure was at least 800,000 dead from the genocide based on all of our studies, and we agreed to use that figure. I have subsequently determined that the figure had to be in excess of one million.<sup>18</sup>

What is the relationship between counting the dead and constituting the living? What is the relation between disfiguring the living when murdering them and constituting the body politic? Is there any connection between figuring and disfiguring? We are all aware that a main target of Holocaust deniers is the effort to cast doubt on the authenticity of the figure of six million Jews killed in the Holocaust. But such battles occur in other genocides as well. And they are important. In Rwanda, many standard texts state that 14% of the population in Rwanda were Tutsi. If we take the population of Rwanda before the civil war and invasion to have been eight million, that means that there were 1,120,000 Tutsis resident in Rwanda. If an estimated 80%+ were killed in the genocide, that means that approximately 900,000 were slaughtered. But if the number of Tutsis was in fact higher, and many Tutsis tried to pass themselves off as Hutu, the number of dead could also be higher. And the proportion of Tutsis in current Rwandese society, even with the return of many of the up to one million Tutsi refugees in exile, will no longer be even 14% of the population of Rwanda. Unless, of course, many Tutsi who had posed as Hutu, and many Hutu as well, now declare that they are really Tutsi. Further, who are we numbering? If we count them as Tutsi, we perpetuate the Hutu/Tutsi divide. If they are numbered as Rwandese, we bury the reason why they were killed in the first place in the effort to institutionalize a new policy in Rwanda in which there are no longer significant differences between Hutu and Tutsi. Do we sanction using these state designations as a new version of homogeneity, which, incidentally, verifies the Hutu extremist belief that this is the essence of the Tutsi plot to eliminate a sense that one is a Hutu, or do we remember and risk perpetuating the Hutu/Tutsi divide? How does the politics of numbers in constituting a state relate to disfigurement in genocide?

I suggest the following:

1. There is a symbiotic relationship between the split that the communicative body of the refugee in exile experiences, and the split symbolically committed against the physical body in genocidal acts; similarly, there is a symbiotic relationship between the vision of homogeneity of the one and the division of the polis by forcing and keeping the other group in exile;
2. ‘Being home’ and the definition of ‘homeland’ - that is home for whom and by whom - are integral to the imagined self-definition of both groups - the exile community and those who sent them into exile - but the imaginative constructs are radically at odds as is clear in the ideologies of the PARMEHUTU and the Tutsi-dominated ideology of a Rwandese nation;

3. There is a complementary relationship between counting the living bodies of a polity, counting the dead bodies for a reborn polity, and not counting the dead bodies of a genocide by the killers when they still control the body politic;

Genocide is always and only committed against the proximate other who, by the genocide, is defined as other than the self in the effort to equate the other with the enemy other. Levinas wrote:

War can be produced only when a being postponing its death is exposed to violence. It can be produced only when discourse was possible: discourse subtends war itself. Moreover violence does not aim at simply disposing of the other as one disposes of a thing, but, already at the limit of murder, it proceeds from unlimited negation. It can aim only at a presence itself infinite despite its insertion in the field of my powers. Violence can aim only at the face.<sup>19</sup>

For Levinas, violence is a product of a communicative body. Genocide aims to deface the face, figures on disfiguring the body. The state of war may suspend morality (Levinas 1969, 21), but the act of genocide undermines morality. Genocide is not a trial by force, since the other is virtually impotent. It is not a test of the real, but aims to injure and annihilate persons as well as destroy their continuity, not only in this life but also in the exile of any possible hereafter. That is why genocide is a religious act, however obscene that may sound.

### **The Self and the Other in Rwanda<sup>20</sup>**

In the mythology of both the Hutu and the Tutsi peoples (suggesting the peoples had common origins), the Hutu were said to be earth- or grave-diggers while the Tutsi were said to be God-like creatures descended from the heavens.<sup>21</sup> Malkki describes the Hutu myths of autochthonous origins and purity versus the vile and deceitful origins of the Tutsi who portray themselves as Rwandese, not Tutsi. (Malkki 1995, 72) Rene Lemarchand (see endnote 30) has done the same. Genocide is a religious ritual of self-purification in terms of a reified image of the self divorced from the Other. In confronting the Other, the genocidal Hutu does not see a reflection of itself. Nor does the genocidal Hutu see a Proximate Other, a neighbour with whom he can live. At the same time, this Hutu sees himself as the expression and embodiment of the true spirit of the nation, alienated from that true spirit because of the presence of the alien Other disguised as part of Oneself. Whatever the shortcomings of the genocidal Hutu, he throws off what he considers his slavish morality and becomes certain of himself as the embodiment of the true spirit of the nation. In Hegel's words, the Hutu "is now a self-consciousness that communes with its own self."<sup>22</sup> In doing so, he comes to worship a particular image of himself, to make an idol of himself, in contrast to the false idolization of the Tutsi that he believed he was previously forced to kneel before.

Further, unlike in the imported Catholic religion, in the religion of Hutu idolatry and the smashing

of the Tutsi idols, religion becomes a part of everyday life, lived in the real world. The genocidal Hutu, conscious of him or herself as an actor in the world, was imbued with a spirit, a sense of being attached and part of a life force. The new idolatrous religion in worship of a reified Hutu demands that the combination of spirit and religion dedicated to reconceptualizing the self and deconceptualizing the other become one as the spirit of the idolotry of the 'natural' Hutu must be realized by the destruction of the face of the Tutsis now perceived as false idols.

The old Tutsi idolatrous religion was perceived as a false and deceitful one in which Rwandese nationality was used to reinforce the servitude of the Hutu and make them into slaves. Religion was taken to be a succession of shapes, the shape of the Tutsi corporeal body as tall and thin and aristocratic and covered up by the sacrificial idol of Jesus on the cross as the model of using the imported religion to keep the Hutu in subjection by ostensibly reverencing the weak and the humble. But the shape of Tutsi idolatry was a false religion which must be succeeded by a revolutionary religion that turns the Hutu into a truly sovereign people free from their former masters.

(T)he 'shapes' which are the 'shapes' of the totality of *Spirit*, display themselves in a temporal succession; for only the whole has true actuality and therefore the form of pure freedom in the face of an 'other', a form which expresses itself as Time.<sup>23</sup>

The problem is that the idolatrous religion of Hutu nationalism must be constructed on the revolution against the idolatrous worship of Tutsi superiority, by, at the same time, effacing the former idols, destroying them as graven images, denying their existence in real time, at the same time as the exaltation of the new religion is built on the glorification of that act of destruction. The goal is to make oneself whole again, to recover one's integrity, to overcome one's self-alienation, one's mythical long migration from one's true self during the false reign of the Tutsi conquerors. One wants to become whole, but the process of becoming whole calls for two very contradictory acts - glorification of the revolution against the false idolotry of the past and the destruction of those idols, and the effacement of the memory of those false idols. The Spirit can only know itself as a Spirit beyond such self-contradictions in the frenzy of destruction of the old idolotry.

The Hutu attempted to overcome this dichotomy by writing a narrative in which the Hutu travels backwards rather than forwards in time, where one sets out to discover the Natural self before the imposition of false gods and rulers, where one was immediately in touch with oneself. And one does so in the ferment and fire and rediscovery of the self in the revolutionary fervor when the idols of the old order were smashed and the PARMEHUTU revolution took place. The self was reborn. In the dawn of the new order, in the sunrise of a new era, when the lord and master were displaced, both the inner masters in the form of the Tutsi, and the external masters in the form of the Belgian colonialists, were exiled; the shape of the new Hutu had yet to be formed. This shapeless shape and the shaping of the shapeless constituted the new national idol. In destroying the inherited structure, the genesis and rebirth of the nation was experienced.

The Hutu worshipped a shapeless form yet to be shaped, yet at the same time they contended that it was a fully shaped natural inheritance. For this reason the new nation lacked both direction and structure. It developed without aim, stability or the guiding hand of reason until it was overthrown in a military coup by Habyarimana in 1973. The previous regime had depended on the persecution of the Tutsi as the alien proximate other for giving itself the only definition it had. The second revolution required no such justification, and the persecution of the Tutsi was stopped. The Hutus discovered that they were subjects and not just objects, agents of history and not just its victims, but only by producing victims and only by defining themselves in opposition to those victims, to the overthrown Other. The Hutu now had power, but they did not yet have a vision of what it was for, except for the negation of the rule of the Other.

Habyarimana set out to give that new idol an authentic shape in creating a productive and honest if authoritarian administration. In the next ten years, the economy boomed, international aid flowed in, and Habyarimana managed to spend the smallest percentage of the national income on the military. Rwanda seemed to have discovered the shape of itself as a unitary Hutu nation with a Tutsi minority. But then reality hit. Tin prices dropped. The price of its even larger prime export, coffees, plummeted. The artificial unity of government and business as a synergistic mutual supporting group now revealed itself to be, not a unitary nation, but a multiplicity of individuals vying for a larger segment of an ever-shrinking pot. In the place of self-sacrifice, self interest and corruption revealed themselves under the force of the World Bank and IMF dicta to restructure. The selfless self in service to the nation was replaced by self-interested selves competing to get at a shrinking trough. The religion of nationalism was quickly turning into the religion of material greed.

The multiplication of political parties in the move to democratization was not so much an example of competing ideologies vying for the favour of the sovereign people, as it was the destructive competition of warring groups using politics to foster their proximity to the trough. Instead of one national spirit, a host of competing and antagonistic national spirits emerged in the name of political pluralism and the construction of a democratic regime. But it was not primarily a struggle for ideas or for the hearts and minds of the people; it was an animal fight to the death for a life now envisioned as a system of spoils.

Propelled by the invasion of the exiles under the banner of the RPF, Habyarimana had transformed himself from the successor to the shapeless and formless PARMEHUTU regime, and the true shaper of the Hutu nation of Rwanda, into the manipulator mediating between the hardliners of the old religion<sup>24</sup>, whose position hid their corruption and greed, and the proponents of the new religion of democracy and pluralism, ethical stance disguised their various attempts to get a piece of the action. Habyarimana, the manipulator and player of one against the other, ostensibly stood above the fray. But if the master manipulator was too fluid and flexible, he was deemed to be betraying the rigidity of the old order. If he took too rigid a posture, a swarm of bees stung the frozen form to reveal that the spirit of the nation had deserted the embodiment of the new idolotry. More and more, Habyarimana revealed himself not to be the mover and the shaker, but a lifeless force being pushed this way and that by forces that had gone out of his control. Almost four years after the beginning of the civil war, after the opening to multi-party government and the respect for human rights and freedom of speech as the new imposed order,

Habyarimana was not even in a position to negotiate the peace signed at Arusha on 4 August 1993. All he could do was stall the onset of his retirement into a lifeless role as a ceremonial head of government, or be delivered from his impossible predicament by being cast aside as a corpse in sacrifice to the last hurrah of the revival of an even more purified Hutu religion which required the actual destruction of the faces of the Other as part of the Hutu nation. For the Tutsi, with their alleged fifth column of Hutu allies, were considered to be an evil force sucking out the spirit of the pure nation from within.

With the murder of Habyarimana and the shooting down of his plane after he had agreed to implement the final stages of the Arusha Peace Accord, the orgy of the idolotrous religion of a purified Hutu nation had its last hurrah with the murder of over a million Tutsi and moderate Hutus. The spirit of the pure Hutu nation has turned to destroy the images of those who had led the invasion from outside by destroying the face of their reflections in their midst. The worst genocide since World War II was perpetrated under the eyes of an international force specifically tasked to protect civilians as well as preserve the peace. Hitler had taken four years to accomplish what the interahamwe had done in four months. If Hitler had operated had their pace, all the Jews of Europe would have been murdered in eighteen months.

### **Counting the Living and the Dead<sup>25</sup>**

The order-maintaining and order-transforming functions of government<sup>26</sup> had given way or were usurped by the order destroying efforts of the genocidal extremists. The calculative rationality of the regime had turned its energy into organizing the most efficient destructive orgy of modern times. There were two wars - the civil war against the RPF and the war against the proximate other, the defenceless Tutsis in their midst. The real energies were fixed on the second war, on destroying the proximate Other and not the war effort against the RPF, even though the RPA, the attacking forces, outmanned and outgunned the government's army.

In the Arusha Accords, very precise divisions were debated in the sharing of power among the various political groups and in the integration of the new army with very specific ratios allocated between the RPF and the RPA in the officer and enlisted contingents. The demobilization was to proceed according to a precise numerical plan. Even the 900,000 internally displaced were to be restored to their homes according to an exact timetable over the next twelve months, although after the signing of the Peace Accord, the 600,000 internally displaced who could move home returned in the next two weeks.

Counting is the very foundation of an enlightened rational government order. But it was constantly being upset by the disorder of the world. When General Dallaire thought he needed eight thousand soldiers as peacekeepers in Rwanda, and was ready to get by with five thousand, he was told to request 2,400, for that was all the United States would approve; needs or demands were displaced by domestic political perceptions.

The onlookers would not allow themselves to see what they did not want to see if seeing meant the deploying more corporeal bodies to foster the peace. Even when assassinations were traced to the

Rwandese army by the peacekeepers, even when arms caches were uncovered, and even when the precise plans of the genocide leaked by the best possible source were cabled to New York by General Dallaire on 11 January 1994, those with "knowledge" remained senseless and stupid, and the planning for genocide proceeded apace. And when the genocide began, what did the UN do - check out when 10 UN peacekeepers were mutilated and killed, call for peace and the restoration of negotiations between the genocidal killers and the RPF. Rationality had turned its efforts to performing as a blind witness and remaining insensitive to the atrocities being committed.

And what of the genocidal killers? They now had the sanction of a government, however illegitimate that power was. And the international community did virtually nothing to delegitimize the authority of that government.<sup>27</sup> The religious passion for defining the other as the source of evil was now reinforced by the capture of the seats of a purportedly rational authority. The Proximate Other as the embodiment of evil and injustice had been reinforced by propaganda and the new idolatrous religion of the worship of the purity of the Hutu nation. The state had now become the embodiment of both power and religious orthodoxy.

If governments largely insisted in the name of rationality and order in remaining insensitive and blind to the emergence of this genocidal murderous regime, what about the eyes and ears of the world, the international media? While 2500 reporters flocked to South Africa in expectation of reporting on a blood bath when Mandela took power, the events in Rwanda had gone largely unnoticed and unrecorded. There was a small mention of the crash of Habyarimana's plane. Then nothing. Until the bodies started floating down into Lake Victoria.

The coverage of violence in Central Africa, beginning with the horrors in the Congo in the sixties and seventies, has followed a predictable pattern. As soon as the news of the killings begins to spread, the cameras arrive and the focus of attention is almost universally on the body count and the plight of the survivors...Where television is concerned, African news is only big news when it involves lots of dead bodies. The higher the mound, the greater the possibility that the world will, however briefly, send its camera teams and correspondents. Once the story has gone 'stale', i.e. there are no new bodies and the refugees are down to a trickle, the circus moves on. The powerful images leave us momentarily horrified but largely ignorant, what someone memorably described as 'compassion without understanding.'" (Keane 1995, 7)

The real coverage began with the crossing of what was reported as one million Hutu refugees in one day into Goma. That, and the presence of Western humanitarian aid workers, really captured the imagination of the media, disregarding the fact that at least 10% of the refugees were probably genocidal killers. Numbers counted. The more the better, even if the result was that 1,200,000 refugees were recorded in Zaire although there were likely only 800,000.

Counting is the fundamental foundation for a rational order of government. But counting can also be used to ignore and hide from oneself the combination of religious passions and interests that turn into

a deadly combination. Blind reason and religious visionary passion combined to produce genocide in Rwanda.

## **Dismemberment and Membership**

Christianity differentiates between the mystical body of Christ and the physical body of Christ. Christ as a corporeal body could die on the cross that the mystical body of Christ would live forever. By becoming part of that mystical body, salvation was offered to everyone for eternity. The corporeal body had been split from the communicative body in order to escape the original sin which Saint Augustine had claimed was an inherent aspect of the corporeal body. Even the mutilation of the flesh could be justified in the name of salvation. This meant that humans were inherently in exile from themselves.

In mediaeval political theory, the king was said to have two bodies, his corporeal, flawed and mortal self, and his immortality with respect to his role in the body politic and the respect rendered to his person.<sup>28</sup> That is why, from the perspective of the sovereign in his role, in his communicative body, there was always a radical alterity between the sovereign and his/her subjects. In modern Cartesian philosophy, the self was divided between the *res extensa*, the corporeal body, and the mind. This division of the self recurs in many forms in ancient, mediaeval and modern thought. But the stress in Kant and post-Kantian thought has been on searching for a way to integrate the divided self rather than to reinforce the division.

But in modernity, when dismemberment of the self is turned from a virtue into a fault, the cause of that divisiveness is often projected onto another. I am not at one with myself because the social order has divided me from my true self. The source of the division can be projected onto a ruling class, a political oligarchy, or a group of people living in one's midst who are said to have corrupted the body politic and prevented one from being raised as an integrated being. So we project our division onto the other as a mode of integrating the self. This is the root of ethnic hatred and racism. "The ethnicity of the body is built into its dismemberment and disfigurement. Violence constructs the ethnic body as the metonym of sectarian social space."<sup>29</sup>

That is why we disfigure those we do not want to figure or count as part of the body politic. We want to strike at their soul through their corporeal being. We want to ex-communicate the communicative body.

We feel the other's e-motional being is central to them, to their identity, to their ability to be with us, in a way that is not quite true of other modes of apprehension. The other's thoughts are the key to their 'insides', as in their imaginative life or their memorial life, but somehow we experience these as somewhat more of a foundation of their history than we do the other's emotional life, which seems to define them in a way more determined by their facticity at that moment, in a way analogous to what we feel about their embodiment. We know that their thinking is not likely to change on this or that subject, but it doesn't seem quite as much part and parcel of the core of their being as do their emotions with

which we identify them.<sup>30</sup>.

Merleau-Ponty (*The Phenomenology of Perception*, 146) wrote that, "the body is essential as expressive space." To reduce that expressiveness, one attacks the face of that body in the Proximate Other as the the foreign, the unnatural, the evil. The Proximate Other is not the merely expendable we murder and slaughter in war.

## **Implications**

Assuming that genocide does indeed consist in the attempt to mutilate the corporeal body of the Proximate Other in order to ex-communicate the communicative body of the unwanted part of the body politic, does this have any implications for how we respond to genocide? I suggest it does. For we are forced to turn back and try to understand why our rational, realist perspective helped both to blind us to the events underway and to undercut any efforts at stopping the tragic course that the Hutu/Tutsi conflict was taking. We are so concerned with the counting constitutive of rational theories of membership in the body politic, as if the body politic were just an aggregate of individuals, that we do not even understand why we cannot even count in our blindness to the forces that seek to dismember one part of the body politic in the quest for purification of the remainder.

I suggest that the reason for that blindness is that we are sufficiently inattentive to the same forces in our own body politic.

## ENDNOTES

Art then ranks with Philosophy and religion on the highest plane of human endeavour, differing only that it is differentiated from them in the forms under which art presents its objects, the form of sensuous perception and, therefore, requiring sensible expression. Art is simply a sensuous sign of that which goes beyond sensibility in philosophy and religion

1. The body may be a corporeal entity, but in the social embodiment of the body, what we make and do with bodies and how we represent them, sometimes reveal how that body is regarded in social space. Structural, functional, and class analysis had dominated sociology. Bryan S. Turner's *The Body & Society* (London: Sage, 1984; 1996), closely followed by John O'Neill's works, inverted traditional sociology by arguing that the body in all its dimensions, rather than social rational abstractions, ought to be the axis of sociological analysis in which major social and political processes are problematized in and expressed through the body. Only one finds no analysis in that literature of the most heinous social crime of all to the body - genocide. Further, Turner's neo-logistic theory of contemporary late capitalist or post-modern society as a *somatic society* seems redundant since all societies engage in this activity; the body is not simply the vehicle for expressing though its condition political and social problems. While much of the literature on embodiment is concerned with contemporary uses of the body to express the good life in a fit, healthy and beautiful body while rejecting the aged, the diseased, and damaged body, where the body is seen as the centre of a culture of hedonistic practice, this story is concerned with the more fundamental ontological possibilities of embodiment. So I am not interested in reading more papers on cults or punkers who pierce, colour and tattoo bodies as signs of membership

in a tribe. Much of the phenomenological tradition of embodiment concerns itself with the fragility of life and brutality. This essay starts with fragility and brutality to contrast those processes which transform that fragility and brutality into a system of order. That means that, unlike Michel Foucault and his followers, who, influenced by Kojève, see the essential mode of intervention between two bodies as one of power, this analysis sees the inter-subjective relationship as a tension primarily between the use of the other for self and the effort of the self to define itself. The primary character of that self is **not** control over the other, but narcissistic self-absorption, what Hannah Arendt called "thoughtlessness", the inability of the communicative body to empathize and enter into the thought processes of someone who thinks differently.

2. However, I do not share the conviction that the world is given to us primordially in our flesh even though our mythologies, religions, philosophies, sciences and ideologies do their best to inscribe their messages in our corporeal beings.

On the other hand, I do not believe that the body as oneself is constructed *de novo* or that contemporary society is the result of an interaction of intention and the body. (Turner 1996, 20)

4. Cf. Arthur Frank, "For a sociology of the body: an analytic review," in M. Featherstone, M. Hepworth and B.S. Turner, eds., *The Body: Social Process and Cultural Theory*, London: Sage, 36-102. Frank discusses the two dimensions of the self related to itself and to the other, but defines another dimension in terms of desire and control, while I take desire as the fundamental character of the communicative body which determines the four possibilities of relationship to itself and the other.

5. John O'Neill, *Five Bodies: The Human Shape of Modern Society*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, 23.

6. See, for example, *The Life of the Mind*, in the single volume paperback containing both Book I and II, HBJ 1981.

7. Contrast this activity with apocalyptic cults like the 39 in Heaven's Gate who committed suicide in California, the Canadian and Swiss suicides in the Solar Temple cult, the Branch Davidians, or the massive suicide/murders in the Jonestown massacre in Guyana. In those cases, the individuals took their own lives rather than the lives of others. But many of the same features were present leading to the massive violence but not self-dismemberment. The cultists were not genocidal killers but were at war with their own bodies. But like

genocidal killers, they envisioned an either/or outcome - either they prevailed and their vision reigned, or evil overtook the rule of the world as they knew it. This made them ignore conventional laws and norms, prepare for utilizing violence by storing weapons in order to deal with what they viewed as persecution of the righteous, demonize their enemies in an eschatology of radical good versus evil, and made them blind to sound judgement in the socially encapsulated world in which they had placed themselves. The severe limitations placed on their communicative bodies made them willing to sacrifice their corporeal bodies. At least, in contrast to the genocidal killers, the bodies were their own. (Cf. Lorne L. Dawson, ed. *Cults in Context*, Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 1996)

8. For a general discussion of the right to return of refugees, cf. Howard Adelman, "Refugees: The Right of Return" in *Group Rights*, ed. Judith Baker, University of Toronto Press, 1994, 164-185. For a more specific discussion of the right of return of Tutsi refugees from their exile before 1990, cf. Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke, March 1996, *Early Warning and Conflict Management*, Volume 2 of *The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience*, Steering Committee of the Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda, Copenhagen, 1996. For a discussion of the resort to violence associated with refugees in exile, cf. my paper, "Refugee Warriors," presented at the International Studies Association Convention, *Coping with Insecurity: Threat more than Enemies*, Toronto, March 19, 1997, for the session "Refugees as Threat to State and Regional Stability in the Developing World."

9. For an excellent novel which documents this split and the way it is represented in the dialectic between memory and history, cf. W.G. Sebald, tr. From the German by Michael Hulse, *The Emigrants*, New York: New Directions, 1997.

10. Daniel Warner, "Voluntary Repatriation and the Memory of Return to Home: A Critique of Liberal Mathematics," *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 7:2-3, 1994, p. 162. To be home is to be with the Reflected Other.

11. Cf. Paul Tabori, *The Anatomy of Exile: A Semantic and Historical Study*, London, 1972, p. 27; see also Michael Seidel, *Exile and the Narrative Imagination*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986, p. 1.

12. Malkki (1995) 90.

13. Seidel (1986) 21.

14. Fergal Meade, *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey*, New York, Viking, 1995, p. 1.
15. Ibid, Keane, 2.
16. G.W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, p. 441.
17. Malkki (1995) 90.
18. This calculation was based on a variety of techniques - demographic calculations, etc. - but mostly body counts of mass graves and the estimates of how many floating bodies down the river into Lake Victoria had not been recovered. The increase in figures after the fact is rare in humanitarian situations. The reverse is usually the case. In refugee studies we take number inflation as a matter of course. In the count of the homeless in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, OXFAM-GB had published full page advertisements to raise funds stating that 600,000 had been made homeless by the invasion of Lebanon. When we did our audit of twelve different counts, the actual figure was 60,000, and one-third of them had been made homeless after OXFAM-UK published its ad. (Cf. Howard Adelman, "Homeless Refugees and Displaced Persons in Southern Lebanon resulting from the Israeli Invasion of Lebanon - June 1982," a report published by the Refugee Documentation Project, York University, Toronto, August 1982.) The most recent case of inflated numbers displayed to the whole world occurred in Zaire where there were purportedly 1,200,000 Hutu refugees. Part of the problem when approximately 600,000 returned to Rwanda at the end of 1996 and up to 200,000 were reported as having been seen fleeing westward, was where the 400,000 phantom refugees were.
19. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969, 225.
20. In this section, I attempt to account for the genocide from the perspective of the genocidal killer.
21. Cf. Malkki (1995) ch.2, fn. 12, pp. 62; 306.
22. G.W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A.V. Miller, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977, para. 677, 411.
23. Hegel (1977) para. 678, p. 412.
24. "When a relation to the other becomes a relation to a radical other (i.e. to an unpunishable and unforgiveable person), everything

is haunted by the past. Insisting on the radical alterity of the other, one becomes captive of a past which must be remembered forever so as to block any future relation and exclude any present relation with the other." Adi Ophir, "Between Eichmann and Kant," in *History & Memory: Hannah Arendt and Eichmann in Jerusalem*, 8:2, Fall/Winter 1996, p. 103.

25. We are all different when we live; we are all the same when we die.

26. Cf. ch. 12 of S.N. Eisenstadt, *Power Trust and Meaning*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

27. "But what would induce ordinary Serbs to turn on those who until recently they had treated as good neighbours? Key factors seem to have been the sanction of authority and the acceptance by society of such extreme action as legitimate." (Cigar 64)

28. Cf. Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957.

29. Cf. Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence: The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, p. 64.

30. Glen A. Mazis, *Emotions and Embodiment: Fragile Ontology*, New York: Peter Lang, 1993, 67.