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Gray Zones of modern genocide

Megan Dale Lee

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

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GRAY ZONES OF MODERN
GENOCIDE

by

Megan Dale Lee

Bachelor of Arts, Education
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2007

Bachelor of Arts, History
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts Degree in History
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Megan Dale Lee

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Examination Committee Chair



Examination Committee Member



Examination Committee Member



Graduate College Faculty Representative

Dean of the Graduate College

ABSTRACT

Gray Zones of Modern Genocide

By

Megan Dale Lee

Dr. Janet Ward, Examination Committee Chair
Associate Professor of History
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Italian-Jewish chemist and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi wrote in his work *The Drowned and the Saved* about the “Gray Zone,” or holding place for all things difficult to categorize about his experiences in the Nazi camp Auschwitz. Because human tendency is to divide things in a rigid dichotomy, he argued, anything without a set role is brushed aside. I have extended this Gray Zone to include mutually shared situations from modern genocide including: the relationship of race/land to genocide, the “Forced Victim-Perpetrator” (victim forced to commit atrocities against his or her own people), and the complex international reaction to genocidal situations on individual and state levels. Understanding some of the common characteristics of the Gray Zones of modern genocide may help scholars and activists to keep the realistic view that genocide is not a confusing anomaly but an unfortunate pattern of human existence that must be understood and combated.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Defining the Unthinkable

In 1921 young Soghomon Tehlirian took out a revolver on a rainy Berlin street and shot a man in the back of the head. After he had been subdued, it was learned that Tehlirian was an Armenian man who had survived the pre-meditated massacre of his people by the ruling authorities in Turkey in 1915. His victim was Talaat Pasha, the Turkish interior minister who had ordered the destruction of the Armenian people six years prior. The story made international news, and was read by a young Polish-Jewish law student named Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin noticed a legal inconsistency that bothered him: there were laws against homicide, so Tehlirian would stand trial for his action. Yet for what Pasha had done, essentially ordering the extermination of an entire race of people, there was no legal recourse because Pasha was a government official and had only ordered the deaths of Armenians within the country whose laws he controlled. His action, though horrific, was not considered to be a crime. How could it be, Lemkin wondered, that killing one person was a crime but killing an entire race was not?¹ He wrote later:

I felt that if the killing of one man was a crime, and is not a matter of negotiations between the guilty and the policemen, the destruction of millions of people should also be a crime, and, moreover, it should be an international crime to the effect that the guilty, whether heads of states or private individuals, should be held responsible as criminals.²

The search for the solution to this problem would become Lemkin's life crusade and though the Turkish government continues to deny its complicity in and even the occurrence of the 1915 Armenian genocide, the world can no longer deny the existence of genocide as a an atrocity worthy of legal action.

Before one can legislate against an action that action requires a name. In 1921, no such name existed. Lemkin considered "barbarity" and "vandalism" but finally settled on "genocide" derived from the Greek word *genos-* (race, tribe) and the Latin *-cide* (killing). To simply state that genocide is the mass killing of a group was not enough, however, and Lemkin extended the term to include things he considered fundamental foundations of a group. His formal definition, as published in his 1944 work *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, reads:

The disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of individuals belonging to such groups.³

This work, which laid the foundation for genocide studies and the multitude of definitional interpretations that followed, was not published until Lemkin himself had been touched by genocide. Though he fled Poland for the United States during the Holocaust he was helpless to save his family who nearly all perished in Nazi concentration camps. Lemkin later invoked their memory as he petitioned for the acceptance of his definition by the newly established United Nations (UN).⁴

The UN consists of many different member states each concerned with their own protection from prosecution. Because of this, Lemkin's original (very broad) definition was drafted and redrafted over the course of a year before the general assembly would vote on its acceptance. Soviet representatives refused to confirm the legislation if it

included political groups. The United States was concerned about the ability to prosecute retroactively. Finally, in 1948, The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, also known as the Genocide Convention, was passed into international law.⁵ It defines genocide as:

Any of the following acts with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial, or religious group as such:

- A) Killing members of the group;
- B) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- C) Deliberately inflicting on the group the conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- D) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- E) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.⁶

Lemkin continued to fight for further legal applications of his definition, and for the ratification of the Genocide Convention in countries throughout the world. His work consumed him entirely and helped to make him a reclusive and passionate man. He had very few social relationships. Raphael Lemkin died of a heart attack on August 28, 1959. Though he had published 11 books, created a name for and attracted attention to genocide, and changed international law, the seven people who attended his funeral stood as testament that his passing was almost unnoticed.⁷

Since its ratification, the Genocide Convention has created considerable acrimony between historians, jurists, and international leaders. Despite being very specific in certain places overall it is very vague. What actions constitute “mental harm”? How many people constitute a group “as such”? And though the beginning of the document claims that all nations whose signature the document held were legally bound to prevent and punish the crime of genocide, the exact extent of required action is ambiguous and allows states to selectively apply the Convention, as it suits their needs.⁸

One of the most contested areas of genocide research is its foundation: the very definition of the word. As a twentieth century invention, the term “genocide” has experienced many shifts and changes that further complicate the discipline. Because of the ambiguity of the UN-provided definition for genocide, scholars spent the latter part of the twentieth century refining and redefining the term. The fundamental divide in Holocaust and later genocide studies was the Lemkin vs. Convention debate. Although Raphael Lemkin’s definition was the original conceptualization of the term, the Genocide Convention is where that definition was codified into international law. Much of the early scholarship of genocide surrounded the definition of the word, and thus identifying historical cases to fit definitions. Peter Drost, in the 1959 book *The Crime of State* would begin a wave of scholars who each coined their own definition. He was followed by Vahakn Dadrian, in 1975, and Irving Louis Horowitz, in 1976. The most fundamental work in Holocaust and genocide studies came in the 1980’s after the publication of Leo Kuper’s *Genocide: Its Political Uses in the 20th Century*. Kuper’s analysis of the United Nations Genocide Convention accepts it for its legal purpose, but insists that it is not broad enough to include all groups targeted by genocidal acts. Kuper’s definition was based on the UN Convention but broadened the scope of potential victims to include political victims. This attempt to broaden the scope of the Convention was met with mixed results. Some of the critics included sociologist Helen Fein, whose 1988 work *Genocide: a Sociological Perspective* returned to the Convention for its foundation with only minor revisions to clarify that “destruction” meant mass killing. Fein, Barbara Harff, and others would maintain that for all of its flaws the UN Convention provided the most legitimate framework for genocide scholarship. Other Scholars, like Adam Jones, are not

convinced that mass killing is necessary to commit genocide. These scholars have trended towards a more Lemkin-esque application of the term.⁹

The plethora of definitions used in current scholarship is almost overwhelming. In his 2006 work *What is Genocide?* Martin Shaw points out that as a result of the academic community being unable to decide on a definition, heads of state for member nations of the UN have often debated what is and is not genocide. This debate leaves legal hands tied and prevents nations from being compelled to intervene until often it is too late and the genocide has already passed. The reliance of the state governments on the definitions academia has presented does not cause genocide but it does provide a convenient excuse for the hesitation of these states to maintain their role as given by the Genocide Convention to “prevent and punish.” While Shaw is critical of the scholastic inability to determine a definition, he ends his work with his own definition further proving the point that scholars define the term as it best suits their own work.¹⁰ For the purposes of this thesis (and in an effort to avoid further exacerbation of this problem) I rely on Lemkin’s original definition to determine the boundaries of a genocidal action. It is appropriate, also, to clarify that I define the intent to commit genocide as reliant on the definition of the “target group” as defined by the perpetrating state or individuals.

The “Gray Zone”

In his final work *The Drowned and the Saved*, Italian chemist and Holocaust survivor Primo Levi recounts a popular fable of a cruel old woman who dies and goes to Hell. This woman, who lied, cheated, and stole throughout her life stands at the gates of damnation with her guardian angel at her side. The angel, seeking to recall anything

salvageable about the woman's existence suddenly remembers a single incident. Once, and Levi reminds us it was "only once," the woman had taken pity on a passing beggar and given him the gift of a tiny onion from her garden. This tiny onion is then held out to the woman and she clutches it tightly as the angel lifts her to salvation. This fable of hope for even the most vicious human beings rings hollow to Levi in his efforts to comprehend the horrors he survived. In his own attempt to organize his experiences and the people he encountered he dismisses the message of this tale for those victims in the Nazi concentration camps with compromised consciences and the perpetrators with moments of moral absolution. Instead, Levi assigns these characters to the "Gray Zone," an ambiguous place where judgment cannot be rendered by outsiders and where moments in Holocaust history remain that are most uncomfortable for scholars to discuss, debate, or classify.¹¹

The Gray Zone is a complicated place for scholars to come to terms with because of the tendency that human beings have to search for a universal "schema," as Levi calls it, to keep things organized. The intrinsic need to establish us and them, friend and foe, is present in all. Oversimplification of the world is necessary if only because of the sheer mass of stimuli demanding recognition, categorization, and response every minute of every day. For this reason, when spectators attend a sporting match, the competitive edge often leads to the creation of rigid dichotomy where a tie leaves the viewer feeling "defrauded and disappointed." Put simply, Levi remarks, this is because, "At the more or less unconscious level, he wanted winners and losers, which he identified with the good guys and the bad guys, respectively, because the good must prevail, otherwise the world would be subverted."¹² For third parties who have not experienced genocide or mass

atrocities firsthand the natural response is often this Manichean tendency to rigidly classify causes and characters of genocide in an effort to make sense of the inexplicable cruelty and mortality. To distill such circumstances for the sake of comprehension leaves one half of the story untold. It also denies a voice to millions for whom the Gray Zone was more than just a rhetorical catch-all for the difficult to understand.

Levi's Gray Zone has a complex cast of characters. Here, Levi places SS Oberscharführer Erich Muhsfeld. This man was one of those in charge of the gas chambers at Auschwitz. One day, the Sonderkommando ("Special Unit" or detail of prisoners charged with facilitating the orderly business of the gas chambers and crematoria) found a teenaged girl who had survived. Muhsfeld weighed the possibility of allowing her to be transferred into the women's camp but after deliberation explained that she was too young and could not be trusted. Rather than subjecting her to a second round of gas, however, Muhsfeld ordered one of his men to kill her quickly with a bullet to the neck. Though the eventual consequence was the same, it was the brief moment of hesitation that causes Levi to claim Muhsfeld in the Gray Zone, on the "extreme boundary, within the gray band, that zone of ambiguity which radiates out from regimes based on terror and obsequiousness."¹³

Levi's grouping of certain perpetrators in this outer band could be further extended to include the soldiers of Police Battalion 101, studied extensively by Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen. These "Ordinary Men" as Browning calls them, were average middle-aged German citizens who were often too old to be drafted into the army but were still useful to the Third Reich in occupied Poland. Browning and Goldhagen detail the transformation from ordinary citizens to cold, often-drunk, killers as this battalion

personally oversaw the execution of hundreds of thousands of Jewish men, women, and children at close range. The psychological effects on the men with little experience disobeying orders and an overabundance of alcohol were profound and call into question the natural inclination to assume the simplicity of perpetrator motivations. Questions also arise about the ability to question authority and the overwhelming power of group-think and peer pressure in situations like this.¹⁴

Along with complex perpetrators, Levi also groups complex victims into the Gray Zone. Among these are the victims who collaborated with perpetrators for a benefit of any kind. This list includes Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski, Elder of the Judenrat, or head of the Jewish Council for the Lodz ghetto. Rumkowski is a complex character because his motivation is so difficult to distinguish. Levi describes him as, “an energetic, uncultivated, and authoritarian man” who was quick to take and exploit the false power given to him by the Germans. Rumkowski was given control over the rations, the work schedules, the housing situation, and any other situations that arose in his private fiefdom.¹⁵ Though to the Nazis this man represented nothing more than a convenient way to accomplish the bureaucratic goals of the Third Reich, in his mind Rumkowski had convinced himself not only of his personal power but also of his magnanimous interest in protecting the Jews under his control. Levi insists: “He must have progressively convinced himself that he was a messiah, a savior of his people, whose welfare, at least at intervals, he must certainly have desired.”¹⁶ Perhaps Rumkowski believed he was acting as a savior to Lodz on September 4, 1942 when he stood before the assembled residents of the ghetto and informed them that the Nazis had demanded 20,000 Jews be selected for deportation to the concentration camps. “Should we take it upon ourselves, do it

ourselves, or leave it to others to do?" He asked over the wailing of the frightened population.

To fill the need, Rumkowski ordered the deportation of the elderly, the infirm, and all children under the age of 10. It was his hope, he reasoned, to save those most likely to survive. "I must perform this difficult and bloody operation," he told them, "I must cut off limbs in order to save the body itself! I must take children because, if not, others may be taken as well, God forbid."¹⁷ Three days later, the order was carried out. An anonymous note, later found written in Yiddish on the back of a set of soup kitchen records, details the grief of a father who lost his five-year-old daughter to the chaotic deportation. Having hidden her in a clothes basket at the hospital, he ran with his other child to hide. When he returned he found that his hidden child's crying gave her away and she was discovered and promptly deported. He writes:

I lost her through my own fault, cowardice, stupidity, and passivity. I gave her up, defenseless...I am broken, I feel guilty, I am a murderer and must atone, because I won't find peace. I killed my child with my own hands, I killed Mookha, I am a killer, because how can it be that a father deserts his own child and runs away?¹⁸

The guilt of this father over the loss of his child may have been felt by Rumkowski, but the leader never showed it to those who lived under his rule in the ghetto. He maintained a private entourage with a carriage driver and a "court of flatterers and henchmen" throughout his time in the ghetto.¹⁹ When the final deportation came, Rumkowski demanded a private train car for him and his family, a luxury that lasted only as long as the ride. When the train came to a stop, nothing stood between the elderly man and the fate of the majority of Lodz in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Levi writes ominously:

Who was Rumkowski? Not a monster, nor a common man; yet many around us are like him...Like Rumkowski, we too are so dazzled by power and prestige as to forget our essential fragility. Willingly or not we come to terms with power,

forgetting that we are all in the ghetto, that the ghetto is walled in, that outside the ghetto reign the lords of death, and that close by the train is waiting.²⁰

Levi clearly reminds his reader that underlying the necessity of the Gray Zone as a category is the inability of mankind to face in itself the ability to commit atrocity, to be complicit in atrocities committed against one's loved ones, and the overarching ability to stand mutely by while atrocity is committed. The inability to understand is just as much caused by a refusal as it is by confusion.

The Rise of Human Rights and Comparative Genocide Studies

In order to understand why comparative genocide studies became a focus of the latter part of the twentieth century, it is important to establish the changing ideas of humanity and the inherent rights of man that increasingly came to the intellectual forefront in advance of Lemkin's definition. Therefore we must examine first the notion of the universality of man, universal human rights, and human rights in general.

The trend of scholarship overwhelmingly credits the Age of Enlightenment with the birth of modern human rights, especially as it pertains to Western philosophy. Scholars like Jack Donnelly have suggested that the concept of these rights originates in the reaction of Europeans to the "social disruptions and transformations of modernity." Modernity was marked by the invention of the modern nation-state with the European Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which carved the continent into definable geographic areas. While previously, the state had been defined by the monarch and the monarch's movements or land holdings, the Western nation-state after 1648 was defined by its physical boundaries.²¹

Another distinctive marker of modernity was the rise of the middle class out of the “growing penetration of the market.” As this middle class rose, so too rose their cause to challenge the prevailing notions of divine rights and privilege.²² This growing awareness of self and increased trend towards questioning the authority of the ruling class was present in the writings of philosophers such as John Locke. In his 1688 *Second Treatise on Government* regarding the fundamental right of man to security, Locke charged that “no one ought to harm another in his life, liberty, or possessions.”²³ He would later write: “All men may be restrained from invading others rights, and from doing hurt to one another... which willeth the peace and preservation of all mankind.”²⁴ This understanding of the individuality of man and his place within the larger conglomeration of humanity was essential to the foundation of human rights. It made clear that the healthy individual assists in the creation of the healthy whole. It also presented a paradox that would become the timeless quandary of modern democratic governments: where is the boundary between individual freedom and the healthy society? This debate has become the catalyst for politically motivated demonstrations by concerned individuals on both sides and continues today.

Locke was not alone in his assertion of the rights of the individual within the larger society; amongst other influential Enlightenment thinkers was Jean Jacques Rousseau, author of *The Social Contract*, published in 1762. Rousseau would further assert the universality of mankind in his statement that “in our corporate capacity, we receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole.”²⁵ Rousseau’s impact was further reaching than social commentary and philosophical frameworks; however, he was also a novelist. According to Lynn Hunt, Rousseau’s novel *Julie* had a more profound

impact on society than his works of social theory because it was amongst the beginnings of a writing genre which focused on members of ordinary classes.²⁶ Hunt suggests that by humanizing formerly untouchable classes and helping readers to identify with their plights, Rousseau—and other novelists of the time—invoked a universal empathy that had previously been reserved for members of one’s own class, family, and social group. It is logical to conclude that readers who were able to empathize with a fictional character of another class would be able to empathize with members of other groups in day-to-day existence as well. Though Hunt is clear that she does not believe the novel to be the only genesis of empathetic human encounters she does provide compelling evidence that to understand the novel is to understand the larger social temperature of the time period, which culminated in the use of these philosophies to stage revolutions in both North America and France.²⁷

At the basis of the revolutionary activity was the idea that, as Thomas Jefferson famously penned, “...all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights...”²⁸ an idea that was further established by the French revolutionaries in the “Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen” in 1789, when they wrote, “Men are born and remain free and equal in rights.” They continued, by amending Locke’s original list, adding to life, liberty, and property, the rights of “security, and resistance to oppression.”²⁹ Although this list was the beginnings of the expansion of human rights, the progression from paper to practice was long and labored. Although these documents used universal language, the initial application of these rights was to an ironically low number of people in very select groups which did not include women, enslaved populations, native groups, or lower class men.³⁰

Despite these seemingly inherent hypocrisies, the ideas would not be entirely deserted, nor would it be the last time that a novel was used as a tool of activism. In 1852, Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* jumped from serial fiction to the printed novel further catalyzed the United States and the Western world against African slavery, selling 1.5 million copies before 1855.³¹ Other novels of prodigious value to activist groups for a variety of human rights causes include Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*—a socialist commentary on the victimization of workers under the unregulated capitalism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—and Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*—a novel about a WWI veteran who had gone to war to defend democracy, only to realize after sacrificing his body that democracy was not really at stake. The gruesome nature of Sinclair's novel eventually brought about the Pure Food and Drug Act, and Trumbo's novel has been re-printed throughout the past century as a tool to protest the atrocity and pointless sacrifice of imperialistic military maneuvers.³²

Evidenced by the popular fiction of the time, individual activism against human rights violations began to increase throughout the two centuries following the American and French revolutions. Slowly governing bodies began to also make movements towards the universal application of such rights, as popular ideologies evolved. The culmination of these efforts was the 1941 Atlantic Charter, outlining the first international application of President Franklin Roosevelt's famous "Four Freedoms".³³ As scholar Elizabeth Borgwardt points out, the charter had a monumental impact on the world because it symbolized the first time that multiple states had agreed that, "the individual [was] in a relationship with a wider international order, and, by extension, implied that the individual was a legitimate object of international concern."³⁴ This eventually paved the

way for even larger international agreement when the United Nations' "Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man" was adopted on December 10, 1948. The Universal Declaration provided the ultimate ideal of "inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family". Within its pages this document asserted that the health of the whole was dependent on the psychological and physical well being of every individual regardless of race, class, gender, or religion. It guaranteed such things as "the right to life, liberty, and security of person" while outlawing atrocious acts like torture, slavery, and arbitrary arrest. It also empowered states to intervene when these "inherent" rights were being violated by states against their own citizens.³⁵

The focus on the rights of the individual was one of the catalysts for the rise in genocide studies. As previously discussed, Raphael Lemkin came to his definition out of concern for the legal justice due to individuals impacted by a crime that knew no restrictions. Such action was the result of the progression of human rights theory from the seventeenth century on. Modern genocide studies could not have existed without this progression, and so it was not until the twentieth century that giving the action a name and being able to prosecute and punish became large enough concerns to share a common movement.

After the end of the Nazi Holocaust in 1945, several survivors published memoirs of the event; including Primo Levi, whose first publication of his book *If This is a Man* received a lukewarm international reception. Raphael Lemkin found his own attempt to publish his four-volume magnum opus on the history of genocide denied; publishers did not foresee potential sales and refused to print it. Popular scholarship did not begin serious inquiry into the Holocaust or other genocide until the early 1960s. It was then that

the capture and trial of Adolph Eichmann, considered the architect of the Holocaust, reawakened international sentiment regarding the tragedy. The next major movement in genocide scholarship came with the convergence of Holocaust and genocide studies to become comparative genocide studies. Initially, the two remained exclusive, until Zygmunt Bauman's 1989 work *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Not only did Bauman determine that the rise of modern bureaucracy gave birth to what has been called "modern" genocide, he also disregarded the theory of the uniqueness of the Holocaust. Bauman claimed that while the Holocaust was arguably the best-known genocide, it was not exclusive in its brutality or function. By the mid-1990s, Holocaust uniqueness had become a moot point as scholars like Ben Kiernan, Martin Shaw, and Erick Weitz used it as a basis for comparison. Current genocide scholarship is comparative in nature, and now focuses on the broader themes shared by multiple situations of genocide.

Comparative genocide studies is a relatively new field, having only really gained academic acceptance in the past twenty years. Prior to that, scholarship focused on specific events. Much attention was given to the Nazi Holocaust, which became the basis of comparison for other genocides and served as the foundation of the field. In comparative genocide studies, there are many Gray Zones not only in the subject matter itself but also in the interdisciplinary nature of the field. Because history, sociology, international relations, political science, psychology and many other fields are all represented, the field is much less distinct than are some of the more rigidly defined disciplines.

Adam Jones in his work *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* gives a broad overview of the contributions of psychology, political science, sociology, and other

humanities studies to the full understanding of genocide. Scholars like psychologist James Waller whose work includes *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing*, sociologist Zygmunt Bauman whose work includes *Modernity and the Holocaust*, and political scientist Barbara Harff whose work includes “No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder Since 1955,” all have brought their varied disciplines to the study of comparative genocide. The inherent interdisciplinary nature of Comparative Genocide studies causes concern for many academics who strive to maintain clearly defined boundaries in their fields. It is important to stress that each discipline brings a unique perspective to the global picture of genocide. For example: political science, as a discipline, provides a macro-level understanding of the situation through the lens of political structure and statistics. History, in turn, provides a micro-level understanding of genocide through in-depth analysis of individual contributions and verbal pictures of events. By understanding the contributions each discipline can make, scholars create a more complete understanding of the problem and can thereby create more comprehensive solutions.

The subject of Comparative Genocide is particularly reliant on primary source documents. These documents are sometimes very personal—in the forms of diaries, letters, and memoirs—or very impersonal—in the form of bureaucratic paperwork, speeches, and official correspondence. Due to the widespread nature of genocide as an occurrence, there is a wide variety of primary sources in a wide variety of languages. In order to really gain firsthand experience with the materials it is crucial to understand the language of the source. Despite the availability of sources as translated texts, language

barriers still present themselves and can make it difficult to fully explore avenues of academic inquiry. As has already been detailed regarding the lackluster initial reception of Primo Levi's memoir, after the Holocaust it took nearly twenty years for public interest in such memoirs to receive recognition. Few were published outside of their primary language until later in the century. Growing humanitarian concern for victims of recent genocides has meant an increase in the number of memoirs initially published in English, but a lack of primary language knowledge still leaves researchers at a loss for the official and bureaucratic primary documents which are less likely to have been translated.

Scholars have used these primary documents in a variety of ways. Christopher Browning and Daniel Goldhagen used the same bureaucratic documentation of Police Battalion 101 during the Holocaust to form their separate theses about the ability of ordinary (in this case German) people to commit extraordinary atrocity. Saul Friedlander, in his work *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1945*, used personal diaries and letters to create a scene in his readers' minds that personalized the suffering of the millions affected by the genocide. In an interview in Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah*, Raul Hilberg explained that his research on the bureaucratic train scheduling paperwork of the Third Reich helped him to sketch a picture of the movement of millions of prisoners to concentration camps and prove that genocide can be completed in minor details. Scholarship on other genocides, such as Ben Kiernan's work on Cambodia and Nicholas Werth's work on Stalin's Soviet Union have used similar techniques with primary sources to achieve similar goals with different genocidal situations. The uses of primary sources differ depending on the field of study and

therefore the audience and intention of the writer. Members of the political science community, such as Adam Jones, often focus more heavily on bureaucratic documents that include specific quantifiable numbers that can be worked into useful statistics. Representatives of the field of anthropology, such as Nancy Scheper-Hughes, use those same documents to create an accurate concept of the “human condition” in the context of that historical moment. Those in the field of psychology, such as Israel Charny, focus heavily on memoirs and letters in an attempt to recreate the mind of a perpetrator or a victim. Equally, those in the field of history, such as Saul Friedlander, use memoirs and letters—often trying instead to create micro-historically intimate pictures within macro-historical event. For this work the perspective will be historically based, and much of the primary source material will be used to paint an intimate picture of macro-historical events for the edification of the reader.

This project is meant to shine light on some of the less researched parts of comparative genocide Studies. The framework that Primo Levi provides offers a convenient starting point for this discussion as the three main components of this work involve subjects best understood through the lens of the Gray Zone. Circumstances of history are inherently complex and messy (as Levi suggests) yet scholarship still looks for clearly defined boundaries to establish a frame of reference by which to codify events. The first chapter of this work explores the fluid relationship between race and land and the uses of both as invoked by perpetrators to justify genocidal action. Although scholars have assessed that both are fundamental justifications for genocide, the definitions of both and their applications are situation specific depending on the perpetrator’s views. Because of the inability to fully define either, they belong in the Gray Zone.

The second chapter is concerned with the characters of genocide, primarily victims forced to commit atrocity against their own people. These Forced Victim-Perpetrators include the Sonderkommando of the Nazi concentration camps and those forced to massacre family members during the Rwandan genocide. Though outside observers might consider the choices these people made to be weakness of moral conscience, Primo Levi reminds his readers that such value judgments cannot apply to such abnormal circumstances. He writes: "I believe that no one is authorized to judge them, not those who lived through the experience...and even less those who did not."³⁶ I also include in this category child-soldiers. While not exclusive to genocide, their use in genocide is frequent and their classification is equally debated. Questions over age of consent and innocence often surround them and they too are left in the Gray Zone of genocide scholarship. The forced victim-perpetrator, as a character of genocide, has not been thoroughly explored yet. For example, the recent edited edition *Gray Zones: Ambiguity in the Holocaust and its Aftermath* offers one chapter dedicated to interviews taken with surviving Sonderkommando members and a second chapter to a basic accounting of the ordeal that the Sonderkommando endured. It offers very little to connect this character of the Holocaust with other groups in similar situations and outside of providing a snapshot of the men, it offers very little to connect them to the larger picture of genocide.³⁷

The final chapter considers the ambiguous relationship of international parties to the prevention, intervention, and punishment of genocide. It further explores the evolution of human rights and their eventual codification into international law as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document, which expresses the equality of man, is the yet unattained model of perfection set forth by a well meaning, but struggling

international body. The sheer number of interests involved in every UN action serve often to delay reaction to genocide and sometimes deny reaction all together until after the fact. In contrast, the work of dedicated individuals often attempts to close the gap between the current application of human rights and the aspirations for full application. The complex relationship between individuals, international governing bodies, and the their reactions to genocide are a part of the Gray Zone due to their ever changing, difficult to determine, and sometimes contradictory nature.

As Primo Levi wrote, “The young above all demand clarity, a sharp cut; their experience of the world being meager, they do not like ambiguity.”³⁸ By shedding light on some of the most complex Gray Zones of genocide research, perhaps this ambiguity can be overcome. As we face our own humanity, perhaps our own frail ability to become victim or perpetrator can be addressed and in turn repressed. Primo Levi’s Lager is not a place that can ever be fully understood. So unimaginable, sadistic, and overwhelmingly monstrous is the crime of genocide and all of its interconnecting themes and characters, that there is no constant of comparison through which the outsider can grasp its enormity. One can read every heart wrenching memoir, gaze in horror at every faded photograph of skeletal prisoners staring blankly at nothing, and consider deeply the mundane bureaucratic details that supported the hellish system of death and dying, but can never fully empathize. Only those who took the last steps into Hell’s innards and placed their humanity away long enough to survive it can ever truly know. This work is not for them, as it can never do their suffering justice, but for the generations to come—the young who demand clarity from sometimes unclear situations. If the approximation of such horror

can be the closest they ever come to inflicting or receiving such inhumanity, perhaps the suffering has not been in vain.

¹ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 20-23.

² Raphael Lemkin, "Totally Unofficial Man" in *Pioneers of Genocide Studies* Samuel Totten and Steven Leonard Jacobs, eds. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2002), 367.

³ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. (Concord: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

⁴ Power, 48-49.

⁵ Ibid, 54-60.

⁶ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights, "The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide." The United Nations.
http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/p_genoci.htm

⁷ Power, 77-78.

⁸ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13-14.

⁹ Ibid, 14-22.

¹⁰ Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 154.

¹¹ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 58-59.

¹² Ibid, 37.

¹³ Ibid, 58-59.

¹⁴ Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*. (New York: HarperPerennial, 1993); Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*. (New York: Knopf, 1996).

¹⁵ Levi, 62-63.

¹⁶ Ibid, 64.

¹⁷ Mordecai Chaim Rumkowski, "Speech by Chaim Rumkowski—'Give Me Your Children'—4 September 1942" in *Lodz Ghetto: Inside a Community Under Siege* Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides, eds. (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), 328-329.

¹⁸ Anonymous, "A Father's Lament" in *Lodz Ghetto: Inside a Community Under Siege* Alan Adelson and Robert Lapides, eds. (New York: Viking Penguin, 1989), 348-349.

¹⁹ Levi, 63.

²⁰ Ibid, 68-69.

²¹ Jack Donnelly, "The Social Construction of International Human Rights." In *Human Rights in Global Politics*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 82.

²² *Ibid*, 82-83.

²³ Constitution, "Second Treatise on Government, Chapter 2:6," *John Locke*.
<http://www.constitution.org/jl/2ndtr02.htm>.

²⁴ *Ibid*, Section 7.

²⁵ Constitution, "The Social Compact: Chapter 7," *Jean Jacques Rousseau*
http://www.constitution.org/jjr/socon_01.htm#006.

²⁶ Lynn Hunt, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007), 38.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 38-50.

²⁸ The National Archives, "The Declaration of Independence", *Thomas Jefferson*.
www.archives.gov/national-archives-experience/charters/declaration_transcript.html.

²⁹ Hunt, appendix. 221.

³⁰ Edmund S. Morgan, "Slavery and Freedom: The American Paradox," *The Journal of American History*, 59 (1972): 1, 5-6.

³¹ Jones, xi-xii.

³² History Matters, "The U.S. Survey Course on the Web." <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5727/>; Dalton Trumbo, *Johnny Got His Gun*, (New York: Citadel Press Books, 1939), xiii-xxiii.

³³ Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America's Vision for Human Rights*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2005), 1-6; President Roosevelt addressed the United States Congress on January 6, 1941 and discussed his interest in developing a "world founded upon four essential freedoms". These freedoms (freedom of speech, and worship and the freedom from fear and want) were outlined in this speech, the text of which can be found at <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/history/ralph/workbook/ralprs36b.htm>.

³⁴ Borgwardt, 29.

³⁵ The United Nations, "United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights."
<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>.

³⁶ Levi, 59.

³⁷ Berenbaum, Michael, "Sonderkommando: Testimony from Evidence," from *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its Aftermath*. (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007), 61-69.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 37.

CHAPTER 2

MUDDY BLOOD-SOAKED HANDS: THE RELATIONSHIP OF RACE AND LAND TO GENOCIDE

When one is up to no good, it is useful to have an excuse.

Francois Jacob
Nobel Laureate for Medicine¹

Introduction to Justified Mass Slaughter

Much like a small ball of snow begins to roll along, building in both mass and momentum, so too does genocide build in layers of mass, momentum, and destructive capability. At the center of this destructive avalanche lays the grand utopian vision, as expressed by historian Eric Weitz, of failing or failed states.² This vision of the “perfectibility of humankind” holds as ideal the victories, real or imagined, that took place in past times and could potentially be recreated but for certain abhorrent elements within society.³ Perfection necessitates the mass relocation or destruction of these elements.⁴ Utopian ideology is not, in and of itself, genocidal. Rather, this core of utopian idealism creates in states a political and social atmosphere that is conducive to what Ben Kiernan has defined as the four fundamental justifications for genocide: “race, religion, expansion, and cultivation.”⁵ Though the underlying cause remains the initial utopian ideology, these four things remain important justifications used by genocidal regimes to suggest that the atrocities committed were necessary for the health of the homogeneous state.

Kiernan's assessment is further refined from four major categories to two, known as the "Blut und Boden" or "Blood" (race) and "Soil" (land).⁶ These two concepts are crucial for those attempting to grasp the incomprehensible nature of genocide. Genocide and other human rights abuses are not historical anomalies, nor are they often entirely pre-meditated.⁷ Rather they fall within the Gray Zone of comprehension where in many cases similar patterns have created similar outcomes. While these patterns are not necessarily guarantees of future genocide, their study may yield increased awareness to potential outcomes.⁸

Race and Land: A Complex History of Conquest

In the quest for land, the inferiority of race has historically served to conveniently justify the removal of the previous inhabitants from the land that regimes wished to claim. The history of one sheds light on the history of the other. For this reason, it is essential to understand the historical interplay of race and land in conquest before each can be examined in their modern contribution to genocide.

As a classification, race is amorphous. Its definition and application have been in constant flux since its advent. Prior to the seventeenth century in Europe, the categorical term "nation" from the Latin *natio*, was used. Its definition simply referred to "a group of people" and was often used to describe a group that was outside of the dominant collective population. Though state borders existed and were fought over to an extent, the state itself was defined as, and completely embodied by, the ruler.⁹ At this time, as scholar Michael Mann states, "...people were killed for *where*, not *who* they were."¹⁰ Therefore, before race came into being as a classification the connection of warfare to

land was solidified by the need to expand.¹¹ It was not until the end of the Thirty Years War and the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 that solid boundaries were established by Papal decree in order, “[t]hat there shall be a Christian and Universal Peace, and a perpetual, true, and sincere Amity” amongst the “Christian” nations of Europe. No longer was the state entirely defined by its ruler; instead, the definition came to include the rigid borders around the land that a people occupied. The measurement of greatness began to include the expanse of territory that a state was able to accrue.¹²

Despite being created to ensure peace, however, the boundaries created in the Treaty of Westphalia only exacerbated the conflict between sovereigns over territory as state status became linked to land ownership. This trend evolved over time into colonization by major and minor states of Europe throughout the world led by: Spain, Portugal, England and France. The age old arms race between rulers had gone global and states began to require new territory abroad filled with resources, not the least of which were precious metals, to fund the armies used to acquire land in Europe to keep individual states safe from each other and the unpredictable peoples who lived in the East. Rulers were accepted by the populations beneath them and so the rise of nationalism and feelings of national unity began to rise coinciding with the rise of the nation-state as an entity. It was out of this race to claim and conquer the entire globe that imperialism dominated and colonialism was born.¹³

Adam Jones, in his text *Genocide: A Comparative Introduction*, states that while imperialism is “arguably as old as civilization...Colonialism is a ‘specific form of imperialism involving the establishment and maintenance, for an extended period of time, of rule over an alien people that is separate from and subordinate to the ruling power.’”¹⁴

Rather than simply taking over the territory that a people inhabited, colonialism instituted the idea of racial inferiority, which gained its modern connotations in the sixteenth century. As the snowball began to pick up momentum, genocidal acts became common place in “New World” territories.

Asian explorers and merchants had long before been present in Africa, and a European presence had been felt on the continent since the 15th century. The need for materials to supply ever increasing armies and ever expanding populations during the Age of Exploration led to a more permanent presence on the continent. As imperialism in Central and South America led to the exploitation of indigenous American populations for the profit of European states (and the subsequent decimation of the native population) human exploitation, and soon exportation, began to increase in Africa.¹⁵ Socialist thinker Walter Rodney wrote of this phenomenon, “Man has always exploited his natural environment in order to make a living. At a certain point in time, there also arose the exploitation of man by man, in that a few people grew rich and lived well through the labor of others.”¹⁶ While slavery had existed in some form throughout history, the European form of chattel slavery—inherited and life-long—was slowly adopted with Africans serving as its base.

The justifications for human exploitation were explanations provided from popular biblical sources, validated by travel accounts of the occasional brave European explorer, for the inferiority of the African race.¹⁷ Travel accounts to the continent provided vivid descriptions of women working naked in fields and throwing their swollen breasts over their shoulders to feed nursing infants and other examples of a supposed heathen nature inherent to the continent. Discourse about the biblical “curse of Ham,” claiming that God

had damned the son of Noah and his descendants to an eternity of inferiority marked by dark skin was also popular.¹⁸ In an age where darkness was equated with sin and general evil, Africa was known as the “dark continent.” All of this provided clear evidence to enlightened Europeans that Africans were not only inferior but that their enslavement was an improvement upon their previous and “savage” existence. Africans were not only sinful but because their proximity to land and lack of technological prowess they obviously also lacked intelligence necessary to survive in a modern world.¹⁹

Africans were exported to the Americas for use on plantations that produced sugar, rice, tobacco, and other commodities that the European powers were greatly interested in but unable to obtain on their own continent. Their use was seen as superior to indigenous slaves not only because they were unfamiliar with the area and thereby less likely to successfully escape but also because of their ability to withstand the grueling labor and the unbearable climate of the plantations.²⁰ The numbers of people involved in this forced Diaspora are staggering. For example, between the years 1700 and 1807, Sierra Leone exported nearly 500,000 people, West Central Africa nearly 650,000 people, and the Bight of Biafra nearly 1.2 million people.²¹ African kingdoms that initially had participated in the slave-trade by exchanging prisoners of war for arms and other European commodities, soon found demand for human exports outweighing supply. While larger kingdoms like Asante and Dahomey did their best to protect their own people, they were not above enslaving others in so much as they themselves were protected.²² What had started as a component of the international trade conducted by African kingdoms soon became a vicious cycle that grew exponentially. Not only did other industry suffer as kingdoms focused on providing and not *becoming* slaves, so did

the population as birth rates declined and much of the young population was exported. In what Robert Harms has called the “zero-sum game” Europeans gained as Africa, and specifically the central western half of the continent, lost.²³

Three fundamental elements came together to create what became colonial genocide, not only in Africa but throughout the world. These elements are: “Manifest Destiny”, “Legal-Utilitarian” justifications, and race. The grand utopian vision of “Manifest Destiny”, or ownership of all land from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean by the United States, became a popular idealization in the early nineteenth century.²⁴ In order to achieve the goal of the perfect society, which necessitated all land from ocean to ocean on the continent, ideas such as racial inferiority of native groups that had been previously established were called upon to further justify colonial actions. Using the “legal-utilitarian” justification that indigenous peoples were not entitled to their own lands because they were not utilizing them to their full potential, Western governments began a campaign of mass extermination (by way of warfare, brutal relocation, and conscious introduction of disease), forced assimilation (by way of taking indigenous children and sending them away to boarding schools to be “properly educated”), and cultural erasure (by way of denying linguistic, religious, and artistic freedoms to indigenous groups).²⁵ This course of action was deemed by Thomas Jefferson to be “justified extermination” and later by Theodore Roosevelt as “beneficial as it was inevitable.”²⁶ Though the perfect society was the core concern, the need for land in order to create that society was a convenient justification that could be given to the general population of Americans to gain support, avoid conflict, and ultimately accomplish complete territorial conquest.

As the imperialistic tendencies of developed nations led them to the conquest of the inhabitants of occupied lands, the development of racism as a pseudo-science provided a foundation that furthered the previous arguments of prominent eighteenth and nineteenth century figures. Even before Charles Darwin published *The Origin of the Species* in 1859, racial discourse had gone beyond the Bible and entered the realm of scientific thought. Science was considered to be secure and infallible where religion had been dismissed by many as superstitious fallacy. Furthermore, Darwin's work became popular in part because it validated ideas that had been circulating for several decades previously. Those who picked his work as their foundation did not always remain true to his assertions, but they continued to use his name to justify their arguments for decades to come.²⁷ In 1853, French philosopher Arthur de Gobineau published his work *The Inequality of Human Races* where he detailed his theories on race and societal degeneration. Claiming that governments, fanatic behavior, lack of religion, and moral corruption were not the causes of societal failure, Gobineau insisted that instead societies failed because they allowed racial miscegenation to contaminate pure blood lines.²⁸ He disputed popular theories of the time that Christianity could "civilize" a race of people, or that all men were equally created.²⁹ Gobineau wrote: "So the brain of the Huron Indian contains in an undeveloped form an intellect which is absolutely the same as that of the Englishman or the Frenchman! Why then, in course of the ages, has he not invented printing or steam power?"³⁰ Gobineau's assertion was that the evolution of peoples provided the more advanced races with the intellect required to make advanced inventive breakthroughs and that the lack of these inventive breakthroughs amongst races he considered less evolved proved their limited stage of evolution and thereby their

inferiority. Though his book was extremely popular when translated into German and English, Gobineau's work was not as welcome amongst fellow French scholars. In an ongoing series of letters between himself and Alexis de Tocqueville, Gobineau bemoaned this fact. He wrote, "I wish that they would discuss my book seriously in my own country... What I want is that my thesis be discussed and that I be given an opportunity to demonstrate that I am right."³¹ Though Tocqueville respected his colleague greatly, his distaste for Gobineau's theories on race was not hidden. He claimed that this work would have consequences that were "immoral and pernicious" and—likening Gobineau's assessment to that of a doctor who misdiagnosed a patient—he wrote, "I must add that physicians, like philosophers, are often greatly mistaken in their prognostications... though I am much disposed to admit the talents of the author I cannot uphold the validity of his ideas."³² This scholarly conversation provides a glimpse into the complexity of the debate over race that continued throughout the nineteenth century between Gobineau and his contemporaries.

After Darwin's publication of *The Origin of the Species* different states took different approaches towards further applications of his theories. In America, William Graham Sumner's works on Social Darwinism were widely published and read. In Europe, Clémence Royer committed herself to a somewhat unsuccessful endorsement of Darwin's theories and the idea that human beings—like other species—developed and improved over time. It proved as unsuccessful for her as Gobineau's earlier attempts for the same reasons. Much of French society was still deeply tied to the Catholic Church, making arguments such as Royer's that held essentially anti-Creationist foundations difficult to sell. As the debate raged in France, Ernst Haeckel became the voice of Social Darwinism

in Germany. He is regarded by present scholars as, “A thorough-going Social Darwinist, eugenicist, Aryan supremacist, and anti-Semite who recommended racial and national conflicts as essential to progress.”³³ For these reasons, it has been argued that Haeckel represents the early form of what would eventually become the National Socialist movement, which I will return to later. The danger of the German intellectual society’s reliance on science as the foundation of truth was the potential for men such as Haeckel to spread race theory as fact—validated by their extensively scientific background.³⁴

These ideas were furthered as other disciplines—sociology, political science, psychology, etc.—also began to apply Darwin’s theories to their fields. The latter half of the nineteenth century saw the rise of concern for the individual (as discussed in chapter one) and thus a rise in concern for various social problems for which science was seen as the best remedy. The creation of pure blood lines that ensured the survival of the fittest was among these social concerns. French political scientist and “anthro-sociologist” Georges Vacher de Lapouge argued that biological law prohibited cross-bred races from advancing. He divided Europe into three races with the most superior race stemming from the unadulterated genetics of the *Homo Europeaeus*, commonly referred to as the Aryan.³⁵ Francis Galton further suggested that the advancement of these established races could be assisted by human involvement in the natural selection process through “eugenics”—deriving from the Greek “Eu”, meaning good, and “Genes” meaning born—which was later adopted in German as “Rassenhygiene” or Racial Hygiene. Followers of the eugenics movement believed that racial superiority could be achieved through selective breeding of superior races and a restricted breeding ability of inferior race.³⁶ “The aim of Eugenics,” Galton wrote, “is to bring as many influences as can be

reasonably employed, to cause the useful classes in the community to contribute *more* than their proportion to the next generation.”³⁷ The separation of the races into categories and the dismissal of inferior races as biologically unfit for future existence set into motion a process that would view the mass slaughter of inferior races as a good deed done in the name of humanity as a whole. By ridding the world of the inferior and thereby providing more opportunities to the superior, the individual might suffer but humanity would prosper.³⁸

It is during this time period that scholar Michael Mann asserts in his work *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, during industrial modernity the ideals of democracy became entangled with the ideals of expansion and racial purification. Europeans looking to expand “wanted fertile land, which was usually already inhabited,” leaving them with what they saw as their only recourse: extermination. If a population could not be subdued and convinced to work for the superior power, or convinced to divide their land and live nearby, they were deemed hostile and thus their deaths protected settlers.³⁹

In 1885, established European colonial powers as well as the emerging states of Germany and Belgium were amongst interested states with representatives in attendance at the Conference of Berlin which had convened to “obviate the misunderstanding and disputes which might in future arise from new acts of occupation (*prises de possession*) on the coast of Africa.” This Conference carved the continent into territorial claims, effectively redrawing the map of Africa and gifting sections to European powers while completely disregarding the current inhabitants therein.⁴⁰ Though the international slave trade was ended before this conference had convened the previously established pseudo-

science of race inferiority added an authoritative tone to territorial conquest and racial extermination that continued throughout the world, and specifically in Africa.

Germany made clear its territorial claim over what is present day Namibia in the southwestern part of Africa immediately after the Berlin treaty was drafted. As an emerging state, Germany lacked the credibility of some of the more established nations and so sought to expand its territorial claims in all ways possible. In Namibia, the Germans acted in accordance with racial views of their time and disregarded the established populations of Herero, Nama, and Damara. German farmers were encouraged to move to Namibia and make proper use of the under-utilized land. After nearly 20 years of tense colonial conflict between the indigenous population and the German settlers, General Lothar von Trotha took over command of the German forces in Africa in May, 1904. By the end of summer his men had forced the Herero people into the desert. The Germans poisoned water holes and shot anyone who attempted to return. On October 2, 1904, von Trotha issued the official order of annihilation: "The Herero people must leave this land... Within the German border every male Herero, armed or unarmed, with or without cattle, will be shot to death. I shall no longer receive women or children, but will drive them back to their people or have them shot at."⁴¹ The Germans created sport of shooting the fleeing Herero, who were viewed as subhuman. This treatment of races deemed to be inferior or subhuman was established in the deserts of Namibia, and would later be perfected in the heart of Europe.

Also having much to prove, Belgium's King Leopold II would oversee his own share of atrocities north of Namibia in Congo after the Treaty of Berlin opened the land to European conquest. Practically powerless over his own parliamentary government, in a

nation that was almost too small to be taken seriously, Leopold hungered for colonies. The king sent scavengers to the Congo region of West Africa, disguising his intentions as philanthropic and altruistic. Once there the scavengers convinced native groups, whose concept of ownership differed greatly from that of their Belgian buyers, to sign away the land and full trading rights to Leopold in exchange for a handful of trinkets.⁴² This trade was done without supervision from the Belgian parliament as their king had created in Congo his own empire which in 1885 he ironically named the “Congo Free State.”⁴³ Congo was rich with many commodities that the world desired. The most lucrative of these at the time was rubber, harvested from vines grown in only a few areas in the world. Though rubber was being harvested in places like Brazil and parts of Southeast Asia, ownership of these resources in the Congo gave the king access to a commodity that was high in demand without being necessarily high in production.⁴⁴ Harvesting the oozing rubber required manpower that the Belgians could not supply. The answer was found in the local population whom the colonial government quickly enlisted into forced servitude.⁴⁵

It took decades for the international community to realize what Leopold and his people were doing to the Congolese. At international conferences, Leopold assured the world that, “The fearful scourges of which, in the eyes of our humanity, these races seemed the victims, are already lessening, little by little, through our intervention. Each step forward by our people should make an improvement on the condition of the natives.”⁴⁶ As international investigations, led by people like Joseph Conrad, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Alphonse Jacques, and Sir Roger Casement proved the true nature of Leopold’s dealings with Congo, a shamed Belgian Parliament forced Leopold to

relinquish his control of the area in 1908. Even then, it was not until the end of World War I that the Congolese suffering under the Belgians subsided.⁴⁷ Between 1880 and 1920, it is estimated that nearly ten million people were killed in the Congo, under these humanitarian auspices.⁴⁸

Race and Land in Modern Genocide

As the nineteenth century came to a close, the precedent of justifying the destruction of peoples through explanations of race and land was well established; evidence of their use clearly continued into the period of modern genocide. While there have been an unfortunate amount of genocides which invoked one, the other, or both of these justifications, the following case studies in modern genocide offer a strong example of the subjective use of race as well as a strong example of the glorification of land. In this way I hope to make clear the connection of both to genocidal motivations.

Race has been called one of the primary links between genocides of the twentieth century; however, because of its arbitrary assignment and fluctuating meaning there has been some dispute over what exactly constitutes race-based genocide. The following case studies show little continuity between genocides in what is considered race. What does remain constant is this: though the definition may change, perpetrators continue to claim through rhetoric and action that racial groups—however they define them—are inferior, responsible for the downfall of the greater whole, and worthy of reprisal.⁴⁹ Additionally, land is ever present in the rhetoric of genocide. Regimes uplift and dedicate themselves to cleansing it and scholars describe genocidal methods as “scorched earth” and “root-and-branch.”⁵⁰ Building on previously established “racial superiority,” regimes claim

authority on proper use of land and so claim its sole ownership. Though the two things are intertwined, they can also be understood within the examples on an individual basis. These case studies provide the best opportunity to compare the two as individual concepts while understanding their relationship to one another.

Case Study: The Soviet Union

During the period of the Lenin-Stalin political regime in the Soviet Union— from the Russian Revolution of 1917 led by Vladimir Lenin until dictator Josef Stalin’s death in 1953—the Marxist utopian philosophies that had spawned the overthrow of the Czarist leadership continued to evolve and grow increasingly more paranoid about potential dissidents within the boundaries of the USSR. Like most historical events, the dark time—which included the “Great Terror” of 1937-38—was not a well coordinated sequence of events, but instead consisted of a series of inconsistent events along with frequent policy changes that resulted in mass panic, torture, and death. By allowing such chaos for a time, the Soviets hoped to eventually create a communal agrarian society with uniform political views and nationality.⁵¹

Unlike other genocides, where race was based on heritage or religious affiliation, the Soviet definition of race was more nebulous and so is a point of contention amongst scholars. The Soviet efforts to purge their country of the “kulak” (political dissident) population can only be understood from the basis of race if one clearly understands who was defined as a kulak and how the perpetrators used the designation to carry out exterminationist policies. Officially, a kulak was whatever the authorities claimed it was for that period of time. Generally, those considered to be of the socially stratified

bourgeois (which was easily achieved by owning a cow or having hired help) wore the label, as well as anyone of a political viewpoint that opposed Socialism.⁵²

The regime permitted the people to choose their official national or ethnic identities to be displayed on passports and official paperwork at the age of sixteen. Being able to designate one's nationality caused problems because over the course of the nearly half century Lenin and Stalin were in power the "dissident" categorization would befall many different nationalities—often because of the supposed shared political connection that the populace had. In this way race and political preference became one.⁵³

"Merciless mass terror against the kulaks...Death to them!" proclaimed Lenin shortly before his death. This proclamation was taken seriously by Stalin who in 1930 ordered the extermination of kulaks as a race of people.⁵⁴ Because the definition of a kulak changed to fit the regime's whims, throughout the 1930s, entire groups like the Crimean Tatars, Balkars, Kalmyks, and Chechans were categorized by the newly created "nationalities" that the Soviets promoted and then arrested, deported, and forced to endure intense heat, cold, and deprivation for having questionable or ostentatious lifestyles or adverse political opinions.⁵⁵ By 1936 nearly 600,000 people throughout the Soviet Union had been dispatched of, many never to be seen again.⁵⁶ Between 1937-1938, over 1.5 million people were arrested and over 681,000 people executed in one of the farthest reaching "purges" of Stalin's reign. The arbitrary "kulak" designation meant that everyone, even loyal citizens and Stalin's fellow party members, were suspect and many suffered torture and death at the hands of an out-of-control dictatorship.⁵⁷

Because the Russian Revolution was based on Marxist philosophies that idealized the proletariat and advocated peasant revolt, the use of land as a tool of Socialist propaganda

and policy was important. During the Revolution, any land that had belonged to the royal family, the wealthy nobility, religious organizations, or any other private party was confiscated to be communally shared by the victorious peasant class. Interestingly, this is where the positive image of the peasant seems to end in Socialist dogma. Focused on innovation, forward motion, and the mechanization of cities, the Soviets actually fought against the agrarianism—forcing peasants onto communally shared land to grow food at the regime’s bidding.⁵⁸

More interesting is the use of “urbicide” (massive urban destruction) to erase from memory the Soviet Union’s past or the history of the dissidents it destroyed. City names, street names, and even building names were changed. Buildings were razed, cemeteries uprooted, and the entire urban landscape that had belonged to an offending population would simply cease to exist as they had known it in the same way that they themselves would cease to exist.⁵⁹ This tactic would later be employed by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and proved extremely effective as a way of purifying the land of any unclean elements that offended the sensibilities of Soviet supporters. Even if its peasantry was not upheld as righteous (as Marxist theories claimed), the importance of the purity of Soviet land remained.

Case Study: The Nazi Holocaust

Coinciding with Stalin’s “Great Terror,” Adolph Hitler’s rise to power and his government’s subsequent policies of racial purification with regards to European Jews, Gypsies, and other “unwanted” groups stands as the most widely recognized of modern genocides. Between 1933 and 1945, an estimate 12 million men, women, and children

were murdered as the German government attempted to achieve total land domination by what had, by this time, become commonly accepted as the genetically superior race—the Aryan.

Most prominently bemoaned was the racial impurity that was blamed for the downfall of this otherwise unstoppable people. German imperialism and ideas of race had been well established by the beginning of the twentieth century when Houston Stewart Chamberlain published his German work *The Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* (1899) which expressed that Western history was embodied in the clash between, “Spiritual and culture-creating Aryans and the mercenary and materialistic Jews.”⁶⁰ Instead of broadly blaming “other” races for societal failure, Chamberlain specifically targeted the Jews for the broken Aryan blood lines. This line of thought was picked up by a young Adolph Hitler who expanded on it in his work *Mein Kampf*. Wrote Hitler, “All the symptoms of decline which manifested themselves already in pre-[WWI] times can be traced back to the racial problem.”⁶¹ Though he held all racial miscegenation as the degeneration of superior intellect and physical ability by impure races, he held a particular loathing for the “mongrel” Jew who, “...never had a civilization of his own.”⁶² To Hitler, the lack of a stable Jewish nation was not the crime of the Jews but rather a symptom of a larger defect found genetically within the Jewish race. Hitler stated of “the Jew”:

He is and remains a parasite, a sponger who, like a pernicious bacillus, spreads over wider and wider areas according as some favorable area attracts him. The effect produced by his presence is also like that of a vampire; for wherever he establishes himself the people who grant him hospitality are bound to be bled to death sooner or later.⁶³

This vicious rhetoric was not entirely out of place in its time, but Hitler's charismatic speeches and widely read memoir gave the German people a clearly defined object for their frustrations over declining national power, economic hyperinflation that saw the United States Dollar trade for 4.2 trillion German Marks, and other woes caused in part by the unfair terms of the Treaty of Versailles.⁶⁴

The definition of race was not initially standardized, despite the fact that Hitler's personal goal (as early as 1922 after he first took control of the Nazi Party in Germany) was the extermination of the Jewish people and the aim of his early anti-Semitic speeches was to further aggravate racial strain in Germany.⁶⁵ Official Nazi policy also lacked a definite plan with regards to the treatment of the Jews and other undesirables. Publicly, Hitler maintained that expulsion of the Jews, not extermination, was his goal. In January 1942 (as head of the German state), he claimed to be "immensely humane" and insisted that the removal of the Jews did not necessarily condemn them to death but that if they were "destroyed in the process" it was not his fault.⁶⁶ Later that month, however, the official policy of the Third Reich took steps toward not only the legal codification of official racial definitions but also the official extermination policy. Here, they adopted the "Final Solution" which planned for the forced labor of the most able bodied, the deportation to a specific location for the elderly, and left silent the fate of the remaining segment of the Jewish population inferring the intent to exterminate them.⁶⁷ Of course, Jews were not the only victims of the Reich's "Final Solution" policy, but like homosexuals, the mentally and physically underdeveloped, terminally ill, oppositional intellectual forces, Communists, trade unionists, and others who were not codified by race, the Jewish race was deemed unproductive and therefore "unworthy of life."⁶⁸

Through the race-coding Nuremberg Laws, race and religion became intertwined so that a person with grandparents who were involved with the Jewish religious community was considered to be either part (Mischlinge) or wholly Jewish, depending on the number of grandparents deemed to be Jewish. Of course, the same situation repeated itself with the Roma and Sinti—the “Gypsy” populations of Europe, as well as with Poles, Russians, Slavs and other conquered “non-Aryan” groups. Following Hitler’s edict that, “the loss of racial purity will wreck inner happiness for ever,” Nazi forces pursued the “ethnic cleansing” of the “vermin”, “lice”, and, “subhumans” throughout Germany and occupied Europe in an effort to achieve the illusive “racial purity”.⁶⁹ Along with the victims, books and other intellectual works of racially impure people were also destroyed, leaving nothing behind to contaminate future Aryan generations physically or mentally.⁷⁰ There were discrepancies, however, because what constituted a full or a partial undesirable could change from circumstance to circumstance and depended largely on the person doing the classifying.⁷¹ The German Nazis, claiming to be soundly grounded in racial “science” were incapable of creating a solid definition of race, further proving the arbitrary and amorphous nature of race as designation.⁷²

Despite being unable to truly adhere to a binding definition, it was essential to the Nazi vision of utopia to identify the “other” in order to extinguish them. It was not enough merely to move them out of German territory, since the Nazis had envisioned eventually ruling the earth.⁷³ Add to this the potential that still remained for Jews to “contaminate” the Aryan female population and there remained little else in the mind of the Reich that could be done except execute every man, woman, and child of the offending “races.” The purification of the world to make way for Nazi ideology was as

far reaching and poorly defined as the Stalinist regime's campaign.⁷⁴ Race, in all of its continuing definitional evolution, encompasses a multitude of justifications for genocidal action.

The Reich's praise of land was intricately tied to its interest in racial cleansing. Likening the process of racial purification to weeding a garden, officials made clear that purging Germany of its weeds and giving the land to the superior race was the only way to achieve maximization of potential for the land and the Aryan people.⁷⁵ As has already been discussed, Hitler showed the lack of a stable Jewish nation as an example of the genetic defect present in the Jewish race. He is reported to have complained that the cause of the "Jewish question" was a need for space. He reasoned that since the Jewish people did not have any land of their own they were consistently encroaching on the land of other peoples, causing problems.⁷⁶ In his 1930 work *The New Aristocracy from the Blood and Soil* Richard Walther Darré argued for the German "responsibility to serve the soil, taking into account the family and its preservation," which was a theme that Hitler built on frequently in speeches praising the common man and the efforts of the farmer.⁷⁷ In *Mein Kampf*, he even went so far as point to "the weakening of the agricultural classes, whose decline was proportionate to the proletariat of the urban areas," as a cause for the decline of the Second Reich.⁷⁸

Not only was Hitler interested in the Aryanization of Germany's land, he was also interested in undoing all of the clauses of the Treaty of Versailles that denied Germany all of its colonies and much of the outlying lands to which it held claim. He called to action all of the people on these imposed borders to demand reunification. Hitler wrote: "Our task today is to make our nation powerful once again by re-establishing a strong and

independent State. The re-establishment of such a state is a prerequisite and necessary condition which must be fulfilled...”⁷⁹ Obsessed with lands that had been stolen and holding in high regard the agrarian farmer while insisting that a purification of land could only happen through a purification of blood helped the Reich combine race and land in its official and unofficial policies towards conquest and annihilation.

Interestingly, in Poland prior to German occupation, government officials had begun to do studies with regards to the use of the finite resource of land in their country. In a 1937 report, it was found that the majority of Polish farmers did not own their own land, and instead made up a suffering “proletariat” class that had a very difficult time sustaining itself. Like their German neighbors, the Polish officials claimed that part of the problem came from the Jewish emigrants who had flooded Polish cities in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The report asserted that because Jews were uninterested in physical labor they were a drain on the community which needed every possible hand tending to the agricultural base of the Polish economy. It claimed that those of Jewish descent:

Evade military service and dodge their taxes, refuse to send their children to state schools, undermine the morality of officials by bribery and sabotage all attempts to relocate them in the agricultural sector and transform them into ‘useful members of society.’⁸⁰

The answer to the overcrowding of Poland and the misuse of the limited land, it seemed, was the “relocation” of the Jewish population. The authors of this report were quick to assist the Germans to this end after the occupation was established.⁸¹

Furthermore, the Reich had a great interest in the land from Germany to the eastern border of Russia with specifically detailed plans of “evacuation,” “resettlement,” and potentially extermination of these peoples starting with the “evacuation of the Poles” and

concluding with the “liquidation of the Russian people.”⁸² The Reich planned to colonize and completely restructure the land, destroying cities and systematically disposing of the rural populations in favor of German settlement. Hitler proclaimed of the “General Plan for the East” commissioned by his officers: “We can take our poor working-class families from Thuringia or the mountains of Bohemia, say, and give them plenty of space.”⁸³ Once the area was occupied (which in 1940-1942 the Germans were convinced was not far away) the plan was to spend twenty-five years “Germanizing” the land, reducing the populations throughout major Russian provinces in the process.⁸⁴ In this way, the Germans hoped to increase their own power while providing for all of their citizens the opportunity to have a “country estate in the East.” The millions of men, women, and children who needed to be dispatched of in order for this goal to be realized were merely an inconvenient numerical figure debated over in Reich meetings.⁸⁵

Case Study: Japan’s Action in China and Korea

Though Eastern philosophy has not always shared commonality with Western tradition, the mid-twentieth century views of the Japanese with regards to race and land borrowed considerably from their Western counterparts. The Japanese took a clear stand on their believed racial superiority and though they may have admitted to the humanity of the peoples that they conquered, they did not believe them to be equal. In a 1943 report, the Japanese described themselves as “the leading race” which would spend eternity putting others in their “proper place”.⁸⁶ The existence of other peoples was tolerated only so long as they were useful. These uses included being subjected to experiments in biological warfare and medical testing. According to Yuki Tanaka, “[The Japanese]

sprayed cholera, typhoid, plague, and dysentery pathogens” on Chinese cities as well as exposing them to contaminated food and water in an effort to gauge reactions to and effectiveness of these weapons.⁸⁷ Another way that inferior races could prove themselves useful to the Japanese was in the sexual exploitation of their women for the satisfaction of the Japanese military. In order to curb the sexual appetite of Japanese soldiers and avoid rape of civilian populations in Japan and its conquered territories females, some as young as thirteen, were enlisted as “comfort women” and forced to sexually service their Japanese captors throughout the duration of the occupation and until the end of WWII.⁸⁸

Depending on where the women came from they were sometimes kidnapped and sometimes voluntarily enlisted under the false promise of a good paying job. Once captured, they were driven far from their home towns and held prisoner in military camps and houses.⁸⁹ Kim Yoon-shim who was kidnapped at age thirteen later recalled, “verbal abuse from the soldiers was constant and unbearable. They told me ‘Choshun’ (a traditional name for Korea) people are liars, distrustful, subhumans and have no ancestors.”⁹⁰ Verbal abuse was the least of the wounds the girls received at the hands of their captors, however. During her captivity, the average “comfort woman” would service up to fifty soldiers a day—thirty minutes at a time—in small rice paper cubicles with mats on the floor. Often these encounters were violent and left the victims with untreated wounds, sexually transmitted diseases, and the high potential for pregnancy.⁹¹ Recalled Hwang Keum-ju, who was eighteen at the time of her enlistment, “I saw so many deaths, so much illness. Girls arrived; they got sick and pregnant. The Japanese injected us with so many drugs...that we would have miscarriages.” The conditions were so bad and the medical treatment was so antiquated, that many women died in captivity. The rare

women who carried children to full term towards the end of the conflict rarely kept the child, but this was the choice of the mother and not the regime since the Japanese ceased to control them after the conflict ended.⁹²

Once the race in question had outlived its usefulness, the Japanese disposed of that race as they saw fit. In the case of Korea, the choice was made to assimilate the population. Any sense of Korean culture, history, religion, language, tradition, or uniqueness was extinguished, with almost complete success, as its young men were enlisted in military service and its young women enlisted as sexual servants.⁹³ In the case of China, the decision was made to decimate the offending population. From 1931-1945, Japan systematically slaughtered the Chinese until “the countryside of North China was punctuated with mass graves” and entire villages ceased to exist.⁹⁴

Japanese expansionist philosophy had much in common with Nazi land policy. In the previously mentioned report about Japanese racial superiority, the terms “living space” and “blood and soil” were abundantly used, clearly pointing to links between the two ideologies.⁹⁵ The origins of the Japanese reasoning differed somewhat from its Western counterpart. Like much of Asia, Japan in the first part of the twentieth century was experiencing the decline of its systems of government and economy. Previous dynastic greatness was crumbling and social structures were showing the strain of a lost empire.⁹⁶ In an effort to restore some of the glorious Japanese past, The Meiji Constitution of 1889 created of the Japanese emperor a deity above all deities. It gave the emperor unquestioned authority to create of the state that which he desired and made him a figure to be worshipped, not merely obeyed. The vision of the dynasty was the idealization of a past glory that included the revival of important ancient terms for the emperor and an

idealization of “cultivators,” claiming agriculture to be the basis of society. This aspiration to a utopian Japan followed the same lines as many regimes before and after by placing such an emphasis on farming and things closely connected to the land. Of course, Japan had limited land to farm, and so it became necessary—in the mind of the regime—to expand. The subsequent occupation of Korea and the invasion of China were intended to solve this problem.⁹⁷

During the attempts to assimilate Korea into Japan, land was often confiscated and given to “mostly absentee Japanese landlords” while all of the food grown on the land was sent back to the people of Japan, leaving the Koreans to starve.⁹⁸ It was made clear that the Japanese were the only race worthy of land, being the only ones capable of working land properly. The emperor, who had become a figure of religious honor by the 1930s, continued to push this land-based ideology amplified by racial superiority. Even soldiers who had pity on the inferior peoples could not help them, because of their firm commitment to their god-like emperor and firm refusal to disobey his edicts.⁹⁹ Here the combined factor of the deified emperor and his insistence on Japan’s expansion created a clear case of land-fueled and race-based genocidal activity.

Case Study: Cambodia

In April 1975, Khmer Rouge rebel forces overtook the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh after a five year civil war that had claimed a quarter of a million Cambodian lives. The Khmer interest was youthful ignorance and poverty and so the majority of the revolutionary soldiers who marched on the capital that day were barefoot teenagers armed with M-16 rifles. Immediately, the separation of the population began and in the

chaos the KR began a forcible mass exodus that included the expulsion of over 20,000 infirm from the Phnom Penh hospital. Many who had been bed ridden still had IV's attached to their arms. The deputy Prime Minister, Prince Sirik Matak, was immediately listed as an enemy of the KR, marking him for death. When the Khmer Rouge finally came for him, Matak had exhausted every effort to save himself and his people only to be told by Western governments and the Red Cross that nothing could be done. He bravely surrendered himself, leaving behind a letter for John Dean, the United States Ambassador to Cambodia, before he was taken away and beheaded on a nearby tennis court.¹⁰⁰

Matak's letter stated:

As for you [John Dean], and in particular your great country, I never believed for a moment that you would have this sentiment of abandoning a people which has chosen liberty. You have refused us your protection and we can do nothing about it...I have only committed this mistake in believing in you, the Americans.¹⁰¹

The chaos and confusion that swept through the capital may have been the end of the civil war, but it was just the beginning of a four-year reign of terror—uninterrupted by a watching world—that would leave over 1 million people dead of starvation, disease, or genocidal violence.¹⁰²

The Khmer Rouge wanted to create a Cambodian utopia. To do so, families were separated and forced to work on communal farms, all members of society were expected to dress in the same asexual style with short hair, and all were expected to follow the Khmer religion and political ideology.¹⁰³ After destroying all previous personal documentation, the Khmer regime began to classify those living in Cambodian society into two arbitrary racial groups—"New" and "Old"—based less on the actual race of the person involved and more on their economic standing. The "New" category was made of the detested urban dwellers, the supporters of the previous regime, and racially outcast

groups like the Vietnamese, Chinese, Muslims, Thais, and Laotians, amongst others. The “Old” or “Base” people were those who had fought with the Khmer Rouge or were poor peasants. These classifications, and one’s happenstance existence in one or the other, were then used to determine whether one would be tortured and killed or permitted to live an extremely restricted lifestyle.

Much like the regimes before them, the Khmer Rouge was unable to create a solid definition of race.¹⁰⁴ Weitz writes of these classifications, “[They were] highly elastic and never self-evident and objective. They blended political, social, and ethnic criteria, and parsed individuals into particular slots often in a highly arbitrary manner.”¹⁰⁵ For example, one could begin in the “Old” category by being a peasant farmer but if it became clear that one had been “contaminated” and was able to speak multiple languages, that person would be immediately moved to the “New” category, arrested, and potentially killed. In February 1978, statue carver Im Chan was forced to teach young Khmer Rouge followers his craft. Once he had done so, Chan and his wife were both arrested. When asked what the charges had been, the carver recalled, “When they arrest you there are no charges, they just say, ‘You have known modern life. You used to go to the cinema, the restaurants, the bars. If we leave you, then you will tell the youth stories and they will want some!’”¹⁰⁶ Chan’s wife was one of the many who died in the Tuol Sleng prison, the infamous housing center where victims were photographed, added to the bureaucratic record, and often killed soon after. Chan himself only survived because the regime deemed him “useful” and enlisted him as the carver of statues of Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot.¹⁰⁷

Some would argue that classifications into “New” and “Old” were based on political categories and not on race, making Cambodia’s genocide one of political and not racial origin. It is important to remember, however, that not only were these categories considered to be the new races of Cambodia but people of racial minority (Thais, Vietnamese, etc) were classified into these categories specifically because of what is commonly understood to be race. Therefore, on several levels race was used and this blending, again, changed the definition of the word. Such change allowed race to be the justification for genocidal activities of all kinds in the policies and practices of the Khmer Rouge under Pol Pot.

During the Cambodian genocide land also had a prominent place and was held to a specific ideal. The state was in decline, the new regime was fiercely utopian, and the regime saw land as a symbol of the peasant class.¹⁰⁸ Conversely, those who lived in cities, namely capital city Phnom Penh, were despised. More importantly, the city itself was despised for what it represented. Therefore, in 1975 one of the first acts of the KR regime was to raze Phnom Penh to the ground, after the previously mentioned forced mass exodus into the rural parts of Cambodia. This urbicide was justified in two ways: first, internal government propaganda referred to it as a method of protection from US air raids. Secondly, it was reported to the international community that this was a way of getting the people away from the starving cities and out to the countryside where food was grown.¹⁰⁹

When asked what his rationale was Pol Pot stated: “The cities were not evacuated through a pre-established plan but were in conformity with the situation at the time.” He cited the “shortage of foodstuffs” as well as the “U.S. imperialists and their lackey’s plan

aiming at destroying our revolution and taking back power,” as his justifications for the exodus and the subsequent dissolution of the urban centers themselves.¹¹⁰ Without a city to target, Pol Pot claimed, Western powers would have a harder time massacring civilians. In reality, the cities were congregating places for the educated. Their liquidation, and that of the places that they frequented, was better hidden in the chaos of the exodus. Those who survived were forcibly assimilated into the agrarian commune society that the Khmer Rouge created, but this number was very small.¹¹¹ The idealization of pristine, unmolested land for the use of the perfect, homogeneous society, helped the Khmer Rouge to convince their followers and the world that not only was it necessary to cleanse the populace of unwanted elements, but it was also necessary to go so far as to cleanse the land of unwanted blemishes.

Conclusion

The concept of racially motivated genocide is a relatively new invention, almost completely exclusive to genocides that occurred after the start of the twentieth century. However, as Ben Kiernan pointed out race is only one of several categorical markers of genocidal justification. Often, the deeper and more profound causes are buried in the decline of the nation-state, the rise of an ideology of utopian progression within which a nation can regain its national dignity and international standing, and the nationalistic fervor that idealizes the agrarian farmer. In the practice of genocidal regimes, utopian society demands the homogeneity of its citizens and so differences in political ideology, religion, and ethnicity are all seen as dangers to the nation as a whole. In every case here examined, “race” was used as the blanket term that encompassed all of these and other

classifications. Religion and race could be one, as in the case European Jews; political viewpoint and race could be one, as in the case of the Soviet kulaks or the Khmer Rouge “New” people; or ethnicity could define race as with the Nazi campaign against the Poles, or the Khmer Rouge against the Chinese, Vietnamese, and Thais. Scholars sometimes argue over whether or not race was actually involved in a genocidal situation, but it is important to use the definition of race as determined by the regime, not as determined by the scholarly community; in this way we can see that race is indeed an integral part of purifying the state. Race, in all of its metamorphosis and evolution, is not the cause of genocide, nor is racial hatred. The causes of genocide are much deeper rooted and racial hatred (in whatever form “race” takes) is merely the red herring that distracts from bigger picture of national instability. This instability leads to the search for land holdings that solidify national power and provide for the citizens of the perpetrating state and thus increases the potential for genocidal action.

Conversely, land has been used as a justification for genocide by regimes throughout history, but it has only been in the last four hundred years as states began to define themselves by territorial boundaries as opposed to leadership figures that the land began to symbolize the state itself. Land is the state; therefore land is the fundamental building block of the utopian ideal for without it there can be no perfect state. Copious amounts of land have historically been important for protection, resources, and national image and any land that held inferior people or undesirable objects necessitated genocide to make such land clean. Genocidal regimes presented this supposed reasoning to citizens of their own states and to an international community, often—as in the case of the indigenous peoples of North America—with little or no resistance and more commonly—as with

Cambodia under the Khmer Rouge—acceptance and encouragement. This brings to light another commonality of genocidal regimes: their aggressive public relations campaign to make themselves appear humane and their deeds necessary for state survival. Racist propaganda is also key, exploiting fears of perpetrating nation populations or threatening their potential demise as a result of the existence of the group being targeted. Because of this fact and because it is often easiest to accept violence in terms of age old racial differences the international community turns a blind eye to the seemingly inevitable conflict of groups with long standing differences. In reality, while this is the accepted explanation, the primary motivating factor of these regimes is often the land grab that is not fully understood until it is completed. In blindly agreeing with this campaign, the international community makes itself complicit in the murders of millions with every genocidal act that occurs.

There is a Kenyan proverb that states, “When lions write history, hunters will cease to be heroes.”¹¹² As long as genocidal regimes are the only ones left to detail accounts of the conflict and their justifications are so readily accepted by the international audience they will never be tried in the court of public opinion, The Hague, or anywhere else. Land has played its own primary role in the justification of genocide, and the hunt for it has left all powerful governments and regimes with *Blut und Boden*, blood on one hand and soil in the other. The relationship of race and land to genocide is a complicated history with its roots in imperialism and colonialism, further evolving and changing to suit the needs of each genocidal regime in the time and place that it is being used. No state is immune from this hunger for racial perfection that masks a hunger for land; no type of economic or political system has been able to remain untouched by the greed that justifies the

deaths of millions in order to create the perfected state; history and human fallibility have left none without blood on their hands.¹¹³

¹ François Jacob, "Foreward" in *Racism, Science, and Pseudo-Science*. (Paris: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, 1983), 9.

² Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. (Concord: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), 79.

³ Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 41.

⁴ Eric D. Weitz, "The Modernity of Genocides: War, Race, and Revolution in the Twentieth Century," in the *Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 59.

⁵ Ben Kiernan, "Twentieth-Century Genocides: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor", in the *Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 29.

⁶ "Race" itself, as Weitz points out in his book *A Century of Genocide: Utopias of Race and Nation*, is an amorphous concept. The term has only been in use since the 16th century; and while race manages to be a factor in every genocide, its definition changes in perpetrator rhetoric to fit whatever victim group the regime is interested in eliminating. In order for race to be a cause of genocide, as opposed to merely the justification used by genocidal regimes, would necessitate a solid definition. Since each regime defines race differently, this cannot be the case.

⁷ Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 21-29.

⁸ As anthropologist Clifford Geertz famously wrote in his 1973 work *The Interpretation of Cultures*, "Different fields, different grasshoppers." Each culture and people is different. Oversimplifying the human experience and categorically assuming that shared patterns automatically predetermine genocidal activity would contribute nothing to academic discourse. However, as Barbara Harff pointed out in her article "No Lessons Learned from the Holocaust? Assessing Risks of Genocide and Political Mass Murder Since 1955," *The American Political Science Review* 97:1 (2003): 60, shared patterns do create a higher potential towards genocidal activity, differences in situation aside.

⁹ Weitz, 17.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 34.

¹¹ Because the exact definition is in constant flux throughout the time period discussed here, the broad classification of race for this chapter will be any group of people which the perpetrating group defines as a collective. Obviously this can be applied to ethnic groups or political affiliations, but because perpetrating regimes applied the term liberally I am unable to provide a specific definition here. It is my goal to capture the arbitrary nature of the assignment of this word, which I intend to prove in the following pages.

¹² Yale School of Law, "Treaty of Westphalia, 1648" <http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/westphal.htm>; accessed September 11, 2008.

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- ¹³ Weitz, 34-55.
- ¹⁴ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 39.
- ¹⁵ Philip D. Curtin, *The World and the West: The European Challenge and the Overseas Response in the Age of Empire*. (New York: University of Cambridge Press, 2000), 7-12.
- ¹⁶ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1982), 22.
- ¹⁷ Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 11-12.
- ¹⁸ Jonathan Schorsch, *Jews and Blacks in the Early Modern World*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.), 135-146.
- ¹⁹ Wendy C. Hamblet, *Savage Constructions: The Myth of African Savagery*. (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008), 5-6.
- ²⁰ John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998.), 141-151.
- ²¹ Gomez, 30.
- ²² Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Slavery and African Ethnicities in the Americas*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 17.
- ²³ Robert H. Harms, *River of Wealth, River of Sorrow: The Central Zaire Basin in the Era of the Slave and Ivory Trade, 1500-1891*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981). 197-198.
- ²⁴ Mann, 83-107.
- ²⁵ Jones, 67-75.
- ²⁶ Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ix.
- ²⁷ Mike Hawkins, *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought, 1860-1945: Nature as Model and Nature as Threat*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-5.
- ²⁸ Arthur de Gobineau, *The Inequality of Human Races* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1999), 23.
- ²⁹ Ibid, 65; Ibid, 37.
- ³⁰ Ibid, 37.
- ³¹ Arthur de Gobineau, "Teheran, 1 May 1856," in *Alexis de Tocqueville 'The European Revolution' and Correspondence with Gobineau* John Lukas, ed. (Mass: Doubleday Books, 1959), 288-289.
- ³² Alexis de Tocqueville, "Tocqueville, par Saint-Pierre Église (Manche) 30 July 1856" in *Alexis de Tocqueville 'The European Revolution' and Correspondence with Gobineau* John Lukas, ed. (Mass: Doubleday Books, 1959), 291-292.
- ³³ Ibid (pre-letter commentary), 123-133.

³⁴ Ibid, 133-134.

³⁵ Hawkins, 191-194.

³⁶ Francis Galton, "Eugenics: Its Definition, Scope and Aims" in *The Idea of Race*, Robert Bernasconi and Tommy L. Lott, eds. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2000), 79-83.

³⁷ Ibid, 81 (emphasis in context).

³⁸ It is at this juncture that the terms "race" and "ethnicity" separates in the minds of some scholars. Because the notion of "race" put forth by members of the perpetrating groups discussed in this chapter changed to include whatever classification of people that the perpetrators wished (be it political, national, ethnic, etc.) the term used from this point will continue to be "race." I realize that academic discourse would separate national groups into classifications of ethnicity, as opposed to race, but feel for the purposes of this chapter it remains appropriate to classify the victim groups as the perpetrators had in order to better understand the rationale for these classifications and the supposed necessitation of mass extermination brought on by said classification.

³⁹ Mann, 71-73.

⁴⁰ "General Act of the Conference of Berlin, 1885.
<http://ocid.nacse.org/qml/research/tfdd/toTFDDdocs/4ENG.htm>

⁴¹ Quoted in Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 383.

⁴² Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism, in Colonial Africa* (New York: First Mariner Books, 1999), 61-74.

⁴³ Jones, 42.

⁴⁴ Hochschild, 61-74.

⁴⁵ Hochschild, 122.

⁴⁶ David Renton, David Seddon, and Leo Zeilig, *The Congo: Plunder and Resistance*. (New York: Zed Books, 2007), 32.

⁴⁷ Jones, 43-44.

⁴⁸ Hochschild, 233.

⁴⁹ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 21-23.

⁵⁰ Jones, 326.

⁵¹ Nicolas Werth, "The Mechanism of Mass Crime: The Great Terror in the Soviet Union, 1937-1938," in *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 215-238.

⁵² Jones, 127.

⁵³ Weitz, 90-97.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Jones, 127.

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- ⁵⁵ Weitz, 80-81.
- ⁵⁶ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 499.
- ⁵⁷ Jones, 130-131.
- ⁵⁸ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 489.
- ⁵⁹ Weitz, 81.
- ⁶⁰ Hawkins, 185.
- ⁶¹ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*. (New York: Hurst and Blackett Ltd., 1942), 186.
- ⁶² Ibid, 232; Ibid, 170.
- ⁶³ Ibid, 172.
- ⁶⁴ Jones, 149.
- ⁶⁵ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 437.
- ⁶⁶ Quoted in Saul Friedlander, *The Years of Extermination: Nazi Germany and the Jews 1939-1943* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 187; Ibid, 332.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid, 339-343.
- ⁶⁸ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 439.
- ⁶⁹ Hitler, 186; Gellately, 247; Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 440-441.
- ⁷⁰ Jones, 149.
- ⁷¹ Robert Gellately, "The Third Reich, the Holocaust, and Visions of Serial Genocide," in the *Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 241-263.
- ⁷² Weitz, 119.
- ⁷³ Götz Aly and Susanne Heim, *Architects of Annihilation: Auschwitz and the Logic of Destruction*. (London: Pheonix Books, Ltd., 2002), 253.
- ⁷⁴ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 22.
- ⁷⁵ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 72-77.
- ⁷⁶ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 432.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid, 426.
- ⁷⁸ Hitler, 135.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid, 335.
- ⁸⁰ Aly and Heim, 55.

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- ⁸¹ Ibid, 57.
- ⁸² Ibid, 253.
- ⁸³ Ibid, 256.
- ⁸⁴ Ibid, 255-257.
- ⁸⁵ Ibid, 282.
- ⁸⁶ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 483.
- ⁸⁷ Quoted in Jones, 45.
- ⁸⁸ Jones, 329.
- ⁸⁹ Yoshimi Yoshiaki, *Comfort Women: Sexual Slavery in the Japanese Military During World War II*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 118-128.
- ⁹⁰ Sangmie Choi Schellstede, ed. *Comfort Women Speak: Testimony by Sex Slaves of the Japanese Military*. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 2000), 45.
- ⁹¹ Ibid, 32.
- ⁹² Ibid, 7.
- ⁹³ Gavan McCormack, "Reflections on Modern Japanese History in the Context of the Concept of Genocide," in the *Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 278-279..
- ⁹⁴ Ibid, 270-271.
- ⁹⁵ Quoted in Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 482.
- ⁹⁶ McCormack, 276-277.
- ⁹⁷ Kiernan, *Blood and Soil*, 455-475.
- ⁹⁸ McCormack, 278.
- ⁹⁹ Maria Rosa Henson, *Comfort Woman: A Filipina's Story of Prostitution and Slavery Under the Japanese Military*. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1999), 44.
- ¹⁰⁰ Peter Maguire, *Facing Death in Cambodia*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 34-40.
- ¹⁰¹ Ibid (quoted), 41.
- ¹⁰² Karl D. Jackson, *Cambodia 1975-1978: Rendezvous with Death*. (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3.
- ¹⁰³ Edward Kissi, "Genocide in Cambodia and Ethiopia," in the *Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, ed. Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 307-323.

¹⁰⁴ Weitz, 159-163.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 159.

¹⁰⁶ Maguire, 26-27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 26-27.

¹⁰⁸ Mann, 341-346.

¹⁰⁹ Jones, 193.

¹¹⁰ Kiss, 181.

¹¹¹ Ibid, 181-189.

¹¹² "African Proverbs," <http://afriprov.org/resources/oldexplain2006.htm> .

¹¹³ Mann, ix.

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN GRAY ZONES: FORCED VICTIM-PERPETRATORS IN MODERN GENOCIDE

Introduction to the Forced Victim-Perpetrator

Modern Genocide is inexorably tied to the rise of the modern nation state—the modern state being characterized by the advent of bureaucratic methods for government efficiency and military policy. When applied to genocide, bureaucratic delegation of unpleasant acts of torture and murder permits perpetrators psychological and physical distance from their victims. The benefit of such distance is that it spares the perpetrator most negative psychological repercussions associated with barbarity. Such repercussions not only cause damage to perpetrator troops but also undermine the efficiency of the bureaucratic process.

Primo Levi, Polish survivor of the Nazi Holocaust, wrote:

Here, as with other phenomena, we are dealing with a paradoxical analogy between victim and oppressor, and we are anxious to be clear: both are in the same trap, but it is the oppressor, and he alone, who has prepared it and activated it, and if he suffers from this, it is right that he should suffer; and it is iniquitous that the victim should suffer from it, as he does indeed suffer from it, even at a distance of decades.¹

Clearly, victims suffer from the psychological trauma inflicted upon them by perpetrators. Levi argues that perpetrators also carry the weight of their actions, further proving not only that perpetrators are ordinary but that they are human. Christopher Browning's research shows higher incidence of drinking, nightmares, and insomnia amongst Police Battalion 101, the corps that would assist in the execution of nearly 1

million Jewish peasants during the first stages of the Holocaust.² In an effort to avoid such problems for its soldiers, the Third Reich called to action one of the most ethically controversial characters of modern genocide: the forced victim-perpetrator.

The forced victim-perpetrator is an enigma, though he has been used by perpetrators in nearly every incidence of modern genocide. The space between innocent victim and guilty perpetrator is large enough to warrant Levi's concern, and he insists on drawing a formal line between the innocent and the guilty with those forced to commit atrocity against their own people firmly placed on the side of those absolved of complicity. This line is note-worthy as scholarship sometimes stands unsure of how to categorize this character due to the nature of his or her captivity. Levi asserts that the forced victim-perpetrator is trapped by extraordinary circumstances where a minor thing like shoes or the appropriate government documents ensure survival. It is here that perpetrators enlist this character to carry out the dirty business of genocide in place of perpetrator troops and civilians. He is the man herding his family into chambers of mass death or turning over his friends and neighbors to government as a member of a Guatemalan Civil Defense Patrol. She is the woman who chooses to bludgeon her husband and children with a machete in exchange for her own life, or the child soldier forced to shoot her own parents at close range after being forcefully conscripted. Each story is different, complex, and uncomfortable for scholars and laymen to consider. It is difficult to determine whether the forced victim-perpetrator should be considered innocent or guilty of the demise of others and this in turn leaves many unanswered questions regarding the post-genocidal treatment of forced victim-perpetrators as individuals and as a topic of academic inquiry. Though moral ambiguity in the Holocaust

has received consideration in edited compilations such as *Gray Zones: Ambiguity in the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, the forced victim-perpetrator—in this case the Sonderkommando of the Nazi Holocaust—takes his place within a few pages in a larger body of unrelated work. Few works have engaged this character of modern genocide in scholarship directly or comparatively.³

Browning and others have made it possible to consider the ability of average people to fall into genocidal behavior by following perceived authority. The average genocidaire is not the single-dimensional embodiment of evil portrayed in popular fiction. Instead he or she is often an average person simply following orders. These “ordinary men,” as discussed by scholars like Daniel Goldhagen, James Waller, and Christopher Browning, are often drawn into perpetration through the power of persuasion or their own inability to question authority.⁴ The findings of Stanley Milgram’s 1960s willing perpetrator experiments support this argument.⁵ Unfortunately, scholarship falls short of addressing the ability for human beings to shed all allegiance and moral obligations to save themselves in times of crisis. Much like the “ordinary man” thesis, this would mean that all people have the latent instinct to save themselves at all costs; unlike the “ordinary man”, the forced victim-perpetrator is not easily categorized and so is not easily understood. He does not fit neatly into the paradigm of victim and perpetrator because he is both. This chapter focuses on this uncharted Gray Zone of comparative genocide scholarship. It considers those who are forced to commit acts of atrocity against their own family, friends and neighbors, including “child soldiers” conscripted in their youth as mercenaries of warlords and genocidal regimes. With this knowledge, I hope to open the

door for further examination of these characters and the reality of their humanity as they take their place in the history of genocide and human rights violation.

Killing Your Own

As the definition and territorial holdings of nations evolved, so too did the social systems within those nations. The advent of modern bureaucracy in the nineteenth century, and its trademark delegation of tasks from one person to another, became a fundamental ideology of efficient government. This model would also be applied generously in cases of modern genocide. As historian Alex Alvarez points out, the very structure of bureaucracy and its ability to exist and perpetuate itself despite changes in personnel lends itself to the “perpetration of certain crimes including genocide.”

Bureaucracy enables governments to remove human emotion, and—when desired—interaction, from situations ranging from the most trivial to the most significant.⁶ In this way, historians like Zygmunt Bauman and Michael Mann point out that bureaucracy inspires group-think, but more tragically, bureaucracy distances perpetrators from their crimes.⁷

This trend of distancing oneself from atrocities committed continued into the twentieth century and was a trademark of the Third Reich in the concentration camps. Elie Wiesel, in his memoir *Night*, detailed a speech given on his first night in Block 17 of the Auschwitz concentration camp by a young Polish prisoner who was in charge of keeping the peace. The man offered this advice to the newcomers: “Let there be comradeship among you. We are all brothers, and we are all suffering the same fate. The same smoke floats over all our heads. Help one another.”⁸ Unfortunately, the Nazis

dispelled this brotherhood quickly as officials took advantage of the opportunity to avoid not only potential uprising, by denying victims solidarity in suffering, but also the dirty work of atrocity by turning their victims against one another. Some prisoners, through cunning and networking skills within the Lager were given positions of authority as Kapos (block leaders) and overall informants to the SS commanders in exchange for extra rations and the occasional promise of less brutal labor or comforts such as better shoes or clothing.⁹ These seemingly trivial items meant the difference between life and death in the Lager. In the end, it was this knowledge of the innate drive towards individual survival that the SS exploited, disintegrating the initial urge Wiesel described to band together in crisis. Residing in Block 30 of Auschwitz, Primo Levi also witnessed this change from unity to individuality and later summed up the transformation in his memoir, *Survival in Auschwitz*:

If one offers a position of privilege to a few individuals in a state of slavery, exacting in exchange the betrayal of a natural solidarity with their comrades, there will certainly be someone who will accept...Moreover, his capacity for hatred, unfulfilled in the direction of the oppressors, will double back, beyond all reason, on the oppressed; and he will only be satisfied when he has unloaded on to his underlings the injury received from above.¹⁰

By giving prisoners authority over each other, the Nazis assured that camaraderie would not exist. They turned the camps into a behavioral science experiment proving the survival not of the most humane, but instead of the most “selfish, the violent, the insensitive, the collaborators of the ‘gray zone,’ [and] the spies.”¹¹

Of all potential special assignments that a prisoner within the Nazi concentration camps could be given, none was worse than assignment to the Special Unit or “Sonderkommando.” This group, invisible to the other prisoners, was responsible for facilitating the systematic slaughter of the Final Solution. Theirs was the job of herding

prisoners into the changing rooms, then to the gas chambers, then to the furnaces of the crematoria. Primo Levi wrote of the Special Unit, “We know that not all the SS gladly accepted massacre as a daily task; delegating part of the work—and indeed the filthiest part—to the victims themselves was meant to (and probably did) ease a few consciences here and there.”¹² In exchange for easing Nazi consciences, men of the Sonderkommando were permitted civilian clothing, proper medical treatment, and abundant nutrition. In contrast to the daily torture, starvation, and labor that the rest of the prisoners endured it seemed that this select group was protected.¹³

In reality, it was only the secret of the crematoria that was being protected. Every four months a “selection” would be made and the SS would line a large number of that cycle’s Sonderkommando men against the wall in the courtyard of their crematorium. Machine gun fire would be heard. Then 200 new prisoners would be selected, forced to undress their predecessors and burn them, and then repeat the ritual with the men, women, and children sent from recently arrived freight cars.¹⁴ Those chosen for the gas chamber came in large groups, since small groups and individuals were more efficiently dispatched of by bullet, electrocution, hanging, or beating. Often they were chosen on the train platform immediately following arrival because they were too weak, elderly, or young or were mothers of the young. They offered little or no resistance and chose to believe the lies the Sonderkommando were forced to tell them: undress quietly for delousing, put items together on the numbered hook, remember the number, and when entering the delousing room move as far to the back as possible. The Special Unit would then close the hermetically sealed door and wait as the SS would drop canisters of Zyklon B pellets through holes in the ceiling. The pellets emitted a poisonous gas after contacting the

ground suffocating those who inhaled. Witnesses heard screams for several minutes and then the silence of death. When fans had cleared the chamber of fumes the kommando would remove gold teeth, shave hair, and haul the victims to the ovens where they were incinerated.¹⁵ As Dr. Miklos Nyiszli, a Jewish prisoner and forced assistant to Nazi Dr. Josef Mengele would later write:

The bodies were cremated in twenty minutes. Each crematorium worked with fifteen ovens, and there were four crematoriums. This meant that several thousand people could be cremated in a single day. Thus for weeks and months—even years—several thousand people passed each day through the gas chambers and from there to the incineration ovens.¹⁶

This efficient model for mass death could not have been accomplished were it not for the Special Unit.

After the initial shock of his situation dissipated, the member of the Sonderkommando would quickly learn that his sanity depended on his ability to avoid emotional attachment and questions of fate. He would, over time, become an automated version of himself. When later asked how he felt during this time, one prisoner of the Special Unit replied, “No more feelings...I was no longer a human being. I couldn’t cry. So this tells me that everything is dead inside. I am not a human being.”¹⁷ Members of the Sonderkommando not only were stripped of their humanity, but also their own faith and conscience.¹⁸ Filip Müller, another former Sonderkommando, described his own metamorphosis in his memoir *Eyewitness: Auschwitz*. After witnessing months of gassings and thousands of people senselessly slaughtered, Müller’s faith in God and humanity had completely disintegrated—blown away in the wind like the ashes of the Reich’s victims. It astonished him to view other people who still claimed hope despite all that they had seen in this place where “the values and laws which formed the basis of

civilization were obsolete.”¹⁹ Müller was given a choice: assist in the execution of his own people with a slim possibility of outliving Auschwitz or die an immediate death. Many of the Special Unit chose to end their own lives overdosing on sedatives, hanging themselves, or a number of other methods.²⁰ Müller, however, chose life and that meant aiding in the demise of others. He wrote, “...if I wanted to survive there was only one thing: I must submit and carry out every single order.”²¹ This he did, being fortunate to escape multiple selections and watching three years pass in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

The Sonderkommando cannot be dismissed as hopeless, and thus compassionless, men. They were men placed in an impossible position forced to make an impossible decision. Throughout the narratives it is clear that when it seemed their efforts could improve their situation or someone else’s, they spared no energy to do so. They shared with nearby female work groups clothing, cigarettes, food, medicine, and gold taken from bags left by the dead.²² They argued with their Kapos for each others’ salvation against selections.²³ As was mentioned in chapter one, when a sixteen-year-old girl survived the gas chamber by being forced to the floor and breathing in a small bit of humidity that saved her life, the men found Dr. Nyiszli and insisted that he help her. She was eventually found by the SS and shot, but not before the men of the Sonderkommando did everything in their power to save her.²⁴ These and other instances show that the men who worked the crematoria attempted to maintain their humanity and dignity.

Though the Special Unit had an undeniable place in the fulfillment of the Final Solution, they did not always go quietly. In the fall of 1944, after 11 trimester selection cycles ended the lives of hundreds of men harboring the Reich’s secret, the men of the

12th Sonderkommando began to plot escape. With the help of outside partisan groups the men began to collect rifles, grenades, and other small arms.²⁵ Then on the 6th or 7th of October, 1944 a selection was made.²⁶ The order was given to the Kapos that they were to choose 300 of their own men from the kommando to be liquidated; ensuring that responsibility for each death fell not on the Nazis, but on the block leaders—they themselves prisoners. That morning, Filip Müller stood with the others of crematorium number two and three waiting for the selection to be made. Being the “lowest [tattooed prisoner] number” in the kommando, one with the most to tell, Müller assumed the Nazis planned to kill him. Before his number had been called several prisoners pelted their captors with rocks. Chaos ensued.²⁷ Against a hail of machine gun fire from the SS, Sonderkommando men used rifles, grenades, and anything else that they could find. At least two members of the SS were shoved into the cremation ovens before crematorium three was burned down. The fourth crematorium was so badly damaged in the fighting that it “was rendered useless.” According to Dr. Nyiszli, 853 prisoners, 70 SS guards, and two crematoria fell during the uprising.²⁸ According to Filip Müller, the number of Sonderkommando lost was only 450, but he stated, “These 450 men had fought bravely and died honourably, refusing to resign themselves meekly to their fate. They had been ready to defend their lives to their last breath, a unique event in the history of Auschwitz.”²⁹ Many of the men of the 12th Sonderkommando died that day. Unlike other prisoners in the camp, men of the Sonderkommando understood that their time was limited and had no hope of survival. It seems that this knowledge fueled their decision to control the time and place of their imminent deaths. By falling in one heroic, if futile, last

stand these prisoners achieved a victory rare to Nazi concentration camps: they died as men, not the broken vestiges thereof.

Filip Müller and other members of the Sonderkommando have long languished in the Gray Zone of scholarship, not fully guilty and not entirely innocent. Recently, however, they were granted exposure in the 2001 Tim Blake Nelson film *The Gray Zone*. Many contemporary films focus on the few happy endings and the occasionally exceptional individuals of the Holocaust, but this film portrays in a darkly realistic manner the lives and deaths of the 12th Sonderkommando unit. By giving cinematic voice to these underrepresented characters of Holocaust history, Nelson helped to pull them from the murky area that is often forgotten in contemporary scholarship. The perpetrators' plan for the men of the Sonderkommando, however, was for the line the blurring of the line between their innocence and guilt. It proved Nazi theories about the inhumanity of their victims, who willingly turned on each other, while permitting the Nazis to later claim that they themselves had killed no one. Levi understood this dichotomy of thought, and would later offer these words which read as a plea for acquittal not just the Sonderkommando but everyone who the Nazis had manipulated within the inhumane and oppressive circumstances that were created:

We are aware that this is very distant from the picture that is usually given of the oppressed who unite, if not in resistance, at least in suffering. We do not deny that this may be possible when oppression does not pass a certain limit, or perhaps when the oppressor, through inexperience or magnanimity, tolerates or favours it... [in that time and place] Survival without renunciation of any part of one's own moral world—apart from powerful and direct interventions by fortune—was conceded only to very few superior individuals, made of the stuff of martyrs and saints.³⁰

To hold one's morals too closely was the surest way to die in the concentration camps as loyalties ceased to exist and selflessness was seen as weakness. To the outside world the

actions of the Special Unit might seem opportunistic; but as Levi reminds us, this place was not the outside world. It was a world unto itself, a world of barbarism and cruelty; a world of starvation and slaughter; a world where saints became martyrs and only those willing to save themselves survived.

Though in the case of the Nazi Holocaust, delegation of unpleasant tasks provided both relief for the SS commanders and denied the victims full innocence, in other instances of human rights abuse and genocide this delegation has also been used as a way of increasing available manpower without overtaxing the perpetrating army. In the latter half of the twentieth century, the Latin American nation of Guatemala experienced a complex series of events that resulted in total political upheaval. According to the later UN administered Historical Clarification Commission (CEH) report *Guatemala: Memory of Silence* Guatemala had, since its independence in 1821 been an authoritarian state run by an elitist regime that excluded all but the “privileged minority”, a fact that showed itself throughout the history of warfare within the state when “[t]he violence was fundamentally directed by the State against the excluded, the poor and above all, the Mayan people, as well as against those who fought for justice and greater social equality.”³¹ Scholar Greg Grandin summed up the timeline that dragged Guatemala through the twentieth century as social democratic “Revolution” (1944), followed by a United States sponsored military coup (1954). After the Cuban Revolution in 1959-1960, Guatemala “was one of the first Latin American countries to develop both a socialist insurgency and an anticommunist counterinsurgency.”³² The government sponsored efforts to maintain the guerilla fighters of the opposition would in turn result in what were later deemed by the CEH to be genocidal acts that included 626 massacres and the

death or disappearance of over 200,000 members of the population—87% of which were ethnically Mayan peasantry.³³

As the government moved into the Mayan villages in the highlands of Guatemala, following guerilla groups like the Ejército Guerrillero de los Pobres, or Army of the Poor (EGP), they began to forcibly conscript Guatemalan men, especially from the ethnically Mayan population, which made up sixty percent of the state. Once conscripted, Mayan men would go through a series of trainings to desensitize and indoctrinate them. They were then deployed to villages that were not their own. This ensured that if they were instructed to kill another Mayan the soldiers would not resist because the person would be a stranger, and an enemy of the state they were employed to protect.³⁴ Military forces would then be dispatched to remote villages where guerilla leaders were said to be hiding and interrogate the local populations, often torturing them to get the information that they desired. To end the torture, victims often supplied names. This led to more innocent men, women, and children being dragged from their homes to endure torture, rape, and execution. Chilin Hultaxh, a Mayan man who had been enlisted in the Guatemalan military during this time later detailed his experiences for Victor Montejo, stating that the military had a preference for the destruction of villages outside of the realm of modern convenience like telephones or highways because, “In these remote places, there is no one who could protect these small communities.”³⁵ At one point Hultaxh witnessed the execution of several teenaged boys who had been accused of guerilla activities. After several days of confinement, the boys were dragged individually from their shared cell and brutally interrogated. Giving up no information—claiming they had none to give—the boys were hung one at a time, with the soldiers hiding the bodies of the ones who had

died before so that each new victim went to his death unaware of the fate of his comrades. Hultaxh could not handle what he was witnessing:

[Another soldier] asked me, 'You want to try one?' I couldn't take it any longer and started to vomit. 'No!' I said. 'I can't stand it. I can't do this.' I still saw before my eyes the man's face when they strangled him and heard the poor guy say 'Oh God, oh God' when the soldiers started to kill him. Foam and blood came out of his mouth. I couldn't stop shaking and had to vomit.³⁶

Mayan soldiers like Hultaxh made up over 90% of the lowest ranks in the army, and would be forced over the course of time to participate in innumerable instances of torture and execution, but they were not the only ones forced to work against their own people.³⁷

After a military advancement was made and a village was occupied, the next step by the military was the forced enlistment of all men from the age of fifteen into the Patrulla de Autodefensa Civil (Civil Patrol System or PAC) division of the military. These patrols were in charge of their own villages and were "under threat of certain torture and probable death" if they refused to participate in the atrocities committed against their friends and family.³⁸ Armed with small weapons like sticks and machetes, the PAC were forced by the military to act as informants, to participate in interrogations, and to aide in massacres which included such acts as gang rape and slamming the heads of infants and small children into trees and rocks.³⁹ Unlike the military conscripts, purposely sent to areas other than their point of origin, these men were forced under threat of death to commit atrocities against family members, friends, and neighbors. Their participation would later be used by the government to avoid blame, and though a few participants have been prosecuted, justice remains elusive in part because of this quandary.⁴⁰

Though some scholars have questioned the racial (and thus genocidal) motives of the Guatemalan government, the findings of the UN sponsored CEH report and the overwhelming numbers of reported ethnic deaths involved as a result of these massacres decisively point to genocidal intent on the part of the regime.⁴¹ The report goes a step further, placing the blame squarely on the shoulders of the state for the actions of members of the military and Civil Patrols, “to whom it delegated, *de jure* or *de facto*, authority to act on its behalf, or with its consent, acquiescence or knowledge,” and thereby absolving the forced victim-perpetrators of any and all responsibility.⁴² Placing blame or absolving guilt does not necessarily equate to prosecution of guilty parties. While there have been no prosecutions of forced members of Civilian Patrols, there have also been no prosecutions of high ranking officials whose direction the army followed. Though the United Nations has been instrumental in exposing the genocide on paper through independent reports, since the end of the genocide few prosecutions of only low ranking members of the army have been made. This lack of action exposes the international community’s disinterest in spending money to rectify past human rights atrocities with action.⁴³

While modern bureaucracy creates a void that only the forced victim-perpetrator can fill it is not the only hallmark of modern genocide. As scholar Ben Kiernan has argued, race, as one of the principle justifications for genocide, is an arbitrary distinction with little realistic value, yet capable of producing dire consequences.⁴⁴ From 1914-1962, the tiny African nation of Rwanda was a Belgian colony. The colonial government, interested in maintaining power, divided the social classes of Hutu and Tutsi into ethnic groups. Tutsi, seen as more refined, better educated, taller, and more beautiful were placed in

positions of power. Hutu, seen as rugged, less educated, shorter, and less beautiful, were relegated to positions of servitude. Due to intermarriage and the fluidity of this arbitrary designation, it was almost impossible to tell the people apart except through the citizenship papers (a system leftover by the Belgians) that they carried which bore the designation of their “race.” This bureaucratic method of efficiently identifying Rwandan citizens proved an equally efficient identification method when used by genocidaires several decades later.⁴⁵

In the spring of 1994, ethnic tensions in Rwanda that had been violently brewing beneath the surface of society since the time of colonization suddenly erupted after the plane carrying president and Hutu leader Juvénal Habyarimana was gunned down on April 6.⁴⁶ What had been a tense existence of mutual toleration between the main ethnic groups of Hutu and Tutsi was suddenly whipped into a racial frenzy.⁴⁷ So called “hate-radio” broadcast messages of massacre to the public taunting the Tutsi victims and inciting Hutu hatred. These broadcast began many months prior to the genocide, but their use intensified during the conflict. Broadcasters from Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (Free Radio-Television of the Thousand Hills or RTLM) warned Tutsi people on April 3, 1994, “The day when the people stand up and they don’t want anymore of you, they will hate you in unison and to the bottom of their hearts. When you make them sick, I ask you how you are going to escape. Where are you going to go?”⁴⁸ The response to broadcasts like this spawned a genocidal massacre that lasted for one hundred terrifying days throughout the summer of 1994 during which many were forced to make the decision to save themselves or save their loved ones.

The most glaring examples of forced victim-perpetration were those of inter-racial marriages that were found out by the Hutu extremist militias and members of the local communities. Each Hutu man and woman married to a Tutsi woman or man was expected to show solidarity with the cause and thus pick up a machete and participate in the slaughter of his or her spouse. In a later interview, perpetrator Pancrace Hakizamungili, who was twenty-five the year of the massacres would state:

In a war, you kill someone who fights you or promises you harm. In killings of this kind, you kill the Tutsi woman you used to listen to the radio with...or your sister who was married to a Tutsi. Or even, for some unlucky devils, your own Tutsi wife and your children by general demand. You slaughter the woman same as a man.⁴⁹

This slaughter was not entirely without conscience. In an interview by Mahmood Mamdani a man named Callixte from the village of Ntarma recalled a fateful decision of familicide. He stated, "One man tried to refuse. He was told he must choose between the wife and himself. He chose to save his own life. Another Hutu man rebuked him for having killed his Tutsi wife. That man was also killed."⁵⁰ Victims had limited time for internal conflict, forced to make instant decisions or die.

Men were not the only members of Rwandan society forced to make impossible decisions about life and death—Hutu women were also drawn into the violence. For many Hutu women trying to escape with their mixed-race children the situation was often made worse. The patriarchal passage of race from father to child meant that mixed children could not be protected from the fate of their fathers. The response by Hutu wives and mothers was mixed. Some women chose to die at their husband's side. When promised that her Tutsi children would be permitted safe passage if she accompanied them out of the country, one Hutu woman made the decision to take her children and

leave the church in which she and her family had sought refuge. Outside, the woman witnessed as the Hutu mob butchered eight of her eleven children despite pleas from her three-year-old that he would “never be Tutsi again.”⁵¹ In the immediate aftermath of these massacres, some women appeared less concerned with their husband’s death and more concerned with the property of the slaughtered spouse. Ignace Rukiramacumu, one of the killers who was sixty-two at the time of the massacres later recalled, “One evening they condemned a Hutu woman to death and cut [bludgeoned] her in public, to demonstrate a bad example. She had insolently demanded the cows of her Tutsi husband, who had just been slaughtered.”⁵² The moral conflict caused by these stories makes it difficult to ascertain the guilt or innocence of those forced to commit familicide. The situation exemplifies Milgram’s theories of the latent ability to commit atrocity found in every person. The overwhelming power of the hate-radio propaganda and the group-think inspired by angry mobs erased previously friendly ties, even the bonds of marriage, as latent racial/ethnic hatred was amplified. The tensions between the two groups had been rising before the genocide and even a small amount was enough to justify the slaughter of friends, neighbors, classmates, and lovers. From an academic distance it also shows the sometimes dangerous effects of arbitrary designations such as race.

Though the slaughter of Rwandan Tutsis ended in 1994, the effects of this genocide continue. Fourteen years later, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is embroiled in a conflict in part caused by Tutsi revenge killings. A 6,000 man Tutsi army, led by Laurent Nkunda, has made threats and carried out assaults on DRC for harboring Hutu perpetrators of the 1994 killings.⁵³ This problem has as much to do with post-genocidal action of the international community as it does with the racial/ethnic tensions leftover

from the massacre. By not separating the refugees from the evacuating perpetrators, the DRC created a second tense situation which lent itself to military and potentially genocidal reprisal.

Killing Innocence: Child Soldiers

“Can you hear, the voice of the children?
Softly pleading, for silence in their shattered world.
Angry gods preach a gospel full of hate.
Blood of the innocent, on their hands.”
--Kurt Bestor
“Prayer of the Children”⁵⁴

Though initially apathetic to the presence of non-voting children in their movement Adolph Hitler and his followers soon saw the potential hidden in the easily influenced and blindly submissive youth culture of the Third Reich.⁵⁵ Joseph Goebbels, Hitler’s Propaganda Minister, summed up the hopes of the Reich for its children when he stated, “To engage in politics one must be called, yet to function administratively it suffices to be instructed, drilled, trained, and bred.”⁵⁶ Even Hitler had to concede that were the Reich to continue for its proposed thousand year reign it would be necessary for the upcoming generations to not only understand the Nazi ideology but to agree with it wholeheartedly. The younger a child was, the more likely that he or she unquestioningly accepted this ideology and so children were inducted into a junior league called the Jungvolk at age ten and graduated to the full Hitler Youth (for boys) or League of German Girls (for girls) at age fourteen.⁵⁷ Easily swayed, fearless, and loyal, the youth movement of Hitler’s Third Reich exemplifies a gray zone of comparative genocide: the child soldier.

Currently, there are over 300,000 active child soldiers in over thirty conflicts worldwide.⁵⁸ Though as a total continent Africa has the largest population of child

soldiers, countries like Sri Lanka and Colombia have also made recent use of what—*The New York Times* has reported—is seen as the, “...perfect weapon: easily manipulated, intensely loyal, fearless, and most importantly, in endless supply.”⁵⁹ Child soldiers are most often poor and male—although the portion of females is not insignificant—, mostly over the age of 13—though any age is vulnerable—, their service can be forced or voluntary, and they are used “...for forced sexual service, as combatants, messengers, porters, and cooks.”⁶⁰ Children are defined by the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) as, “...every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier,” and are recognized as having the fundamental right to life and a state-ensured survival, inasmuch as that is possible.⁶¹ However, despite the CRC being overwhelmingly ratified by member nations of the UN, the fact remains that the majority of wars fought in developing countries are not done with complex technology, but rather with simple Avtomat Kalashnikova 1947 rifles (Automatic Kalashnikov or AK-47) which are cheap, plentiful, and light weight enough to be carried by a child as young as 10, leaving millions of youth in danger of being enlisted to fight the battles of rogue regimes and renegade guerrilla militias worldwide.⁶²

As a specific type of forced victim-perpetrator, child soldiers are also stuck in a moral gray zone with regards to scholarship. Though the international sentiment has shown that in theory all states agree to the innocence of children, there is much debate on this matter in reality. At what age is a child truly culpable of their military actions, especially if those actions include voluntary enlistment in an armed conflict that results in genocidal acts or crimes against humanity? Can a child of ten or twelve be held to the same standard as an

adolescent of seventeen or an adult? Scholars and the world media disagree on many of these points. In order to shed some light on some of these quandaries we must consider motivating factors of poverty, family pressure, and religious or social ideological indoctrination. We must also consider our own double-standards with regards to the definitions of childhood and the culpability of youth in human rights atrocities.

In 1993, The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 48/157, which is the “Protection of Children Affected by Armed Conflicts.” This resolution commissioned Graça Machel, former Minister of Education in Mozambique to carry out a study in collaboration with the United Nations Center for Human Rights and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) regarding the affects that war had on children throughout the world. This report, *The Impact of War on Children*, was presented to the UN in November 1996 and made special note of the use of child soldiers throughout the world. Machel broke the children into two groups: involuntary and voluntary enlistments. Involuntary enlistments are often procured through kidnap or conquests, where children of vanquished villages are subjugated and forced into military service. In some cases, every household is issued the order that they must surrender at least one child to the cause. If parents refuse to cooperate, the army simply comes in and threatens lethal force to get what they want.⁶³

Voluntary enlistments are children who, on their own volition, agree to join a militia or guerrilla campaign.⁶⁴ However, use of the word voluntary depends on perception. Studies show that children involved in armed conflict are often raised in conflict zones with broken families on the brink of poverty. They are often ill-educated and have very few outside options.⁶⁵ In 2000, a young girl named Renuka was captured by the Sri

Lankan Army after a bloody battle during the Sri Lankan civil war.⁶⁶ When offered the opportunity to speak from a detention center in Sri Lankan Army custody, the 13-year-old explained that at age 11 she had run away from home to voluntarily sign herself up to fight with the rebels because, "...we all knew that they give meals." After heavy indoctrination and military training, the barely teenaged girl was denied the opportunity to see her family and would eventually find herself with a chest full of shrapnel after a mortar blast hit her sentry post. Refusing to swallow the cyanide capsule issued to her by the rebels, the girl waited instead to be captured and refused to return to her leaders.⁶⁷

Stories like Renuka's are all too common in the world of child soldiers, making it clear that even a voluntary enlistment is often pressured by forces outside of the child's control. In 2003, during the raging warfare in eastern Congo, almost thirty percent of the soldiers were children. Though some of the children were kidnapped, a situation we will discuss more later, many of them signed up of their own free will in order to avoid hunger.⁶⁸ For some of the girls who joined, the motivating factor was fear of being raped as a civilian. Said a girl who identified herself only as Vanessa, "When you know what the men do, you will make the war with them, like that, you have a weapon and you can protect yourself."⁶⁹ Being armed does not necessarily mean safety, however, as girls and women in the fighting forces are still subjected to sexual abuse that leads to sexually transmitted disease, pregnancy, and scars both physical and emotional. Worse, it is extremely difficult for girls who are used as military sex slaves to get the post-conflict aide given to child soldiers because they do not often have the AK-47 to prove their account.⁷⁰ As of 2006, nearly 30,000 of the Congolese child-soldiers had been successfully taken out of the war zone, reunited where it was possible with family, and

educated through aid groups; however, fighting continued to rage, and child soldiers—occasionally even the ones who had just been sent home—were reactivated to again become part of the military effort.⁷¹

Not all child soldiers who go “voluntarily” claim bitter experiences, however, further complicating the matter of innocence and guilt with regards to the child soldier. For some, the opportunity to leave home is incentive and the power, the guns, the drugs, and the familial atmosphere that sometimes develops within the ranks is enough motivation to stay. For youths with absolutely no control over their present lives, the opportunity to wield a weapon brings a sense of security and control that nothing else they are offered can. Reports on the recent conflict in Ivory Coast speak of ten-year-olds hauling their AK-47’s and listening to reggae music while, “The hardened ones scowl and swagger...joyrid[ing], firing off their weapons, [just] for fun.”⁷² A young soldier and now political refugee from Ivory Coast named Salifou—who I will discuss more later—reflected on some of the youths he had fought alongside during the conflict, “There are some who can’t be healed anymore. There are some who can’t stop killing and giving orders. There are people who hate people. If you had a terrible childhood, if you hated your parents...I loved my parents.”⁷³ In the same article that reported about thirteen-year-old Renuka in Sri Lanka, another girl of the same age named Malar Arumugam was also interviewed. Malar’s story bears no resemblance to Renuka’s—she was an orphan when she had been recruited at the age of eight. When interviewed, she was defiant and angry at having been captured. Years of indoctrination into guerrilla ideology were apparent in her defense of the rebel cause and her motivations for joining, “I thought it was better to go with the [representative of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] because of our

poverty...I also wanted to contribute to freedom.” She declared her determination to continue fighting in whatever capacity she was able, despite being involved in a grenade attack that killed ten of her fellow child-soldiers and despite being at that time in the custody of the Sri Lankan Army.⁷⁴

Like Malar, children and adolescents are easily swayed by powerful religious and social ideologies, and often volunteering to fight, showing no remorse afterwards and maintaining the dogma which they have been taught. Videos have shown children receiving instruction in al Qaeda training camps, the Real Irish Resistance Army (Real IRA) of Northern Ireland has made specific attempts to recruit younger teens to further their cause, and the youngest recorded use of a child by a terror organization was the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (National Liberation Army or ELN) in Colombia, who recruited a nine-year-old boy to attack a polling station with a bomb in 1997.⁷⁵ In Palestine, children in the 1990’s were recruited using television programs like the *Children’s Club*, a child-centered program with puppets and Mickey Mouse look-alike characters that sang songs like, “I finished practicing on the submachine gun of return. I trained my friends from among the children and the youths...” and “When I wander into the entrance of Jerusalem I’ll turn into a martyr warrior.”⁷⁶ Today in Palestine, a program called *To Win with Shahad* has become popular. This program is a quiz show which offers cash prizes to call-in contestants who can answer questions that are usually religious in nature but have also been shown to include glorification of political martyrs and a blatant dismissal of Israel as a nation.⁷⁷ Since Israeli soldiers have strict orders to abstain from using lethal force against children under the age of twelve, Palestinian

militants have perfected the use of youth in their attacks—indoctrinating them from infancy through mass media.⁷⁸

To the citizens of many developed nations there is little sympathy for former perpetrators, no matter their age or condition of service. The same world that demands the black and white clarity of victims and perpetrators in situations of genocide also demands such clarity with regards to other humanitarian crises. Since it remains that perpetrators can rarely be seen as anything but, there is some question as to what—if anything—should be done to give former child soldiers refuge or rehabilitation. In November, 2006, Salifou Yankene arrived at Kennedy International Airport from Cote d'Ivoire and told airport authorities, "I want to make refugee." After he explained his story of forced conscription into the rebel army at the age of fifteen after witnessing the murder of his father and sister and the bloody severing of his younger brother's hand, the teen was granted temporary refuge. For two years in Cote d'Ivoire the young man had, "looted during raids, grabbed new child conscripts, and kicked civilians without pity if they resisted." However, at subsequent asylum hearings, the United States has argued that the boy was—by his own admission—a perpetrator of atrocities, and "thus legally barred from refuge." Though some, including former child-soldier Ishmael Beah, have advocated that sending the young man home would mean certain death, there is still much confusion over whether or not his story can be considered credible, his innocence genuine.⁷⁹ This inability to discern innocence, especially in older children and adolescents, is an issue that plagues researchers and jurists trying to handle the very real problem of forced perpetration amongst children.

Mortar blasts and children are not naturally mentally connected by much of the West. Unfortunately, despite recent reports that show an overall decrease in the use of child soldiers worldwide the problem is still very real and the choices are still very limited in the developing world.⁸⁰ Themselves forced victim-perpetrators, child soldiers are stuck in a moral gray zone of scholarship. Though the international sentiment, and indeed official policy, has shown that in theory all states agree to the innocence of children there is much debate on this matter in reality. Child soldiers who are older are often stuck in limbo, not considered children by some and not considered adults by others, making it difficult to give them assistance that they need post-conflict. In addition, aid groups often neglect female child soldiers because they lack the weapons of engagement that validate their accounts, leaving young girls who had been sexually abused without assistance and often carrying sexually transmitted diseases and children. Child soldiers are often categorized as voluntary or involuntary; when in reality their lot is much like that of the victim-perpetrator in regards to a complete lack of real options. choice between that which is atrocious and that which is equally atrocious but with the slight potential to be less personally painful is no choice at all—especially for a child of six, ten, or even seventeen. Scholars like Peter Singer have recently chided researchers for such refusal to act to protect child-soldiers without clarity or simplicity. Reality is complex and messy. By conveniently justifying neglect of this field of study, scholars allow the continued forced participation of thousands of children every year in genocide and other atrocities.⁸¹

Conclusion

In an essay entitled “The Evil in Genocide” in the edited collection *Genocide and Human Rights*, Berel Lang asks the question, “What’s so bad about genocide anyway?” Though Lang admits that “The wording sounds flippant...” the question is meant to bring about this point: so long as society learns from every situation of genocide and mass atrocity, the lives spent were not in vain—rather what we learn from their deaths could catalyze the world to action and potentially prevention of future atrocities.⁸² Thankfully, as Adam Jones points out in his work *Crimes Against Humanity: A Beginner’s Guide*, “...the notion that systematic crimes against civilians are atrocities against all ‘humanity’, which is in turn obliged to monitor, suppress, and punish them, has grown incrementally...especially in recent decades,” but much still remains to be done.⁸³

Within the emerging field of genocide research, there is a constant battle against the human tendency to create a field of good guys and bad guys, winners and loser, victims and perpetrators. Though scholarship and even film of the last decade has sought to expand on Levi’s “Gray Zone” thesis—focusing less attention to moral absolutes, and more attention to the realistic portrayal of the victims and the perpetrators of genocide—scholarship now fights the urge to consider too many different ideas at the same time.⁸⁴ The resulting compilations of “Gray Zone” research provide some explanation of forced victim-perpetrators but often only as a side note to the greater theme of moral ambiguity as a whole. While it is a positive advancement for academia that such ambiguity is finally being recognized for its underlying presence in all situations of genocide and human rights violation, scholars must now endeavor to dig deeply into the “Gray Zone” to investigate ambiguous items and characters as individual entities, much the same way

that other genocide scholarship has been performed in the past. The forced victim-perpetrator deserves his or her own consideration. If Lang's thesis is to be proven correct, society must be willing to learn from the past; which can only happen if a full exploration is done into all topics, no matter how uncomfortable.

When considering forced victim-perpetrators and the potential innocence or guilt of such a character, trying to determine motivation—whether participation was willing or an unwilling—is an ethical trap that scholars must be clear to avoid. The choice between one's own life and the life of another is not a choice at all; it is an attempt by the perpetrators to dehumanize their victims while salving their own consciences and deflecting blame. It would be too easy to call the forced victim-perpetrator a collaborator—though they do in certain cases benefit from the death of others—but conversely it would be too easy to proclaim their full innocence. Rather than assigning a moral black or white, this character of modern-genocide must remain in the “half-tints and complexities” that scholarship longs to avoid, but most importantly must be acknowledged.⁸⁵ How society treats the victims of genocide is based on how society perceives them; therefore it only stands to reason that a society denying victim-perpetrators full understanding denies them also empathy, assistance, and compassion to which they—like all victims of genocide—are entitled.

¹ Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Summit Books; 1986), 24.

² Browning, 78-87.

³ Berenbaum, Michael, “Sonderkommando: Testimony from Evidence,” from *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its Aftermath*; (New York: Berghahn Books), 61-69.

⁴ Christopher Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*; (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), xx.

⁵ Stanley Milgram performed a series of psychological studies in the early 1960's where participants were asked to administer a sort of shock treatment to a "learner" in varying degrees of severity based on right or wrong answers to questions the administrator asked. The "learner" was always on the other side of a partition, so the administrator was never able to see them, but could hear cries of "pain" from the other side—unaware that the "learner" was not in any pain at all. The findings were astounding, as most participants put up very little resistance to the order to inflict pain on other people, especially when the person giving the orders sat in the same room. These tests have become famous examples of the "ordinary men" thesis, reportedly proving that the average person is not interested in defying authority and so simply complies with orders without resistance; Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 270-274.

⁶ Alex Alvarez, *Governments, Citizens, and Genocide: A Comparative and Interdisciplinary Approach* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2001), 97-100.

⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 114; Michael Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 29.

⁸ Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), 38-39.

⁹ Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz* (New York: Touchstone, 1996), 87-100.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 91.

¹¹ Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (New York: Summit Books, 1986), 82.

¹² *Ibid*, 52.

¹³ Dr. Miklos Nyiszli, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account*, (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1960), 38-39.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 71.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 47-55.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 55.

¹⁷ Quoted in Michael Berenbaum. "Sonderkommando: Testimony from Evidence," from *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its Aftermath* (New York: Berghahn Books), 65.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 50-53.

¹⁹ Filip Müller, *Eyewitness Auschwitz: Three Years in the Gas Chambers* (Briarcliff Manor: Stein and Day, 1979), 4.

²⁰ Nyiszli, 108-109.

²¹ *Ibid*, 17.

²² *Ibid*, 77.

²³ Müller, 154.

²⁴ Nyiszli, 114-120.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 129.

²⁶ It is here that Müller and Nyiszli disagree on dates. Müller states that the last selection leading to the uprising happened on October 7th, while Nyiszli recalls the uprising starting on the 6th. Due to the circumstances both men were in and the time that passed between the incident and the publication of their memoirs it is of note that they are so close in their date approximations to each other, regardless of who is actually correct.

²⁷ Müller, 153-160.

²⁸ Nyiszli, 166-167.

²⁹ Müller, 160.

³⁰ Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz*, 91-92.

³¹ This report was released in February, 1999, and can be found at <http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/mds/spanish/> but is also available in English at <http://shr.aaas.org/guatemala/ceh/report/english/toc.html>. Both are maintained by the American Association for the Advancement of Science; CEH Report, *Guatemala: Memory of Silence*, 1:3.

³² Greg Grandin. "History, Motive, Law, and Intent: Combining Historical and Legal Methods in Understanding Guatemala's 1981-1983 Genocide" from *Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*; (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 339.

³³ Ibid, 341; Victoria Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan Press, 2003), 149.

³⁴ Victor Montejo, *Voices From Exile: Violence and Survival in Modern Maya History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 62-63.

³⁵ Ibid, 92.

³⁶ Ibid, 93.

³⁷ Ibid, 63.

³⁸ Sanford, 136.

³⁹ Ricardo Falla, *Massacres in the Jungle: Ixcán, Guatemala, 1975-1982* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 153; Ibid, 249-250.

⁴⁰ Sanford, 248-271.

⁴¹ Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 210.

⁴² CEH Report, 2:80. Emphasis in context.

⁴³ David Stoll. "Guatemala" *Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, <http://www.enotes.com/genocide-encyclopedia/guatemala>

⁴⁴ Ben Kiernan *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2007), 21-23.

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- ⁴⁵ Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 233-236.
- ⁴⁶ There has been much investigation into this incident with inconclusive results. Competing theories that he was shot down by his own people, that the plane was not shot down but had an explosive device on board, and that the Tutsi rebels blew it out of the sky, have all been entertained with scholars in disagreement. What is known is that the plane carrying the president was brought down and that this incident was used as a catalyst to begin the 100 days of massacre that followed.
- ⁴⁷ Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 329-348.
- ⁴⁸ Faustin Kagame, translator, "RTLM Broadcast, 3 April 1994", from *Genocide in Rwanda: A Collective Memory*; (Washington D.C.: Howard University Press, 1999), 118.
- ⁴⁹ Jean Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Picador Publishing, 2003), 112.
- ⁵⁰ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 4.
- ⁵¹ Power, 334.
- ⁵² Hatzfeld, 75.
- ⁵³ Olivia Ward, "Lust for Resources Driving Conflict in Congo," *The Toronto Star*, November 16, 2008.
- ⁵⁴ Kurt Bestor, "Prayer of the Children," *Innovators*, http://www.musicagain.com/featured_artists/prayer_of_the_children.html
- ⁵⁵ Michael H. Kater, *Hitler Youth*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 11.
- ⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁵⁷ Alfons Heck. *A Child of Hitler Germany in the Days When God Wore A Swastika*. (Phoenix: Renaissance House Publishers, 1985), 7; Kater, *Hitler Youth*, 17.
- ⁵⁸ Graça Machel, *The Impact of War on Children* (London: Hurst and Company, 2001.), 7.
- ⁵⁹ Roy Gutman, David Rieff, and Anthony Dworkin ed., *Crimes of War: What the Public Should Know Revised and Updated Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2007.), 95-98; Jeffrey Gettleman, "The Perfect Weapon for the Meanest Wars." *The New York Times*, April 29, 2007.
- ⁶⁰ Machel, 7.
- ⁶¹ United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1.1, <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>; accessed September 15, 2008; *Ibid.*, 6.1-6.2.
- ⁶² The countries that ratified the CRC are listed on <http://www.unhchr.ch/pdf/report.pdf>, and include a majority of the states that have used child soldiers in the last twenty years, despite the explicit agreement to desist this practice; Scholar Michael Wessells has stated in his research that AK-47s can be purchased in most African nations for the "price of a chicken or goat."; According to the "Small Arms Survey" that was published by Kopel, Gallant, and Eisen in 2004 and by Lacina and Gleditsch in 2005 there are an estimated 500 million firearms worldwide, with over 100 million of those being in the "Kalashnikov family". This survey was reported by Phillip Killicoat of the Department of Economics at Oxford University in his paper "Weaponomics: The Global Market For Assault Rifles."; <http://www->

wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2007/04/13/000016406_20070413145045/Rendered/PDF/wps4202.pdf; According to specifications offered by the manufacturers of the AK-47, the rifle weighs 3.8 kilograms with an empty cartridge and 4.3 kilograms loaded. This translates to 8.4 pounds and 9.5 pounds respectively, or roughly an armload of books. For young children, such a weight is not unbearable and this makes it the perfect weapon for use in military and guerrilla actions that utilize child soldiers; Michael Wessells, *Child Soldiers: From Violence to Protection* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 18.

⁶³ Ibid, 42.

⁶⁴ Machel, xv-11.

⁶⁵ Rachel Brett and Irma Specht, *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 9-25).

⁶⁶ According to *The New York Times* article, “Her last name was withheld by *The New York Times* out of concern that the [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, a Sri Lankan rebel group] would punish her for turning against them.” Celia W. Dugger, “Rebels Without a Childhood in Sri Lanka War.” *The New York Times*, September 11, 2000.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Editorial, “Armies of Children” *The New York Times*, October 12, 2006.

⁶⁹ Brett and Specht, 95.

⁷⁰ Lydia Polgreen, “Fewer Conflicts Involve Child Soldiers, Report Finds” *The New York Times*, May 22, 2008.

⁷¹ Editorial “Armies of Children” *The New York Times*, October 12, 2006.

⁷² Somina Sengupta, “The Child Soldiers of Ivory Coast are Hired Guns” *The New York Times*, March 27, 2003.

⁷³ Nina Bernstein, “Taking the War Out of a Child Soldier.” *The New York Times*, May 13, 2007.

⁷⁴ Celia W. Dugger, “Rebels Without a Childhood in Sri Lanka War” *The New York Times*, September 11, 2000.

⁷⁵ P.W. Singer, *Children at War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2005), 124-125.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 124-125.

⁷⁷ CNS News, “Palestinian Children’s Program ‘Glorifies Terror,’” September 10, 2008
<http://www.cnsnews.com/public/content/article.aspx?RsrcID=35443>.

⁷⁸ Singer, 118.

⁷⁹ Ishmael Beah was a child soldier in Sierra Leone. *The New York Times* reports that he was “orphaned, drugged up, indoctrinated, and made to kill indiscriminately by government forces in Sierra Leone’s civil war—and then reclaimed by counselors at a UNICEF rehabilitation center. (See article citation), he became a permanent resident of the United States through connections within aid groups, and would go on to publish his wildly popular memoir *Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* (New York: Sarah Crichton Books, 2007) which would become a national bestseller thanks in part to Starbucks, who featured the book in their coffee houses for much of that year.

⁸⁰ Lydia Polgreen, "Fewer Conflicts Involve Child Soldiers, Report Finds," *The New York Times*, May 22, 2008.

⁸¹ Singer, 138-161.

⁸² Berel Lang, "The Evil in Genocide" from *Genocide and Human Rights: A Philosophical Guide* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 5.

⁸³ Adam Jones, *Crimes Against Humanity: A Beginner's Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008), ix.

⁸⁴ Released in 2001, the Tim Blake Nelson film *The Gray Zone* focuses on the Sonderkommando units of Auschwitz. The film does not romanticize the forced victim-perpetrators, and has been acclaimed for its ability to give dignity to a much overlooked character in Holocaust history while portraying the events without euphemisms or false hope.

⁸⁵ Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, 37.

CHAPTER 4

DEATH IS IN THE DETAILS: THE GRAY ZONES OF INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO GENOCIDE

The “Overman”: Striving for Perfection

According to philosophers like Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), humanity is in constant struggle between the singular self-ambition of the individual and the universal understanding of the individual’s place in the larger whole.¹ To these nineteenth-century philosophers, all humanity was created by a greater being called the “Will.” The Will is an artist and a perfectionist. It creates, then realizing flaw it destroys in order to create from the ashes a new masterpiece. The eventual product is the flawless “Overman” who is the eternally enlightened and ideal human being, the magnum opus of a flawless creator.² Within this context, human beings are a product of creation, flawed by definition, and utterly dispensable—but their destruction is never without purpose for the Will has great plans for which that one person was a necessary first step.³ Though Schopenhauer argued the pessimism of the individual who eventually dies without ever realizing his potential, Nietzsche maintained that individuals are merely pieces of a larger puzzle. He found them to be fundamental, for what is a whole but the summation of its parts? At the same time, he saw them as unimportant.⁴ Scholar Walter H. Sokel has written of Nietzsche’s philosophy, called Dionysianism: “Life goes on. Individuals come and go, rise and fall, but the whole is everlasting. The individual dies, and that is tragic. But being goes on forever and ever.”⁵

The assertion of Nietzsche was that the individual had to transcend himself to fully appreciate his role in the great drama of humanity, a philosophy that can be applied to incomprehensible situations to provide otherwise elusive explanations—situations such as genocide.

To study genocide is to study humanity at its worst, in its most selfish, and most profane. Few things require as much self-examination or immediately humble a subject as the moment when it becomes clear that the ability to commit atrocity is not exclusive to history books or developing countries, but instead is a fundamental part of the human condition, transcending race, religion, and gender. Even in the insular developed world it is the history—shown through genocides on every populated continent on earth—and latent potential of every individual, despite the strongest desires of those who consider themselves to be “civilized” to distance themselves from this ability. Genocide is an uncomfortable subject because it requires scholars to confront the wrongs and suffering of others while self-reflecting and acknowledging that these other people are simply them in another body. This universality has provided hope for the eventual positive outcome of genocide. Though individual deaths and instances of genocide are tragic atrocities, from these deaths came the birth and application of universal human rights, the advent of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) like Amnesty International, and many other forms of local, international, and intercontinental activism. Like the Phoenix from the ashes of the Will’s creation, an active and empathetic international community arises from situations of genocide, as human beings begin to transcend their individualism to understand their role in the greater whole. In this framework it seems that from the death and destruction of genocide the Will is progressing towards the creation of its Overman.

Nietzsche's theory on the upward intellectual motion of humanity towards the enlightened Overman depends on the perpetual forward movement of society towards a greater understanding of the individual's place in the collective whole.⁶ As discussed in chapter one, the social movement towards universal human rights culminated in the twentieth century with the creation of the United Nations and its Declaration of Universal Human Rights. Unfortunately, even as the members of the United Nations put these enlightened ideals of supposedly universally applicable human rights on paper, they were more idealistic dream than reality. Amongst other things, both Britain and the Soviet Union objected in the 1940s to the inclusion of human rights fearing colonial backlash and international interference, while the United States initially rejected the clause regarding the equality of races.⁷ Such paradoxes have brought criticism on what seems like a hollow promise of equality that cannot truly be guaranteed. The Universal Declaration and the later adopted United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide represent the ideal of the human rights agenda: universal, enlightened, and—as yet—unattainable. They present the world with what, in a perfect world, would be the standard. In the currently imperfect world, humanity has not been able to achieve universal guarantee of safety, free speech, and freedom from torture. The trouble comes not from the idealistic documents, but instead from the slow international body that stands behind them.⁸

Among the levels of responsibilities that the Genocide Conventions add to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is the call to justice. The language of both documents is open for interpretation of how justice can best be served to the victims, perpetrators and bystanders of human rights violations. Although international criminal

tribunals have been established and trials held, it is rare for anyone but the highest ranking officials to be tried; even then trials drag on for years leaving victims without other recourse. The ability to assign responsibility for damages done is a fundamental part of the healing process for victims and bystanders as Martha Minow illustrates in her work *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness*. In this work she likens survivors of atrocity to a character from a novel who survives the Holocaust and three years later strangles the Nazi doctor responsible for his family's deaths. The character is confronted about this action and is told that it did not bring back his family from the dead. His response, "It brought *me* back from the dead." When appropriate blame is assigned and closure can be felt by the suffering survivors, vengeance is more likely to be avoided. Yet the UN remains slow to respond due to its overwhelming size and lack of cooperation by member states.⁹

The effects of the United Nations' inaction have plagued it since its inception. The two major genocides of the end of the twentieth century have been the turning point, however, as international *individual* pressure has mounted for the UN to live up to its idealistic documents that are often ignored in current policy. If the principles of the UN represent the philosophical Overman of human rights, the course of individual action has proved Nietzsche's theory correct inasmuch as it is has steadily increased over the past three centuries; evidence of increasing numbers of individuals realizing their place in the larger world and empathizing with the other through a recognition of other as self. Some of the byproducts of this increased participation are the legally focused Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, with its famous letter-writing campaigns, along with

hundreds of situation-specific groups.¹⁰ All of these have proven crucial to the examination of genocide in the latter half of the twentieth century.¹¹

The enlightened Overman of human rights has not yet been achieved. Despite the idealism that longs for a world where human rights are universally applied, there is a great divide between the conceptualization of human rights and the practical application of these rights embodied by the governments that have failed to act on the collective call of concerned individuals. Ironically this bureaucratic, and arguably diplomatic, gulf between the individual who sees himself as a member of a world community and the document that obligates international governments to actively pursue the application of ideals befitting a world community is one of the greatest hindrances to genocide prevention and the realization of universal human rights. There is confusion over who is responsible for enforcing these rights and whether or not state sovereignty can be overruled in favor of these guiding principles. In part because of this conflict, and the confusion it creates, genocide and other human rights abuses continue.

The international response to genocide unfortunately deserves its own place in Gray Zone scholarship. Confusion over who is responsible for intervention compounded by the hesitation of states to involve themselves in armed conflict that does not seem to concern them creates a realm of half-tinted shading where genocide is permitted to continue not because it is condoned but because it is not condemned. The disconnect between the individual call to action and government response is indicative of the complex nature of this relationship, proving that it sometimes takes more than awareness of a problem to find a way to end it. This chapter investigates this disconnect in an effort to recognize the positive progression towards the universal human rights (the Overman) through the ever

expanding role of activist groups (the Individual). It also seeks to establish the pressing need to clear the line between the humanitarian individual and the governing bodies with the capabilities to insure that all people are offered the same fundamental and unconditional securities without bias. By examining the two major recognized genocides of the 1990s, spanning different races, religions, and genders, the chapter will discuss popular debates about the interest of both the international governing bodies and activist groups when confronted with genocide in the Balkans as opposed to genocide in Africa and determine what—if any—difference existed. Finally, it will consider the potential lessons that genocide teaches the world and how these lessons can be applied in order to stem the flow of genocidal activity.

While it is the optimist's eternal hope that genocide will eventually cease to be, the basic understanding of the individual interests precludes this and the realist must look for more tangible results: the shortening of genocidal situations, the increase of activist participation on the world stage, and clarity regarding international responsibility for action. By engaging Nietzsche's framework in this debate we see that it is no one entity's responsibility to protect human rights, but every single individual's responsibility because the health of the whole depends on the health of its parts. It is this important realization, and to the potentially useful comparative dialogue that supports it, that this chapter hopes to contribute.

Case Study: Bosnia

In the early 1990's, Yugoslavia's tenuous political and ethnic climate broke into war, exposing to the world the unsustainable coexistence of the Balkans which had been

slowly coming unraveled since WWII. Under the socialist authoritarian regime of Josip Broz, known to the world as Tito, the Cold War era had seen a federation of six republics in Yugoslavia. There, much was done to ensure that power constantly changed hands to avoid the singular domination of any one ethnic group. The hope was that the power-sharing would eventually create a unified nation out of the diverse ethnic make-up of the region. Unfortunately, with Tito's death in 1980, so did the idealism behind the unified Yugoslavia. A surge of ethnic solidarity saw the rise to power of Slobodan Milosevic, an astute observer of the social temperature who would use the violent nationalist undercurrent to stir public outcry for Serbian independence. After the 1989 takeover of the province of Kosovo, in the Yugoslav republic of Serbia—resulted in the ousting of ethnic Albanians from jobs and homes—the dissolution of the entire nation over security concerns was almost inevitable. The 1991 secessions of Slovenia and Croatia solidified it, and the bloody fallout began.¹² Though the other republics had defined ethnic majorities, Bosnia was by far the most diverse.¹³ It was left in the unenviable position of having to decide between remaining a part of the Yugoslavian federation and attempting to declare its own independence. While the first option left Bosnia's Muslim population susceptible to the control of Serbian forces that surrounded the republic the second would provoke a backlash from the rest of the state attempting to avoid the federal breakdown.¹⁴ After consulting the major powers of Europe and the United States, Bosnia chose to secede, with the predicted response from Serbian forces.¹⁵

The expectations for violence were completely outweighed by the reality of Serbian force, however, which included concentration camps that created skeletons in “various stages of human decay and affliction; the bones of their elbows and wrists

protrud[ing] like pieces of jagged stone from the pencil thin stalks to which their arms [had] been reduced.”¹⁶ Lists of “Muslim and Croat intellectuals, musicians, and intellectuals” were compiled, the people on them rounded up, and mass executions were performed.¹⁷ Rape of women and men, a historically prevalent tool of subjugation during war, became common. For the fiercely patriarchal society which valued manhood and protected women the inability to protect oneself or one’s female relatives from such torture was degrading. It was also meant to prove the inability of men to protect their women as they were often bound and forced to witness the gang-rape of wives and daughters. For these reasons, the term “genocidal rape” gained popularity in international news coverage.¹⁸

Almost immediately after the conflict began the world media descended on the Balkans, broadcasting gruesome details of violence, internment, and death. Theirs was the first line of individual response. Journalist Samantha Power, covering the situation in Bosnia for the *Washington Post*, personally witnessed the bombing of the UN safe area of Srebrenica on July 6, 1995.¹⁹ Despite desperate attempts to “shame” the United States to action, Power soon came to realize, as she later wrote, “Despite graphic media coverage, American policymakers, journalists, and citizens are extremely slow to muster the imagination needed to reckon with evil.”²⁰ Attempting to stir that imagination, journalists, began reporting a death toll of 200,000 Muslim victims as first reported by Senada Kreso, Bosnian Deputy Minister of Information, in June of 1993.²¹ There was confusion as to who deserved blame, whether international forces should get involved, and whether or not there were atrocities being committed on both sides. As Canadian General Lewis MacKenzi of the United Nations Protection Force was later quoted,

“Dealing with Bosnia is a little like dealing with three serial killers—one has killed fifteen, one has killed ten, and one has killed five. Do we help the one that’s only killed five?”²² Despite this confusion, the lay public and the political establishment were both intent upon making their own statements.

The ideals set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights were clearly being violated from the first day of conflict in the Balkans. Interestingly, the international political community was extremely slow to act, resulting in a widening of the gulf between rhetoric and action. The United Nations established economic sanctions on Serbia, and deployed 9,000 UN Peace Keeping troops to deliver food, water, and medical supplies to Bosnia. These troops were not authorized to make efforts to stop atrocities, having been mandated only to provide deliveries, and were essentially useless to the victims. Their presence provided psychological security, however, and reports surfaced of delivery convoys being retained by Bosnian Muslims who feared Serb reprisal when the troops left. October of 1992 saw the declaration of a “no-fly” zone over Bosnia, but according to a Human Rights Watch report this declaration had been blatantly “violated nearly 500 times,” by the following March.²³ Making matters worse was the lack of commitment by UN member states to get involved.

During his bid for presidency, Bill Clinton vowed not only to make Bosnia a national concern of the United States but to put U.S. efforts into ending the crisis. Within his first six months in office, Clinton attempted to follow through with his promise by proposing to give munitions to the Muslim government of Bosnia, while threatening United States air strikes on strategic Bosnian Serb targets. This proposal was immediately denied by major European states that felt the United States was politically posturing

without genuine interest in being physically involved. They suggested that if the United States had true interest in stopping the violence that U.S. soldiers would be brought in to assist in the United Nations mission to protect UN safe zones. One British official, who refused to be named by the press, stated that, “It looks a bit like President Clinton feels the compulsion to do something but does not actually want to get involved.”²⁴ This compulsion to act juxtaposed with the disinterest in physically becoming involved rendered the United States and other member nations of the United Nations almost useless to Bosnian victims of all ethnicities. Eventually, the conflict would be resolved with the Dayton Accords—drafted by Milosevic, benefiting leaders of Serbia and Croatia, and forced on Bosnia by international pressure to end the conflict—which divided Bosnia into districts and military zones, overseen by international forces. This act would be seen as “rewarding genocide” and empowered Milosevic—in an effort to rebuild the greatness of the crumbling Yugoslavian state—to then attack Kosovo, which had been an independent Serbian province. The Balkan conflict would continue unabated into the end of the twentieth century.²⁵

Under the UN Genocide Convention, the act of labeling conflict “genocide” obligates the labeling state with decisive action to stop the violence. This obligation often leaves heads of state arguing over the definition of genocide as a way to prevent their states from having to commit militarily.²⁶ As Samantha Power writes:

[During situations of genocide] U.S. officials spin themselves (as well as the American public) about the nature of the violence in question and the likely impact of an American intervention... Thus, they can in good conscience favor stopping genocide in the abstract, while simultaneously opposing American involvement in the moment.”²⁷

In an effort to justify being the barrier between enlightened individualism and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, politicians conveniently avoid action until action can be symbolic and rhetorical, not strategic and militaristic.

It was not until ten years after the July 1995 attack on the UN “safe area” of Srebrenica that the United States Senate finally moved to pass SR134, mirroring HR 199 by the House of Representatives. These acts referenced the United Nations Genocide Convention as they resolved that not only were the acts by Serbs against the Muslim population of Bosnia genocidal, but that the UN and its member states bore responsibility for not acting to end the conflict.²⁸ Twelve years after the conflict in Bosnia began, and nearly a decade after a tenuous peace returned to the region, the United States would no longer need to back its decision to invoke the term “genocide” with manpower on the ground, making it the perfect time to pass such a resolution. Historically UN member states have proven that they prefer to ignore first and admonish later.²⁹ SR134 and HR199 were empty documents; however, their passage marked a step forward for the United States, which has often hidden behind the need to preserve international relations as an excuse to avoid implicating other states in genocide.³⁰

For survivors of the atrocities in Bosnia, suffering has been compounded by the slow legal reaction by the international community. While there were steps forward—the first trial after the atrocity was actually the first trial for the crime of genocide, and not the easier to prove “war crimes”—as of the writing of this chapter less than fifty people have been legally tried for the crime of genocide in Bosnia. Among these was the notable leader Slobodan Milosevic, who died in prison during his trial without receiving a verdict.³¹ On July 21, 2008 former president of Bosnia-Herzegovina Radovan Karadzic

was apprehended and transferred to the international tribunal known as The Hague where he is standing trial for his part in the genocide, proving that justice has not yet been fully served even a decade after the fact.³²

In the UN's defense, even with all due legal speed it would be almost impossible to convict every person on all sides who committed atrocity during the Bosnian genocide. What other ways could the victims reach closure? In the case of Bosnia, the United Nations decided to duplicate the successful model of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission used after the South African Apartheid to seek answers, if not convictions.³³ In this model, investigations are completed into individual events within a larger picture of genocide or mass atrocity. A body of individuals considers all of the evidence on both sides and then grants amnesty in all but the most monstrous of situations in exchange for willingness to cooperate in the initial investigation. Financially, this model is better for the UN and the state that is involved, and is more expedient since Truth Commissions are kept on strict time tables.³⁴ For Bosnia, the trouble was the difference in opinion between those giving testimonies. Since the Truth Commission does not give a black and white response to what has occurred, but rather reports what it has been told, the reality is left in a legal gray zone. This has been difficult for some victims of the Bosnian genocide to deal with, feeling cheated for justice in a process that is instead focused on healing and not necessarily placing blame.³⁵

In contrast to the top-down approach of the United Nations and its members, the individual, bottom-up efforts by grassroots activists were numerous and without their impact it is hard to say whether the eventual involvement of Western nations in Bosnia would have ever been seen, however limited in capacity that involvement may have been.

As news organizations began to inundate the Western world with graphic images of violence and carnage, viewers went from having what scholar Dorie Wilsnack has called a “passive” response where they, “sat and watched and shook their heads to express frustration and confusion” to becoming actively concerned for the future of the Balkans.³⁶ In an editorial published in *The New York Times* on September 8, 1994, the newspaper demanded that “Instead of allowing other nations to set the agenda, President Clinton needs to take the initiative,” and, “Not go along with this unseemly wooing of the architect of Greater Serbia and the godfather of ethnic cleansing.”³⁷ Concerned citizens also wrote to the paper, claiming that, “Genocide anywhere in the world is inconsistent with traditional American Values. And that suggests, at least, a national interest in Bosnia.”³⁸ The concern did not end there, however, and soon situation-pertinent non-profit organizations began to flourish, giving voice to activists throughout the United States and in the world.

In August of 1993 State Department official Stephen Walker resigned his position in protest of the United States’ policies towards and overall lack of action in Bosnia. Four months later, Walker and representatives from more than forty different “humanitarian, citizen advocacy, and religious organizations,”³⁹ emerged as the American Committee to Save Bosnia (ACSB). The ACSB became a major lobbying effort, putting pressure on Congress and President Clinton to act decisively. Walker openly criticized the administration’s approval of the Dayton Accords and would later state that the administration had, “...basically swept Bosnia under the carpet by forcing a partition agreement on the parties....and insert[ed] U.S. troops to prevent further fighting and to implement the accord.”⁴⁰ One year after Walker left the government, the ACSB started

publishing a monthly newsletter, informing members about the latest action on the ground in Bosnia and providing “Activism Notes” providing details on protests, demonstrations, film viewings, and guest speakers all over the United States.⁴¹

By keeping Bosnia in the public eye, the group was able to rally public support for their cause, and soon other influential groups like Friends of Bosnia and student-led groups like Students Against Genocide (SAGe) joined the charge.⁴² While it seemed that a positive outlet for justifiable international concern had been reached some scholars, like Dorie Wilsnack, would later criticize these groups for being singularly focused on Muslim victims and claiming that American arrogance as well as situational blindness made groups like SAGe wary of student organizations in Bosnia, and prevented cooperation between American activists and their Bosnian counterparts who understood the situation and the needs of the people involved.⁴³ Wilsnack’s concern that overzealous and somewhat ethnocentric activism is more harmful than helpful to important causes is valid in terms of concrete results; but in Nietzsche’s framework of universal awareness it seems counterproductive to argue for a hierarchy of activism. Such a hierarchy, applying arbitrary value to contributions made by organizations and then labeling them “useful” or “not” based on this arbitrary value denies this underlying truth: the engagement of the individual in any capacity outside of himself is worthy of consideration and should be encouraged, not admonished.

In a August 19, 2003 blog-entry, Stephen Walker reflected on his choice to walk away from his promising career with the government a decade before saying that it was, “quite exhilarating to be able to fight for a cause I believed in so strongly. The day I resigned was the most empowering experience I have had.”⁴⁴ Though it may have taken

the graphic images and death toll reports sent by Samantha Power and other representatives of the media to encourage collective action, individual response to the genocide did eventually come. The gulf between the implementation of the Universal Declaration's ideal for human interaction and the self-transcendent individual in the case of Bosnia was the individual governments. What help was sent was slow to come, small in number, and almost totally powerless in the face of genocidal activity. Worse, recognition of the existence of genocide took over a decade, by then offering little comfort to the victims of violence in Bosnia and throughout the Former Republic of Yugoslavia.

Case Study: Rwanda

As the events in Bosnia were unfolding, another nation was about to deal with its own ethnic past. As discussed in chapter three, Rwanda was declared an independent state in 1962 and faced with the task of rebuilding itself as a country despite lingering colonial scars.⁴⁵ For months before the genocide, Hutu militants had been stockpiling weapons and preparing for the call to strike. On April 6, 1994 these weapons would be used to begin the one hundred days massacre of Tutsis by Hutus that eventually left in excess of 800,000 victims—which is eight thousand victims a day, or five each minute—while the United Nations and its member states sat by in silence and activists pleaded for intervention. In the end, it was only when Tutsi rebel forces were able to repel the attackers that unmitigated slaughter gave way to civil war for which peace would be brokered by international bodies.⁴⁶

In the case of Rwanda, UN peace keepers had already been in the country for several months attempting to maintain a peace agreement between the two sides. Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire, force commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), had been nervously watching the Hutu rebels stockpile weapons before President Habyarimana's plane was shot down. A source close to Dallaire confirmed "four large shipments of AK-47s, ammunition and grenades" which were being stored in Kigali against regulations. When he informed his superiors in New York of his intention to raid the weapons cache, he was commanded to keep UNAMIR in a "monitoring" position, effectively summing up the UN presence in Rwanda for the entire duration of the catastrophe.⁴⁷

Dallaire's orders from the UN throughout the genocide were to fire only when fired upon, leaving his soldiers as moot witnesses to unimaginable horror. Worse, because the UN has no military, the forces under Dallaire's command were volunteered through a mandate by their respective member nation, which maintains the authority to override UN orders. Therefore, in order for UNAMIR to be successful, member nations would have had to agree to potentially losing members, and the UN would have had to assert its authority to intervene in situations of genocide. Neither of these things occurred. Instead, the United Nations voted on April 21st to revoke peacekeeping forces from the region, citing its presence in 16 other world affairs—not the least of which was Bosnia. One of the most televised moments of those first weeks was the hasty retreat of the Bangladeshi contingent. As the plane came to take them home Bangladeshi officers ran for it causing a spectacle as they kneeled before and kissed the aircraft, dragging much more than their allotted fifteen kilograms of luggage per person on board and forcing the aircraft to leave

without the entire group. In essence, the Bangladeshi soldiers were abandoned by their superiors, and the entire world watched thanks to the presence of the media on the airstrip. Many other contingents soon followed. Utterly outnumbered and hands completely tied, the remaining UN forces were practically useless. In some ways they even proved quite dangerous as evacuating Tutsis sought refuge en masse with the UN's familiar blue berets, only to be wiped out by Hutu militias as the outsiders watched.⁴⁸

If the United States was anything during the Rwandan genocide, it was consistent. As the world looked to the major global power for direction, the country maintained its policy of caring from a distance while doing very little to actually assist. One year before the slaughter in Rwanda began, April of 1993, President Clinton had been present at the inauguration of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. There, he repeated familiar rhetoric about contemplating the evils done in Europe and learning from the past. He stated emphatically, "But as we are...witness [to the evils of genocide], so we must remain its adversary in the world in which we live."⁴⁹ Twelve months later, as one of the bloodiest genocides of the twentieth century was unfolding, the president maintained rhetoric, but did very little else. After a speech expressing sorrow at the death of the Rwandan president and his counterpart in Burundi, Clinton's administration ordered all American citizens out of Rwanda. While some Americans, like Seventh Day Adventist missionary Phil Van Lanen—who had been working with the poor in Rwanda and was evacuated immediately from Kigali—worried that, "we have betrayed the people we came to help," others like senate minority leader Bob Dole stated on April 10, 1994, "The Americans are out, and as far as I'm concerned, in Rwanda, that ought to be the end of it."⁵⁰ Having recently suffered tremendous casualties during the

embarrassing failure of a peacekeeping mission in Somalia, the United States was uneasy putting more troops in harm's way.

Other nations followed the American's example and quickly evacuated their citizens, unashamedly leaving nearly 1 million Rwandans to their deaths.⁵¹ The unfortunate irony is that according to survivors like Paul Rusesabagina:

It all could have been stopped quite easily [early on] with just a small fraction of the police department of any midsized American city. Rwandans have always shown respect to authority figures—it is part of our national personality—and a brigade of international soldiers would have found it easy to keep order on the streets of Kigali if they had had the guts to show they meant business about saving lives. But they didn't.⁵²

Instead of showing America's dedication to justice and force of arms, the United States stood behind empty words. They would later apologize for inaction. On March 26, 1998, President Clinton stopped briefly in Rwanda to pay tribute to the victims. In a speech to a handful of people, the American leader stated, "We in the United States and the world community did not do as much as we could have done to try to limit what occurred in Rwanda in 1994," later continuing that, "We cannot change the past," but suggesting that the world should learn from it.⁵³ This disheartening return to the rhetoric of memory fell hollow not just on the victims but on the world as it became clear that the governing bodies of the most powerful organizations and nations were useless in the face of genocidal evil, and at best could provide a half-hearted apology years after the fact.

In the 14 years following the massacres the International Court has only about 70 cases and left 100,000 men and women suspected of genocidal activities in prison awaiting trial. The state of Rwanda then initiated a unique Rwandan court system called *Gacaca*. This system places the victim and perpetrator across from one another on a hillside with a respected member of the community officiating. As other community

members watch, the perpetrator explains the deed to the victim and the victim in turn explains the impact the perpetrator's deeds had on him or her. In the 2008 documentary *Scream Bloody Murder* Cable News Network (CNN) foreign correspondent Christiane Amanpour interviewed Efuginia Makantbama, a Tutsi victim whose five children were murdered during the 1994 genocide by her Hutu neighbor Jean-Bosco Bizimana. After Bizimana served seven years in jail, he was brought to Gaçaca to stand before Makantbama where he, "discussed the horrible things we did...without holding anything back." In her interview with CNN, Makantbama was having dinner with Bizimana and his wife, Makantbama's basket-weaving partner. When asked how she had managed to reconcile, Makantbama said, "I am a Christian, and I like to pray...In my heart, the dead are dead. They cannot come back again. So I have to join myself with the others and forget what has happened."⁵⁴ Scholar Adam Jones terms this "restorative justice." While the sentences for perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide—rebuilding homes, schools, and other pieces of destroyed communities—are not the "eye-for-an-eye" justice that Western observers might expect, this solution provides much needed "rehabilitation" of perpetrators and overdue "justice" for the victims.⁵⁵

From the perspective of watching individuals, the crisis that unfolded during the summer of 1994 in Rwanda was anything but unexpected. Throughout the early 1990's, groups like Human Rights Watch made repeated warnings to the United States government and the United Nations about the potential danger in the tiny African country.⁵⁶ They continued to protest for intervention of some kind on behalf of the victims, but were told that in order to affect the policy of the United States—much less the United Nations—they needed to "Make more noise."⁵⁷ Other international groups like

Doctors without Borders wrote to *The New York Times* in an effort to shame the United Nations and United States for their inaction. The inability of aide groups to treat the wounded or provide for the ailing was blamed on the inability of the United Nations to provide any sort of military support, and the group claimed that “Ethnic tensions within Rwanda [were] being exacerbated to pursue political goals.”⁵⁸ Other aide groups also were quick to vocalize their disapproval, claiming—as The Organization for African Unity did—that, the decision obviously showed “a sign of indifference or lack of concern for Africans.” Meanwhile, Abiy Hailu of London based group “Christian Aid” told *The New York Times*:

We are appalled at the hypocrisy of the international community. They have pledged humanitarian assistance to the victims of the fighting in Rwanda and then [acted in a way] that insures that none of this emergency aid will reach those who need it”.⁵⁹

While humanitarian groups continued to work, the international governments continued to ignore their pleas, and the pleas of the men, women, and children, abandoned to death in Rwanda.

On the part of individuals themselves, two names stand out clearly for their heroic action in attempting not only to save the Rwandan people but also for trying to awaken the empathy of the international community in a call to action. These two men, Hutu Hotel Manager Paul Rusesabagina and UNAMIR leader Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire, embodied the concept of the enlightened individual throughout the genocide.

Rusesabagina, husband of a Tutsi woman, managed to save 1,268 people from certain destruction by sheltering them in the Hotel des Milles Collines throughout the tragedy. Through his own considerable bravery and ability to provide an illusion of being protected by international forces, Rusesabagina was able to wait until the rebel forces

advanced and the Hutu attackers were stopped. This modest hotel manager refused to be considered a hero, after doing the math and realizing that he had only saved what represented four hours of murdered civilians.⁶⁰ Rusesabagina insisted through it all, however, that human existence was based on sanity. He later wrote, "The individual's most potent weapon is a stubborn belief in the triumph of common decency. It is a simple belief, but it is not at all naïve...it is the best way to sabotage evil."⁶¹ This stubborn belief in decency also drove Roméo Dallaire to action.

For his part, Lt. General Dallaire maintained his belief not only in his native country of Canada but also in the United Nations and the principles of universal human rights that the UN was built upon. Early in the conflict, realizing that the media could potentially be his most effective weapon, Dallaire began providing interviews to anyone who would listen. He unapologetically denounced the lack of action provided by his superiors when he told reporters, "My aim has been to achieve my mission in accordance with the various mandates that I have been given, and right now, I can't achieve my mission because I don't have the resources to do it."⁶² Still, on April 25, 1994, the United Nations evacuated all but 503 of Dallaire's troops. Those who remained could do little but bear witness to the atrocity at hand. He would later describe the experience by saying:

My force was standing knee-deep in mutilated bodies, surrounded by the guttural moans of dying people, looking into the eyes of children bleeding to death with their wounds burning in the sun and being invaded by maggots and flies. I found myself walking through villages where...all the people were dead.⁶³

Although his hands were tied, Roméo Dallaire bravely stood his post, determined to protect over 25,000 refugees who had managed to be placed under UN supervision. This decision to stay left Dallaire a broken man and he would eventually be medically discharged from his post in the Canadian military. In interviews regarding his life after

Rwanda, he stated that he was unable to forget the “piercing eyes of bewilderment [of dying victims] damning of the ineffectiveness of the mission...and of course the detachment of the international community as to the Rwandan fate.”⁶⁴ When asked to testify in 1998 in the UN established war crimes tribunal for Rwandan perpetrators, Roméo Dallaire would take the stand and in a broken voice tell the prosecutor, “It seems inconceivable that one can watch thousands of people being massacred every day in the media and remain passive.”⁶⁵ Yet, passive is how much of the world remained.

Individuals who claimed that they did not “know what [could] be done about the people [in Rwanda]” were unable to transcend themselves and apply pressure to their governments, and governments playing political games refused to get involved.⁶⁶ Ultimately, this combination led to the failure of human rights philosophy in Rwanda. Stated Alison des Forges, a human rights investigator, “Rwanda was simply too remote, too far, too poor, too little, and probably too black to be worthwhile.”⁶⁷ This is a bleak assessment, but it also minimizes the gains that were made from Rwanda. Although the governments were just as slow to react, the time it took to name the situation genocide was diminished over Bosnia. This could be because the Bosnian genocide continued throughout the 1990’s, and Rwanda was over in one summer, but nevertheless, the fact remains that it took less time. The individual response, though perhaps not as organized in the United States, was arguably worldwide. It was also effective in that while applying pressure concerned individuals were also sending aid almost immediately.

Conclusion

The genocide in Bosnia and the genocide in Rwanda were just two of many unfortunate cases of modern genocide witnessed by the world throughout the twentieth century. One continued for nearly a decade while the other ended almost before the international consciousness could grasp its brutality. Contemplating these two events forces scholars to question the failures of humanity in addressing such problems. It also begs the question, if such activity is a predisposed part of the human condition, what—if anything—could possibly be gained from such carnage?

Schopenhauer and Nietzsche provide a convenient framework for understanding idealistic endeavors. Their concept of the perfectibility of mankind, the eventual evolution towards a perfect Overman is easily applied to human rights philosophy, embodied by the perfectly balanced United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. If this document provides the ideal that the world strives for, the enlightened individual—present as members of the media, activist groups, and the concerned public—is working diligently towards the goal of a truly universal application of these rights. In both Bosnia and Rwanda, such individuals were present. They reported events, they risked their lives to protect others, they led mass protests, and they left comfortable government jobs to draw attention to the injustices they witnessed. As Samantha Power discovered, individuals are often slow to truly grasp the nature of violence. This was evidenced by the delayed public reaction to Rwanda. Still, delayed reaction is still reaction, and with the news of genocide rapidly spreading throughout the world much was done in both instances on the individual level to promote awareness and prevent continued slaughter.

Ironically, the biggest barrier between the awakening individual and the achievement of the universal human rights has proven in both instances to be the very governing bodies that have sworn to enforce the application of those rights. The United Nations, with so many individual member nations with competing political interests, is at best a slow moving behemoth and at worst an actual detraction from human rights. In both cases examined here the UN provided soldiers but denied those soldiers the ability to fire their weapons. This left the men and women in the blue berets helpless to assist and unconscionably abandoned by the governments that had sent them. In both cases, civilians seeking out the safety of the UN found themselves congregated together without protectors, easy prey for attacking genocidaires. Furthermore, the politically self-interested member states of the UN also impeded progress by refusing to even acknowledge genocide as it occurred, opting instead to wait until the fighting had ended and no soldiers were needed to make such declarations. In both cases, these declarations came in the form of apologies after the fact. For this reason the United Nations, and the governments of every state that signed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Genocide Convention, should be held complicit in the genocidal activities that were not prevented, not acknowledged, and not halted. These failures were not without lessons however, and though governments and the United Nations remain hindrances to the universal application of human rights, public pressure from enlightened individuals has forced them to act in more recent cases.

The Gray Zone between individual interest and government response is filled with the contradictory pattern of progress mixed with disappointment. This leads to the concern that international action is the empty response to citizen concern. This emptiness is

disheartening. Are international bodies completely devoid of true empathy? Perhaps in the politics of international relations human concern is lost and human rights are hollow. If this is the case, individual action is more crucial now than ever before, since governments respond to pressure of enlightened and empathetic individuals. As historian Lynn Hunt writes:

Empathy has not been exhausted, as some have claimed. It has become a more powerful force for good than ever before. But the countervailing effect of violence, pain, and domination is also greater than ever before. Human rights are our only commonly shared bulwark against those evils.⁶⁸

We have not yet achieved truly universal human rights; therefore, genocide and other egregious human rights violations continue to occur. It is not any one nation's responsibility to address this issue, but the responsibility of the world at large. Every individual must become aware of his place in the grand scheme of humanity, empathy must be awakened, and pressure must be applied to the governing bodies with the resources to make the difference. Paul Rusesabagina, survivor of the Rwandan genocide, summarized this necessity when he stated:

Unless the world community can stop finding ways to dither in the face of this monstrous threat to humanity those words 'Never Again' will persist in being one of the most abused phrases in the English language and one of the greatest lies of our time.⁶⁹

Some progress towards clearing the Gray Zone has been made and work towards the enforcement of international standards has been started thanks in part to the diligent work of men like Paul Rusesabagina and Roméo Dallaire and women like journalist Samantha Power. Much has yet to be done. It is our generation's responsibility to act, to pressure our leaders to act, and to insure that "Never Again" does not become, "Never again, again."⁷⁰

¹ Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Arthur Schopenhauer." <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/schopenhauer/> ; Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Fredrich Nietzsche." <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/> .

² This dynamic of human progression, or social evolution, was twisted to justify the extermination program of Nazi Germany. Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 Nazi propaganda film "Triumph of the Will" supported this twisted idea of the Aryan race being the embodiment of "Overman", the perfect product of social evolution. Later works would credit Nietzsche too far in the opposite direction, however, scholars like Walter Sokel—in his article "The Dionysian in Nietzsche" —attempt to reclaim Nietzsche's original thoughts and permit his work to be complex in meaning and depth.

³ Fredrich Nietzsche *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music* http://records.viu.ca/Johnstoi/Nietzsche/tragedy_all.htm.

⁴ Walter Sokel, "The Dionysian in Nietzsche." *New Literary History* 36 (2005): 503.

⁵ Sokel, 502-503.

⁶ Though Schopenhauer and Nietzsche built their nineteenth century theories of the universality of mankind on a Western foundation laid during the birth of the modern era, he proposed universality of the human condition was hardly a novel concept globally. It was present in Eastern religion and philosophy thousands of years before *The World as Will and Idea* or *The Birth of Tragedy* were published. For example, practitioners of the Hindu faith believe that the perfectability of mankind involves the continual upward progress of the individual through the course of many lifetimes. Through reincarnation, wherein the works (karma) of his previous life are attached to his very essence and thus build on themselves, the individual has the ability to live, as R.C. Zaehner wrote in his work *Hinduism*, "in this world in the sublime consciousness of not being of this world." (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962) Man becomes perfected when he realizes that his individualism is one part of the greater world, the greater whole, or, as Troy Wilson Organ quoted in *The Hindu Quest for the Perfection of Man*, "The realization of the Universal self and the Universal Community." (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1970) Human rights do not necessarily factor into this philosophy, since the individual should not be interested in his own rights but in his place within the greater whole as he attempts to attain perfection without time or space limitations. The universality of mankind is a popular theme in other Eastern religions and philosophical thought as well, including Taoism, and Buddhism.

⁷ Hunt, 202.

⁸ This document is another often cited as a weakness of the United Nations because much academic debate has centered on the accepted definitions of genocide (see Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007). Because the Convention obligates action when genocide is identified, states often refuse to acknowledge genocide until it is too late, citing the lack of a consistent definition as justification for inaction.

⁹ Minow, Martha. *Between Vengeance and Forgiveness: Facing History After Genocide and Mass Violence*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 11.

¹⁰ Human Rights Watch, "Main Page." <http://www.hrw.org/>.

¹¹ Stephen Hopgood, *Keepers of the Flame: Understanding Amnesty International*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 52-72.

¹² Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 212-215.

¹³ It is interesting to note that although the breakdown of Bosnia is often discussed in terms of religion, the war was not generally noted to be a religious war, but instead an ethnic violence. The arbitrary nature of

defining race and ethnicity further complicate this matter for scholars who might separate religious expression from race. In this case, religion was associated with ethnicity and so though the violence was not specifically labeled religiously motivated, religion did play a part in the identification process of participating ethnic groups.

¹⁴ According to Samantha Powers in her work *A Problem From Hell*, the exact ethnic make-up was 43 percent Muslim, 35 percent Orthodox Serb, and 18 percent Roman Catholic Croat (247).

¹⁵ Samantha Power, *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, (Basic Books: New York, 2002), 247-250.

¹⁶ Quoted in Jones, *Genocide*, 215.

¹⁷ Power, 249.

¹⁸ Jones, *Genocide*, 218.

¹⁹ Established by the United Nations as a neutral zone, the city of Srebrenica had become a massive collection point for refugees attempting to avoid further violence. In July of 1995 the Serb forces made a showing on national television, bringing candy for the children of Srebrenica and making speeches promising the safety of the refugees so long as they cooperated. As soon as the cameras were turned off, however, the Serbs destroyed the city and murdered many of the unarmed civilians who sought refuge from the UN.

²⁰ Power, xvii-xviii.

²¹ These numbers would eventually be questioned, countered by Red Cross estimates of 20,000 (on “all sides”), and CIA suggestions of “tens of thousands”, with George Kenney contributor to *The New York Times* eventually settling on somewhere between 25,000 and 60,000 deaths; George Kenney, “The Bosnian Calculation,” *The New York Times*, April 23, 2005.

²² Quoted in Peter Ronayne, *Never Again?* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 106-107.

²³ Human Rights Watch, “Bosnia-Herzegovina,” <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1994/WR94/Helsinki-04.htm>.

²⁴ Roger Cohen, “Europeans Reject U.S. Plan to Aid Bosnia and Halt Serbs,” *The New York Times*, May 11, 1993.

²⁵ Stephen Walker, “Friday, March 19, 2004: More Tragedy in Kosovo—Clinton’s Legacy,” <http://Walker-Blog.blogspot.com>.

²⁶ Martin Shaw, *What is Genocide?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 6-13.

²⁷ Power, xviii.

²⁸ Senate Resolution 134, May 9 2005, <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/C?c109:/temp/~c109HXXVH6>.

²⁹ Shaw, 153-171.

³⁰ Jones, *Genocide*, 12-22.

³¹ Simons, Marlisle and Alison Smale, “Slobodan Milosevic, 64, Former Yugoslav Leader Accused of War Crimes, Dies,” *The New York Times*, March 12, 2006.

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- ³² Bowley, Graham and Nicholas Kulish, "The Double Life of an Infamous Bosnian Fugitive," *The New York Times*, July 23, 2008.
- ³³ United Nations "International Criminal Tribunal Yugoslavia (ICTY) and The Truth and Reconciliation Commission," <http://www.un.org/icty/pressreal/p591-e.htm>.
- ³⁴ Minow, 58-60.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 62-3.
- ³⁶ Dorie Wilnsack, "The Lessons of Yugoslavia: Intervention by International NGO's," Chapter 12 in *The Lessons of Yugoslavia*, (New York: JAI Imprint, 2000), 216.
- ³⁷ Editorial, "Bosnia: Lead, Don't React," *The New York Times*, September 8, 1994; It is also important to point out that "ethnic cleansing" was the term first coined to address the situation in Bosnia. Martin Shaw, Adam Jones, and others argue that there is no substantial difference in the meaning of the two terms and that the use of this phrase has more to do with semantics. By avoiding use of the term "genocide" nations avoid the complicated obligations that accompany it.
- ³⁸ Owen Clyke, "Letter to the Editor," *The New York Times*, December 1, 1995.
- ³⁹ NetChange Journal, "Bosnia: Why Your Voice Matters," *Catherine Petrusz*, <http://www.ibiblio.org/netchange/bosnia.html>.
- ⁴⁰ Stephen Walker, "Friday, March 19, 2004: More Tragedy in Kosovo—Clinton's Legacy" <http://Walker-Blog.blogspot.com>
- ⁴¹ Bosnia Watch, "September, 1995," *The ACSB Monthly Newsletter, No. 13*, http://www.hri.org/news/agencies/bosnet/1995/95-09-06_2.bos.txt
- ⁴² Friends of Bosnia, "Who We Are," <http://www.friendsofbosnia.org/who.html>
- ⁴³ Wilnsack, 217.
- ⁴⁴ Stephen Walker, "Tuesday, August 19, 2003: 10 Years Later..." <http://Walker-Blog.blogspot.com>.
- ⁴⁵ U.S. Department of State, "Rwanda," <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2861.htm>.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, xi.
- ⁴⁷ Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, (New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2003), 141-167.
- ⁴⁸ Dick Gordan, "Romeo Dallaire" interview from *The Connection*, originally aired Wednesday, April 24, 2004, WBUR, Boston http://www.theconnection.org/shows/2004/04/20040421_b_main.asp.
- ⁴⁹ Quoted in Scott Peterson, *Me Against My Brother: At War in Somalia, Sudan, and Rwanda; a Journalist Reports from the Battlefields of Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 289.
- ⁵⁰ William E. Schmidt, "Refugee Missionaries from Rwanda Speak of Their Terror, Grief, and Guilt," *The New York Times*, April 12, 1994; Quoted in Power, 352.
- ⁵¹ Ronayne, 161-164.
- ⁵² Rusesabagina, 74.

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- ⁵³ James Bennett, "Clinton in Africa: The Overview; Clinton Declares U.S., With World, Failed Rwandans," *The New York Times*, March 26, 1998.
- ⁵⁴ Armenian Genocide Resource Center, "CNN Transcript 2670" *Scream Bloody Murder* <http://armenians-1915.blogspot.com/2008/12/2670-cnn-transcript-scream-bloody.html> Accessed February 2, 2009.
- ⁵⁵ Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, 370-371.
- ⁵⁶ Human Rights Watch "Africa: Rwanda" <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/AFRICA-08.htm>.
- ⁵⁷ Power, 377.
- ⁵⁸ Alain Destexhe, "Rwandans Die While the UN Procrastinates," *The New York Times*, May 23, 1994.
- ⁵⁹ Editorial, "Aid Groups Assail U.N. Pullout in Rwanda," *The New York Times*, April 23, 1994.
- ⁶⁰ Rusesabagina, xi.
- ⁶¹ Ibid, 203.
- ⁶² Gordan, "Roméo Dallaire" http://www.theconnection.org/shows/2004/04/20040421_b_main.asp
- ⁶³ Quoted in Power, 369.
- ⁶⁴ Gordan, "Roméo Dallaire" http://www.theconnection.org/shows/2004/04/20040421_b_main.asp
- ⁶⁵ Power, 386.
- ⁶⁶ Quoted in Power, 375.
- ⁶⁷ Jones, *Genocide*, 233.
- ⁶⁸ Hunt, 212.
- ⁶⁹ Rusesabagina, 195.
- ⁷⁰ In the spring of 2003, as the United States plunged into war in the Middle East, another conflict became genocidal. This time what had been a tensely negotiated end to a civil war ended in the targeting of the goat herding people of the Darfur region of Sudan. As government sponsored militias raided villages, raped unarmed civilians, burned homes to the ground, and denied water supplies to fleeing victims, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum acted immediately and declared a "Genocide Emergency" for the Darfur region. In September 2004 United States Secretary of State Colin Powell declared that the US had "Concluded that genocide has been committed in Darfur and that the government of Sudan and the Janjaweed bear responsibility and genocide may still be occurring." This declaration was record timing for a state that took ten years to formally acknowledge the Bosnian genocide and four years to formally acknowledge Rwanda. Still, by 2007 little had been done for the continuing genocide outside of empty economic sanctions on Sudan. Human Rights Watch, in their 2007 report, chided not only the United Nations and United States but also the European Union for not acting quickly or fiercely enough. Student groups like SAGE, and activist groups like SaveDarfur have worked tirelessly with documentary filmmakers and A-list celebrities like George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio to make the genocide in Darfur a widely publicized international concern. In July 2008, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Sudanese president Omar Hassan al-Bashir formally charging the leader with genocide. Still, for all of the rhetoric of progress made, the UN peacekeeping force stationed in Sudan remains—as

usual—“underfunded, understaffed, and vulnerable to attacks.” The pressure of enlightened individuals is forcing movement, but there is still much to be done.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Primo Levi, in his assessment of individual reaction to situations of genocide suggested that human logic initially gravitates towards rigid dichotomy and a clean pattern that provides boxes, categories, and organization to incidences encountered. According to Levi, the finite human understanding of the world in which one lives does not permit for the ambiguous or for stimuli that do not properly fit into the pre-ordained categories that one has given them. When trying to comprehend a situation as overwhelming as genocide scholars are conflicted. Genocide in and of itself is almost impossible to comprehend; therefore, when humans encounter further obstacles to their understanding, it makes the situation easy to dismiss for lack of comprehension. Perhaps they are willing to address genocide but only in terms of black and white dichotomy, leaving all ambiguity in a seldom discussed Gray Zone. These ambiguities are numerous and yet little has been done to provide a full understanding.

Perhaps the most telling character of the Gray Zone is actually Primo Levi himself. Having survived Auschwitz, written several successful books, and endured bouts of depression and anxiety, the quiet Italian was found dead at the bottom of a stairwell in 1987. There has been debate over whether or not Levi's death was an act of suicide. Many have argued that the man was a classically trained chemist and could have committed a less painful death if he had wanted to do so. Those closest to him, however, are willing to recognize the death as a suicide, given what they knew of the real Primo.

The author who rarely mentioned himself in his memorials of the concentration camps has become a figure of endurance for scholars throughout the world. The reactions to his death by Levi's worldwide public underscore the human need for rigid dichotomy. Researchers in all disciplines reason that his survival despite great suffering in the Lager could have given him the ability to live through anything. For some, he had become a hero to whom they could not ascribe such a tortured death. It simply did not make sense. Survival once does not ensure permanent survival, however, and the nightmare of attempting to live a normal life after experiencing such debased inhumanity is more difficult than the public wishes to admit. We would like to think that after genocide a person can learn to live with what they have seen, and we are confused when they can not. In death, Primo Levi provided the conclusion to the thesis he presented in life: oversimplification of complex situations helps no one; sometimes accepting that which we will never understand is the difference.¹

Primo Levi's Gray Zone thesis provides an excellent starting point for scholars trying to understand subjects in Comparative Genocide studies that might otherwise be oversimplified or simply under-explored. These shadowed areas deserve a more thorough analysis and fuller recognition by scholars and members of the public. Within this framework, this work has come to four main conclusions. First, a common definition for genocide needs to be established amongst the academic community. By being unable to come to a consensus on this issue scholars leave open the possibility for governments to use the lack of a solid definition as justification for hesitation in genocide intervention. If a conflict can be deemed to be an "ethnic cleansing" as opposed to "genocide" it does not carry the same international obligation. There is no United Nations Convention on the

Prevention and Punishment of Ethnic Cleansing binding member states to step in on behalf of victims. While it could not be reasonably asserted that a lack of universal definition has caused genocide, it stands to reason that a lack of such a definition has permitted genocide to continue unabated in incidences throughout the twentieth century. While the formal acknowledgement of the crime does not necessarily guarantee international intervention, it also stands to reason that any potential hindrance to the alleviation of genocidal conflict should be avoided.

Second, race and land are concepts best understood through the eyes of perpetrators. Often, perpetrator propaganda and rhetoric have included in the broad categorization of race different ethnicities, political affiliations, economic statuses, and many other arbitrarily designated categories all expressed as “race.” As the Holocaust established itself as the basis for genocide research it was initially thought that genocide was most often racially motivated due to the Third Reich’s extensive extermination policy towards the Jews and other specific racial and ethnic groups in occupied areas of Europe. A more thorough examination of this and other events of genocide proves that while propaganda and hate-based rhetoric often blame those arbitrarily designated into the inferior race groups, the underlying motivation of perpetrator regimes remains the interest in expanding the power of their societies through control of natural resources and land. To justify the removal of entire populations from land where they had established residence requires a complex propaganda campaign aimed at demonizing the racial inferiority of these groups. By understanding that inferior race is the convenient designation of all who stand in the way of expansion for perpetrating regimes, scholars can better understand the root of genocidal action.

Third, those forced to commit atrocity against their own people (including child soldiers) should not be exempt from historical analysis or academic discourse as a whole but should be thoroughly examined, explained, and understood. Forced victim-perpetrators present a unique challenge not only to scholars but also to jurists who have a difficult time justifying refuge or legal immunity due to the perceived complicity of this character in atrocities committed. They are also often neglected when victims are provided post-genocidal assistance, due to the confusion over their role. For this reason especially, it is important to explore the nature of the forced victim-perpetrator's position and fully establish, as Primo Levi suggested, the absolution of this character as opposed to further allowing scholarship to ignore him or her due to the complex nature of his or her experience.

Finally, despite the viral nature of the latest wave of internet activism connecting humanitarian individuals from all over the world in the united cause of stopping genocide, the bureaucratic and highly political international governing bodies of the United Nations and its member states still proceed slowly towards intervention in situations of genocide. By the time the genocide starts it is too late for the victims, who are often neglected until international troops can be assured a safe occupation of the region. The disconnected nature of the relationship between the individuals and the governments able to apply the individuals' demands for justice leaves international response in a Gray Zone that must be addressed.

As opposed to waiting for genocide to begin (and subsequently end) before international states intervene; it would be prudent instead to focus on the "Prevent" clause of the Genocide Convention. Supporting developing nations in their attempts to

build functioning economic, educational, and political systems is a vital component of this solution as states with working social systems are less likely to participate in genocidal acts. After genocide is over: recognizing victim needs, assisting in the rebuilding of fractured systems, and being cognizant of remaining tensions between groups (and the potential for retributive violence) is important in order to avoid future genocidal situations in the same area. Through legal channels (such as the Hague) or by using “restorative justice” (such as the Rwandan *Gacaca*) some form of reconciliation must also be established to provide closure for victims, perpetrators, and bystanders. These actions are not the responsibility of any one state but of all states who have signed the Genocide Convention. Preventative measures are less costly in the long-term than the cost to contain genocide and rebuild in its aftermath.

The acknowledgement and exploration of the Gray Zones of modern genocide are not meant as an admonishment. Human nature demands order and stability. To categorize things that are difficult to understand in the Gray Zone is not a measure of moral weakness but a method of coping with atrocity too great to empathize with. Primo Levi wrote, “If we had to and were able to suffer the sufferings of everyone, we could not live.”² Still, self-preservation should not dull our ability to make what progress we can towards potentially shortening or even eradicating genocide as an action. By delving into the places that are the most uncomfortable, the most unfathomable, we recognize our own weaknesses and can move past them towards greater solutions.

Distilling genocide into fairy tales of heroes and villains is not a productive method of approaching the discipline nor is it historically accurate. Yet, by dividing characters and situations into good and bad while leaving that which is too hard to understand in a foggy

Gray Zone does just that. It is only by allowing these Gray Zones to develop into full stories, no matter how atrocious, that scholars can help the victims, perpetrators, and bystanders who are otherwise forgotten in the rush to raise heroes and demonize perpetrators.

¹ Carole Angier, *The Double Bond: Primo Levi, a Biography*. (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2002), 724-731.

² Primo Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*. (New York: Vintage Books, 1988), 56.

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VITA

Graduate College
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Megan Dale Lee

Local Address:

705 Harper Circle
Las Vegas, NV 89107

Degrees:

Bachelor of Arts, Education, 2007
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Bachelor of Arts, History, 2007
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Publications:

Book Review: Wendy C. Hamblett *Savage Constructions: The Myth of African Savagery* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2008) in the *Journal for Genocide Research* 11:1 March, 2009.

Book Review: Richard A. Koenigsberg *Nations Have the Right to Kill: Hitler, the Holocaust, and War* (Library of Social Science, 2009) in the *Journal for Genocide Research* (pending)

Thesis Title: Gray Zones of Modern Genocide

Thesis Examination Committee:

Chairperson: Janet Ward, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Kevin Dawson, Ph.D.

Committee Member: Elizabeth White Nelson, Ph.D.

Graduate Faculty Representative: Michele Kuenzi, Ph.D.