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# **Genocidal Dehumanisation as a Discursive Strategy in the Modern Era**

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## Abstract

This thesis asks what role is played by institutionalised dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing. In answering this question, I construct a model of genocidal dehumanisation according to its functions, and its manifest types. I argue that genocidal dehumanisation should be considered a unitary, but internally differentiated, phenomenon; and that it is best conceptualised as one extreme of a continuum of dehumanisation. The different manifestations of institutionalised dehumanisation have a stable and predictable relationship to psychological dispositions, and to practices which enact oppression and destruction. Genocidal dehumanisation exists at the locus of individual psychology, group psychology, culture, and the social. It must therefore be conceptualised through a framework which incorporates insights from each of these fields of inquiry. Hence, the work takes a multidisciplinary approach, employing the concepts of ‘discourse’ and ‘ideology’ to suggest that genocidal dehumanisation is a functional, purposive, and internally differentiated discursive strategy. Within the context of the discursive and social structures of the modern era, dehumanisation becomes a necessity in genocide and genocidal killing. I argue that genocidal dehumanisation can serve two purposes in such episodes: legitimisation, and motivation. However, in its legitimatory aspect, dehumanisation is universally present, whereas in its motivatory aspect it is present only in some cases. Having dealt with questions of function, I propose a three-part typology of the construction of Othered outgroups in genocide and genocidal killing: as disease organisms, animals or subhumans, and as bureaucratic-euphemistic reifications. Each of these types is a product of the intersection of specific modern discourses. While all three legitimise the elimination of the target group, the first type, medicalisation, is always motivatory, the second, animalisation, is sometimes motivatory, and the third, bureaucratic-euphemistic reification, is not motivatory. Finally, I suggest the way in which this conceptual model, which covers functionality, type, and the

relationship between the two, can be used both as a means of historical analysis and as a predictive tool.



## Declaration

This thesis includes material drawn from two papers which have previously appeared in peer-reviewed publications:

Rowan Savage. 'Disease Incarnate: Biopolitical Discourse and Genocidal Dehumanisation in the Age of Modernity'. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2007, pp. 404-440.

Rowan Savage. 'Vermin to be Cleared off the Face of the Earth: Perpetrator Representations of Genocide Victims as Animals' in Colin Tatz, Peter Arnold & Sandra Tatz (eds). *Genocide Perspectives III: Essays on the Holocaust and Other Genocides*. Brandl & Schlesinger with The Australian Institute for Holocaust & Genocide Studies, Sydney, 2006, pp. 17-53.

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I could not have produced the thesis without the continual encouragement and support of my parents – my gratitude is boundless. The presence of family – my parents and my sisters – counts for a great deal in the process of writing a work such as this.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the debt this thesis owes to a broader community. The ideas and arguments which I present here have been influenced by many conversations and debates with interested (and interesting) parties, in both formal and informal contexts. Without these, and without the personal and professional hospitality which has been extended to me by those who offered them, this thesis would be much the poorer.

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# Chapter I.

## Introduction

The capability of humans to perpetrate extreme cruelty upon their fellows is a fact which is often met, in the public arena, with sheer incomprehension, un-nuanced condemnation, or prejudice against some group to which perpetrators belong. In the scholarly realm, a great deal of ink has been spilt examining various aspects of this question, leading to many different conclusions regarding the answer to the seemingly eternal question, 'how could they do it?' In this thesis, I examine the most extreme cases of mass mistreatment and destruction of life: genocide and genocidal killing. I take as my subject an aspect of this process which, I believe, has not thus far been accorded the attention it deserves as a vital, but complex, factor: dehumanisation. Dehumanisation occurs when a collectivity as a collectivity is defined as unworthy of the moral consideration afforded to members of the ingroup.<sup>1</sup>

'Ethnic cleansing,' *Sonderbehandlung*, 'Tutsi cockroaches,' 'Jewish vermin': these and similar phrases will be all too familiar to the scholar of genocide. But what do they signify, and what work do they perform? I begin with this relatively simple question: what role does dehumanising discourse which names an outgroup as lesser humans, less than human, or nonhuman play in the elimination of that outgroup? What becomes possible for one human to do to another, when that other is named as less than human or as non-human, as an animal, a virus or as an inanimate unit of material? And why should it be so? While many works on genocide mention dehumanisation, only a small body of scholarly work has thus far considered dehumanisation to be a concept worthy in itself of meaningful theoretical

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<sup>1</sup> The development and justification of this definition will be outlined in Chapter Four of the thesis.

investigation as a primary subject.<sup>2</sup> With a few exceptions (which will be explored in Chapter Four), there has been little question of *why* dehumanisation manifests in cases of genocide and mass killing; of *how* it functions (that is, what ends it serves and how this takes place); and of whether it is *necessarily* present in all such cases. Nor has there been much serious investigation of whether, in fact, in the study of genocide the deployment of 'dehumanisation' as a meaningful or useful ontological category can be justified. Rather, both in general, and in specific analyses, the *raison d'être* and the function of dehumanisation have too often been considered to be self-evident.

The question as to whether 'dehumanisation' is a useful concept in scholarship on genocide therefore remains open. If investigation into the subject concludes, as this thesis does, that it is indeed a meaningful and useful concept, then it surely deserves attention as a primary subject of investigation. This thesis is, firstly, an attempt to answer some basic questions about genocidal dehumanisation: what are its features as a phenomenon, and what its presence in particular, differentiated forms can tell us about a given situation. The second purpose of this thesis, which emerges in pursuit of the first, is to engage in a comparative examination of *why* dehumanisation has become a necessary accompaniment to genocide (that is, the theory of dehumanisation); and, given this, of *how* it functions in genocide (the practice). In the course of this examination, I formulate a general definition of dehumanisation, and a typology of genocidal dehumanisation. On the basis of my research, I conclude that if the concept of 'dehumanisation' is to be employed usefully in scholarship on genocide, it should be conceived in a nuanced way, as a unitary phenomenon, but one which is internally differentiated both by type and by function.

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<sup>2</sup> Scholars who have made significant contributions to research on this topic include Helen Fein, James Waller, Albert Bandura, Daniel Bar-Tal, Emanuele Castano, Israel W. Charny, Stanley Cohen, Herbert Hirsch, Susan Opatow, Ervin Staub, and Christian Tileagă.



I argue that dehumanisation, which should be understood as a discursive strategy, is a necessary precondition for genocide and genocidal killing because it *legitimises* the destruction of the victim group.<sup>3</sup> It may also be present, but is not universally so, as a *motivation* for genocide and genocidal killing. The model of dehumanisation that I present may be used, firstly, to provide a new understanding of the particular role of dehumanisation in given historical episodes of genocide and mass killing; and secondly, to reveal a stable connection between particular kinds of dehumanisation and particular types of action toward the object, making the existence and nature of certain types of rhetoric a more exact tool of both historical and predictive analysis.

In introducing this subject, I first consider issues around conceptual, theoretical and empirical approaches to the subject of genocidal dehumanisation. I go on to introduce the multidisciplinary form this inquiry will take, and explain why I have chosen this form. The major issues and areas of inquiry which the thesis will address having been outlined, I go on to delineate the development of my argument over the course of the thesis in light of the unfolding of these thematics. I deal with a number of issues which will be of concern throughout the body of the thesis: the definition of the field of inquiry and the inclusion or exclusion of relevant concepts; definitions of 'genocide' and 'genocidal killing'; the definition of the phenomenon in question in this thesis; and, finally, the nature and provenance of the documentation which will be used as evidence for my argument regarding the nature of dehumanisation.

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of a 'discursive strategy' and the reasons for characterising dehumanisation thus will be explored in Chapter Three.

## I. Introducing Genocidal Dehumanisation: Conceptual, Theoretical, and Empirical Aspects

Dehumanisation as a phenomenon exists at the level of the individual and that of the collective. It is found in socio-cultural practice, as manifest on both these levels, in an evolving historical context. The physical practice of dehumanisation upon the bodies of its object tends to be preceded by, accompanied by and followed by discursive dehumanisation in the form of utterances, which are chiefly but not solely verbal.<sup>4</sup> Given this, in order to analyse dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing it is necessary to draw, theoretically and empirically, on the resources provided by different disciplinary fields, including sociology, psychology, anthropology, political science, cultural theory, sociolinguistics, and history.<sup>5</sup> My approach to the topic will therefore be broadly interdisciplinary. In the following section, I will give some idea as to how such an approach may be pursued. Here, however, I explore the question of the features of dehumanisation itself as a subject of inquiry, considered as introductory problematics in the conceptual, theoretical and/or empirical realms. In the process, I will clarify what this thesis aims to demonstrate, and what claims lie beyond its compass.

Firstly, to what body of evidence do we target examination of genocidal dehumanisation? Given that in this work dehumanisation will be conceptualised as a discursive strategy, my key area of investigation is *the use of language as representation*; and, more specifically, metaphor and euphemism. Language is the primary form of representation used to dehumanise an outgroup such that they are no longer considered to deserve the moral

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<sup>4</sup> The term 'utterance' is used in preference to 'language' not with reference to the particular sense of the term found in the work of scholars such as J. L. Austin or Mikhail Bakhtin, but to indicate that although this dehumanisation is generally verbal, it may also take non-verbal forms – for example, visual representation.

<sup>5</sup> It has been argued that not only particular aspects, but the very phenomenon of genocide or massacre is so complex as to require such an interdisciplinary approach: see for example J. Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary of massacre and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5 no. 2, 2003, pp. 193-194.

obligation owed to 'fellow humans,' whatever that obligation may be. The discursive strategy which constructs the other as a lesser form of life, practised in language which names the other as lesser, morally legitimises the subjugation, oppression and mistreatment of that group; and in its most extreme manifestation legitimises the outright destruction of the group.<sup>6</sup>

Secondly, given the action that is thus legitimised, in terms of historical cases, what episodes are to be examined and why? This thesis focuses on episodes of genocide, and of genocidal killing (whilst also making mention of other episodes for points of similarity and difference). But even in defining the object of inquiry as 'genocide and genocidal killing' it will be clear that this represents a broad field, encompassing attitudes and actions toward an outgroup which differ extremely in their particularities from case to case. The phenomenon into which the work inquires, however, is very specific, and it is my aim to uncover its manifestations in otherwise very different episodes, and in so doing to demonstrate the *commonality* of this process. Rhetoric which dehumanises an outgroup by naming its members as lesser humans, less than human or nonhuman is a tool which can be employed in different ways and for different purposes, but it is nonetheless a *common* and *identifiable* factor in episodes of genocide and genocidal killing. I examine narratives of dehumanisation 'in practice' in the broad variety of cases which appear in my typology with the aim of demonstrating this underlying connectedness (and hence demonstrating the validity of the concept of 'dehumanisation').

Thirdly, the nature of the theoretical claims to be made must not be mistaken. I will argue that dehumanisation is a *necessary accompaniment to genocide and genocidal killing*; the question therefore arises as to whether I am arguing for such dehumanisation as a *causatory* factor. In terms of causation, the question of motivation necessarily looms large. We may

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<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of my usage of the concepts of 'the other' and 'othering,' see Chap. 4, n21.

address this problem in the following way. There are many reasons for which an outgroup becomes such, which may, from the observer's perspective, appear either rational or irrational. That is to say, the negative characterisation of the outgroup may be the primary motivation for their mistreatment (as in the case of Jews in Nazi Germany); or there may be a more 'objectively rational' desire to profit from their mistreatment. Most commonly, these are intertwined: for example, European colonisers arrive with a preconceived, dehumanised concept of the 'savage' natives; but they also have a 'rational' reason to mistreat the colonised group, namely, to take their land and exploit their labour. At the level of the individual, actors are not always motivated by hatred or fear of the outgroup; there are many other possible motivations. This thesis, therefore, is indeed concerned with the question of motivation (and thus causation); but, I will argue, motivatory dehumanisation can be considered a subcategory of dehumanisation, one of two functions, along with legitimisation. My argument is that genocide is sometimes motivatory, but it is not in this aspect that it is a necessary accompaniment to genocide. Dehumanisation, that is to say, is *distinct from*, although it may *overlap with*, motivation. Rather, it is in its legitimacy aspect that dehumanisation enables genocide to take place by allowing the moral disengagement of perpetrators. Dehumanisation, therefore, is not necessarily a cause of genocide; but it is necessarily indispensable to the process.

The question of causality in collective practice brings us to our fourth introductory problematic: that of the construction of collectives as such. This thesis examines collective dynamics (though in doing so a detailed focus is turned upon the psychological state of the individual as an individual *within* a collectivity). Further, I am concerned with the characterisation of *specific* collectivities. Not everyone within a perpetrator society must think of the collective object of dehumanisation as lesser humans or as less than human in order for action against that group to be generally acceptable; but such rhetoric must be common, and be both accepted by, and acceptable within, that society as a whole. By no

means do I argue that 'dehumanisation' means that every member of society, or even a majority, are ideologically committed to the genocide of the outgroup. The acquiescent bystanding of the majority is quite sufficient for genocide and genocidal killing to take place. Dehumanisation provides an overall justification for, and legitimisation of, action, whatever the motivation. Therefore, dehumanisation provides not only willing perpetrators, but also a population within which individuals may not personally participate in exploitation and murder, but where these are accepted by a majority as legitimate and justified, or, at the least, as matters of relatively little or no concern. I have, therefore, neither the need to demonstrate, nor the intention to make, universalising claims about the subject positions of individuals within collectivities.

The issue of the collective opens up a fifth issue – that of general questions regarding the theorising of negative group characterisation. Negative categorisation is used to identify outgroups and to stigmatise and dehumanise such groups in various different contexts, from the society-wide to the personal level. This thesis concerns itself with the *characterisation of an outgroup* based on a perception of the *essentialised identity of its members* (even if this is not perceived as a biological characteristic). One may ask, why draw the line at genocide and genocidal killing? Why not examine slavery and apartheid, or the dehumanisation of refugees or welfare recipients? The focus of this thesis is an attitude which sees, not a behaviour, but an essential identity, as fundamentally alien to the true 'humanity' of which the perpetrator group is the primary example. Therefore, I do not examine cases in which, according to the logic of the perpetrators, negative characterisation is related to an alleged behaviour rather than an alleged identity. While an intent to create prejudice against such groups exists, it is (again, in rhetorical terms) the *behaviour* of individuals making up such groups which is seen as aberrant; and thus their boundaries are understood within the terms of this discursive strategy to be fluid. For this reason, such groups are not included. Furthermore, I am concerned with situations in which a motivation and a desire exists for the elimination of the

group of people so categorised. Thus, while essentialising dehumanisation certainly occurs in cases such as (some forms of) slavery and apartheid, the action to which it is related is of such a different nature as to make such dehumanisation a separate subject of inquiry. Here, it is only possible to suggest, according to the model I propose, the type of dehumanisation which would be likely to be found in these cases, and to give some limited examples.

In speaking of the various ways in which 'outgroups' are constructed, I wish to clearly recognise that there are different subtypes and different degrees of dehumanisation. In a literal sense, perpetrators may characterise victims as inferior humans; or they may characterise or name victims as entirely non-human, whether in the strictly metaphorical sense in which it is implicitly accepted that jargon and euphemism refer to human beings (*stücke*, 'pieces'), or in the sense in which there is a more (*untermenschen*, 'sub-humans') or less ('vermin') literal dehumanising characterisation of victims. There is a tension, and a clear distinction, between utterances which depict the other as a threat, arousing feelings of fear, hatred and anger (this characterisation is often termed 'demonisation'), and utterances which arouse no emotion whatsoever in that they characterise the other as totally non-human, as a 'piece' or a 'log.' In examining different cases of genocidal dehumanisation in the context of general theories about negative group identifications and their consequences, this work proposes a model of dehumanisation which explains the 'placement' of these forms of dehumanisation. It examines the relationship of these different kinds of dehumanisation to the kind of action taken against outgroups, arguing that it is possible to *identify a predictive relationship between statement and action.*

Finally, the thesis engages with the temporal aspect of dehumanisation in terms of the problematics of monolithic, linear, or teleological conceptions of the role of dehumanisation in genocide. I will examine the chronological development of modern dehumanised conceptions of the other, from the discourses and historical circumstances whose

confluence gave it origin, to its most extreme modern manifestations; and I will question the relationship of the development of dehumanisation with the existence of motivations for mistreatment. Does this kind of rhetoric emerge and disappear without necessarily taking place simultaneously with action against the outgroup? In exploring such questions, consideration is made of *where* dehumanising rhetoric is present in societies, and how its nature may be connected to escalation of harmful action resulting from particular circumstances outside the realm of verbal discursivity. Neither in the individual, nor the social sense is dehumanisation atemporal or stable; and both of these factors will be taken into consideration when looking at the role of dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing.

These, then, are the major theoretical problematics which arise in dealing with genocidal dehumanisation as a discursive strategy. The reader should now have a clearer idea of the subjects which will be explored within the thesis, and the claims which will be made, as well as those which do not lie within its scope. At this point, we may return to a closer examination of the first issue raised in this section: the employment of a multidisciplinary approach.

## **II. Genocidal Dehumanisation: Development of a Multidisciplinary Approach**

In summary, this thesis inquires into the role played by a particular discursive strategy, termed 'dehumanisation,' in the essentialised construction of a collective other; and into the relationship between dehumanising utterances, and physical action taken against that other.

In his work on the ideologies of moral exclusion, social psychologist Christian Tileagă insightfully identifies the nature of and the necessity for the undertaking I am embarking upon in this thesis:

What is needed is an attempt of [sic] re-conceptualization of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanization in discursive terms, a look at how particular ways of speaking might depersonalize (and sometimes, dehumanize) the 'other' (cf. Billig, 2002, p. 184) and how they are actually accomplished in interaction and in talk about 'others'. What is needed is an approach that cuts across the traditional individual/social dualism, as well as the traditional micro/macro and majority/minority divisions (Potter, 2003). An approach with a focus on the way moral standings in the world, the social structure of group and category relations are being 'produced', that is described, invoked, categorized, for action and interaction.<sup>7</sup>

In the literature on dehumanisation, diverse epistemologies and methodologies have been applied depending on the discipline within which a given analysis has arisen. In the field of genocide studies, for the most part, analysis has been weighted toward the historiographic, the sociological, and the social-psychological. My own inquiry aims, through a synthesis of these approaches with methods belonging to cultural theory and sociolinguistics, to shift this emphasis somewhat in order to give an overall picture of the workings of genocidal dehumanisation within both specific and universal contexts: that is, to understand the way in which the complex interrelationships between historical events, cultural discourses and human mental processes give rise to a particular set of utterances and practices. Because genocidal dehumanisation is situated at the intersection of the areas which the abovementioned disciplines take as their respective fields of inquiry, it is not possible to develop an overall model of its nature or functionality through the application of

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<sup>7</sup> C. Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion: A critical discursive reframing of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanisation', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 46, 2007, p. 721.



unidisciplinary theoretical frameworks. A multidisciplinary approach allows both a more nuanced, and a more thorough, understanding of the nature, the crucial importance, and the differentiation of the role of dehumanisation in genocide.

The two issues in focus here are, firstly, the genocide-specific question of what exactly different disciplinary approaches have been able to tell us about genocide; and, secondly, the more general issue of using multidisciplinary tools to theorise a subject which has not had a long history of being thus theorised. In order to ground my own standpoint, and to clearly elucidate the conceptualisation of genocidal dehumanisation as a discursive strategy, my aim is to weave together different disciplinary and thematic approaches through the employment of concepts around 'discourse' and other heuristics emerging from the field of cultural theory. The application of work applying the insights of the 'cultural turn' to genocide, however, is very much in its infancy.<sup>8</sup> How, then, does one go about such a synthesis? It is primarily a question of using the appropriate tools to analyse different aspects of dehumanisation in order to arrive at a conception.

Given that the way in which I approach my subject matter does not have well-developed theoretical antecedents in terms of an application to genocide, in my examination both of approaches to genocide, and of the ways in which cultural theory can be applied to such an inquiry, my aim is not to *critique* particular theoretical or disciplinary approaches *per se*, either individually or in a comparative sense, but rather to comprehend how such different approaches may be employed in order to illuminate particular aspects of the phenomenon. When using the scholarship of different authors, I will indicate whether there are aspects of any specific work or theory which are either problematic in terms of my model, or which are not relevant or useful; but again, in-depth critique of one or a few theoretical approaches to the subject does not serve my purpose. Rather, a *synthesis* of individual elucidations of

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<sup>8</sup> Scholars who have written work employing such methods include Jacques Semelin, Norbert Finzsch, Dan Stone, and Klaus Theweleit, among others.

different aspects of dehumanisation allows the creation of an integrated model of genocidal dehumanisation. In creating such a model in this thesis, I will first outline previous disciplinary and thematic approaches to understanding the questions of the causation of and motivation for genocide (in Chapter Two), before explaining the way in which the theories I employ can synthesise work from these perspectives in order to tell us something about the nature of the subject in question (Chapter Three).

This division has a further logic. I have already mentioned the issue of causation and motivation, and the problematics of locating the argument of this thesis within discussion about these issues. In the second chapter, therefore, I examine work on the causation of and motivation for genocide in order to reveal the ways in which particular disciplinary models can shed some light upon the problem at hand, and to locate my discussion within a general field of scholarship on the subject of genocide. In so doing, given that dehumanisation is considered, here and elsewhere, to be one causatory factor in genocide, causatory models are examined thematically, covering psychological, socio-cultural, political, economic/demographic, and bio-evolutionary approaches. Rather than giving an overview of these entire fields, which would be an encyclopaedic task, I ask what each of these approaches can lend to my examination of the questions around genocidal dehumanisation, and what problematics they present which may be fruitful in conceptualising this phenomenon. In a progressive sharpening of the focus of attention, an overview is provided of scholarly work treating the question of how people come to participate in genocide, chiefly from a socio-psychological perspective.

At this point, the state of the field regarding scholarship on causation, motivation and human involvement in genocide has been established; in so doing, the usefulness of particular approaches and conceptions has been mooted, giving some appreciation of the point from which my own discussion of dehumanisation in genocide must begin. But thus far, what has

been undertaken is a survey of the field, rather than a statement outlining my own approach to this material. It therefore remains to be asked: how exactly is one to take a cultural-discursive approach to this topic, and what does it mean to call dehumanisation a 'discursive strategy'? In the third chapter, I divert focus temporarily away from the question of genocide *per se* and toward that of methodological approaches.

Since, as I have mentioned, there is little scholarly work modelling the application of cultural theory to genocide, it becomes necessary to outline important concepts and to indicate the way in which textual documentary material can be approached through such a lens. I begin Chapter Three with an analysis of Michel Foucault's use of the concepts of 'discourse' and of 'discursive strategy,' with particular reference to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. The concept of discourse has often been linked to that of ideology, and it is to an analysis of the latter term, and its usefulness for this investigation as an analytical tool, that I next turn my attention, making specific use of the work of Terry Eagleton and Teun van Dijk. Theories developed around these two terms considered as heuristics, I argue, are vital to developing an understanding of the nature and function of genocidal dehumanisation. Finally, there remains the issue of the way in which this theory can be applied to textual material. Here, I outline Critical Discourse Analysis as developed by Norman Fairclough, and set out the aspects of this model which can be useful in the examination of a macro-level phenomenon such as genocidal dehumanisation. This excursus into methodological questions establishes the origins of the concepts that I use, the way in which they are employed henceforth in the thesis, what they reveal about their object and how this is done, and the reasons why this approach is necessary in order to capture the features and demonstrate the nature of this object.

Having established both a point of departure from current research in the field of genocide studies, and the nature of and justification for the methodological approach to be taken, I

return to genocidal dehumanisation as the primary object of investigation. My investigation of 'dehumanisation' itself begins with the psycho-social dimensions of the problem, from the standpoint of common, but problematic, assumptions about 'human nature' in the context of mass killing. In order to identify and address these problems, it is necessary to embark upon a general examination of the concept of 'dehumanisation' in academic literature, giving in the process an overview of the present understanding of the nature of dehumanisation (as well as related terms) and, more specifically, its role in genocide. For the most part, this analysis, focussing on scholarship taking genocide, mass killing and collective violence as its subject, emerges from the field of psychology, particularly the scholarship of James Waller, Daniel Bar-Tal, Israel Charny, and Philip Zimbardo; and from sociology, most notably in the research of Helen Fein. In the course of analysing this work, firstly, I give a justification as to the development of my definition of the term. Secondly, extending my field of inquiry to take in the historical dimensions of the nature of modernity, and in particular questions of modern conceptions of moral legitimacy, I formulate an argument as to why dehumanisation is a necessary component of modern genocide and mass killing (that is, why such a consensus must be constructed, and what purposes it serves); and how it actually functions in these circumstances (including the vitally important differentiation between motivation and legitimisation). Having considered the historical dimension, I take into account the specific role of language (in particular, metaphor) and representation in constructing dehumanising practice. Finally, I enquire as to the nature of the various manifestations of dehumanisation, and what connection exists between them (connections which allow us to consider dehumanisation a phenomenon). I propose a three-part typology of genocidal dehumanisation, which will form the structure of the following discussion on the substance of dehumanising utterance and practice, and the historically- and culturally-determined reasons it manifests in these particular forms.

At this point the nature of the field, the phenomenon at hand, and the approach which is to be taken have all been established. I have provided the analytical tools and the background knowledge to directly undertake a detailed description of each of the three types of genocidal dehumanisation – conceived as discursive formations – chapter by chapter: medicalisation, animalisation, and bureaucratic-euphemistic reification. In each chapter, I analyse the cultural, social and historical circumstances which gave rise, and gave ‘purchase,’ to each type of genocidal dehumanisation, and I provide numerous and representative examples of actual utterances of the type in question.

On the basis of this investigation, I emphasise that my proposed model of genocidal dehumanisation is instructive both in its historical and predictive dimensions. Ultimately, the aim of this work is to provide a hitherto-unconceptualised model of the nature and function of dehumanisation in genocide and mass killing. This model, I argue, can be employed as a conceptual tool in order to understand what function dehumanisation has played in any given historical episode and how it has done so; and also to point to the nature of genocidal dehumanisation in the pre-genocidal period, in order to recognise such discourse as it arises in possibly pre-genocidal contemporary situations.

## §

Thus far, introductory discussion has been made of some problematics inherent in the issue at hand, leading into an argument and an outline as to the way in which the issue will be approached in this thesis. I have established that I am concerned with the qualitative analysis of discursive formations, and that I employ a multidisciplinary theoretical lens to examine a broad range of episodes of genocide and genocidal killing. The necessity for a comparative approach is inherent, given that my argument concerns genocidal dehumanisation as a common and necessary factor in episodes of genocide and mass killing. Given all of this, it

should now be understood that this thesis is not a work of history in disciplinary terms; it is not an examination of the way in which any particular ideology of prejudice causes or contributes to genocide; it is not a dissection of Fascism, Nazism or other genocidally-related ideologies from the perspective of political philosophy or political science; neither is it an exhaustive category of documents relating to dehumanisation in any one episode, nor a detailed sociolinguistic analysis of one or a few documents. Any of these would constitute, in themselves, a separate work than the present, and one with quite different aims.

I have thus addressed both what this thesis intends to do, and what it does not. Before proceeding, there are three further issues to attend to. Firstly, there is a question of subjects which are related to dehumanisation, but which are not taken as primary objects of analysis. Secondly, as regards terminology, while the question of my own definition of 'dehumanisation' will be dealt with at length in Chapter Four, there remains the question of the definition of the terms 'genocide' and 'genocidal killing' as they are used here. In arriving at definitions of these terms, I will also explain why I have chosen to gather documentary material demonstrating my argument from a broad range of cases, rather than examine one or two episodes as detailed case studies; these considerations lead to a discussion of the specific nature of the phenomenon in question. Thirdly and finally remains the issue of the provenance of the documentary sources which I employ in order to adduce empirical evidence for my argument.

### **III. Dehumanisation: The Relevance of Related Concepts**

There are certain belief systems or ideologies – those concerned with identity, exclusion and prejudice – of which dehumanisation is often seen as a sub-category or a manifestation. I do not discuss theories of any of these at length in this work. In order to explain this

choice, clarification must be made of the conceived role and importance of these concepts in my overall model. While they are discussed in terms of historical developments which gave rise to specific types of genocidal dehumanisation, I do not directly analyse racism, nationalism, or denaturalisation (a decision which is given further consideration in Chapter Two). Nor do I give detailed attention to questions of gender or sexuality.

I do not intend to deny that there are close connections between tropes of racism (and related belief systems such as antisemitism), nationalism, masculinity and emasculation which are integral to many forms of dehumanisation, though not all. While I do not neglect the content of these practices where it is relevant to any manifest form of genocidal dehumanisation, I have chosen not to devote separate attention to the discussion of these subjects, for the following reasons.

Firstly, a great deal of scholarly work has already been done on the relationship between racism, nationalism, and sexism, and harmful action toward the other, both in specific cases, and in a more universal sense. I draw upon some of this work for my own analysis, particularly in the three chapters forming my typology. However, the contribution of this thesis to the study of genocide and mass killing lies not in any specific argument concerning any of the above theories, but rather in analysing dehumanisation as a functional component of genocidal action. The functionality, and indeed the very existence, of genocidal dehumanisation as a common phenomenon consists in the way in which it draws upon various different ideas, beliefs, forms and content to serve the same ends, ends which are crucial in the commission of genocide and mass killing: that is, legitimisation and/or motivation. Therefore, to devote too much space within an analysis of dehumanisation as a phenomenon, to theories and arguments concerning the role of nationalism, racism or sexism in harming the other, would be to misunderstand the nature of the enterprise. It is impossible to conceptualise genocidal dehumanisation without seeing it, not as a sub-

category of any or all of the belief systems and practices mentioned above, but rather as a *functional discursive strategy* which draws upon them in order to enact its functionality.

Secondly, a detailed discussion of these concepts, and of their manifestations in dehumanisation, would in itself constitute a number of different theses. Such an attempt would be further complicated by their highly variable manifestations in different socio-historical contexts. To embark upon any such project would, for reasons of conceptual coherence, make impossible the development of a comparative argument regarding dehumanisation as a conceptually unified phenomenon.

Finally (as I will discuss in Chapter Four) there is a component of the essentialisation of the identity of outgroups as constructed by perpetrators which may or may not be present in these belief systems, but which is an essential aspect of genocidal dehumanisation. For these reasons, I do not devote dedicated space within the thesis to discussion of these discourses, belief systems or practices as *separate* phenomena. Rather, the focus of my examination of genocidal dehumanisation as a primary subject of investigation is on the *function* of the ways in which the identity of targeted groups is constructed, rather than the content which serves as a delivery mechanism for this functionality (content which is dealt with in greater depth in the typological chapters).



#### IV. 'Genocide' and 'Genocidal Killing': Definitions

This thesis focuses on one extreme of what I tentatively conclude is a continuum of dehumanisation: that is, dehumanisation in genocide, and in genocidal killing.<sup>9</sup> Given this, clear definitions are needed of these two terms.

What constitutes genocide is not a question with a simple answer. The term 'genocide' was coined by the jurist Raphael Lemkin in 1944 from the Greek *genos* (race or tribe) and the ending *cide*, from the Latin, indicating the killing of the object. Lemkin defined genocide as:

[T]he destruction of the essential foundations of life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The objectives of such a plan would be the disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups.<sup>10</sup>

Since Lemkin, many scholars have put a great deal of effort into defining genocide, and arguing for particular definitions. This debate has not resulted in any scholarly consensus. However, the popular 'success' of the concept of genocide as the 'crime of crimes' has meant that its adoption has come to be a common rhetorical strategy used to indicate deeply-felt collective victimhood, rather than any more restricted meaning.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> As mentioned elsewhere, brief speculation is also made on the role of dehumanisation in mass subjugation such as slavery and apartheid, and the way in which this fits into the conception of dehumanisation proposed.

<sup>10</sup> Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule In Occupied Europe*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington [D. C.], 1944, p. 79.

<sup>11</sup> J. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (trans. C. Schoch), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 309-313.

The question of 'genocide' is not only academic. Certain national governments (notably those of Turkey and Japan, as well as those of colonised regions such as the Americas or Australia) have a stake in the denial of historical genocide, while in contemporary cases the label of 'genocide' is denied both by states which commit the act, and by the leaders of nations upon whom, having once admitted that genocide is occurring, action is incumbent, either in a legal sense (as signatories to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide), or in a moral sense.

We are faced with a need to avoid confounding the activities of the humanities and social sciences with the realm of juridical law (while also acknowledging 'international law' itself as an evolving system). In this context, there is a necessity for a definition which has universal features and which is recognised outside the realm of the academy by international bodies which concern themselves with the problem of genocide. Given this, as well as the failure of all attempts by scholars thus far to establish any other uncontroversial definition, the best definition to employ is that found in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948. The Convention defines genocide as:

[A]ny of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical [sic], 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 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.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, Resolution 260 A (III) (9 December 1948), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner For Human Rights, retrieved 30th November 2007, <<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/genocide.htm>>. The Convention entered into force on 12 January 1951.

Despite issues with both its breadth ('in whole or in part'; 'serious bodily or mental harm') and its narrowness ('national, ethnic, racial or religious group'), if we are to create and engage in a universe of discussion about historical genocide and about prevention, this definition, with all its imperfections, seems the most feasible to adopt.

My concern here, however, is not only with cases which uncontroversially fall under this imperfect rubric. This thesis is an attempt to understand one aspect of what might be termed the genocidal or eliminationist discursive strategy, rather than solely 'genocide' as a phenomenon considered entirely in isolation. Therefore, I consider not only clear cases of genocide as defined by the Convention, but a number of other episodes which I have termed 'genocidal killing.'

There are very few cases which can be said to be even relatively uncontroversial as far as a definition of genocide is concerned. Even the least controversial, such as the Nazi mass killing of Jews and the Rwandan mass killing of Tutsi, are contested outside the realm of the academy, or by those with agendas to which such denial is convenient in an ideological sense. Given the moral weight generally afforded to 'genocide' as opposed to other related terms (war crimes, crimes against humanity, massacre, ethnic cleansing, and so forth), this is not surprising. The politics of the application of the term 'genocide' are thus highly fraught.

In this work, as well as the two cases mentioned above, I will make reference to the following cases: the mass killing of Armenians by Turks in the early 20th century; mass killings by the National Socialists of Gypsies, the mentally and physically disabled, Russian prisoners-of-war and significant strata of the Polish and Ukrainian populations; killing of Australian Aborigines and North and South American indigenous peoples by European colonisers; killing of the African Herero people by German colonisers; killing of Jews in medieval Europe; killing of Muslims by Serbs in Bosnia; killing of East Timorese by Indonesian

forces; and killing under the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. As well as these episodes, I will refer to other episodes of the mass killing of civilians, including the Allied bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the Japanese killing of civilians in occupied China in the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>13</sup>

Clearly, not all of these cases satisfy the terms of the Convention, chiefly because the group concerned (as, for example, in the killing of Khmer people in Cambodia) does not satisfy the possible victim groups listed there. They also include cases in which an attempt was made to wipe out a group in part, thus satisfying the terms of the Convention, but in which there was no intent to wipe out the entire group as such. In these cases the commission of the crime of genocide may be unclear. But they are episodes in which, it must be recalled, civilian victims of the killing process number in the tens or the hundreds of thousands, or more (whilst also recognising that number or scale of deaths is not a definitional aspect of 'genocide').

'Unclear' cases of this kind have often been defined as 'genocidal killing' or 'genocidal massacre,' that is, the mass killing of non-combatant or 'innocent' victims because they belong to a particular group, without the intent to wipe out that group in its entirety. This concept is discussed by scholars such as Leo Kuper, and is given particular consideration by Eric Markusen and David Kopf, who note that many scholars concur that 'an action can be genocidal even if it does not constitute a genocide per se.'<sup>14</sup> Both Kuper and Helen Fein have employed the term 'genocidal massacre.' Firstly, it has been used, problematically, to indicate scale, in cases where the number of those killed is 'relatively small.'<sup>15</sup> More germane to the use of the term here, however, is the conception that 'genocidal massacre' refers to

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<sup>13</sup> In discussing these cases as episodes of 'killing,' I do not intend to imply that genocide *necessarily* involves killing. However, in the cases I examine in this thesis, killing has been a primary means to genocidal ends.

<sup>14</sup> E. Markusen & D. Kopf, *The Holocaust and Strategic Bombing: Genocide and Total War in the Twentieth Century*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1995, p. 62.

<sup>15</sup> Markusen & Kopf, p. 63.

the situation where a portion of a group is killed *qua* that group, but where there is no intention to destroy the group in its entirety.<sup>16</sup> It is in this sense – mass killing in which there is an intent to destroy members of a putative collectivity because of their membership in that collectivity – that the term ‘genocidal killing’ (in preference to ‘genocidal massacre,’ where the term ‘massacre’ opens up another terminological issue) is employed here.

Finally, I will mention the concept of ‘sanctioned massacre,’ which puts the emphasis on ‘sanction’ rather than on the objective nature of victims’ association with a specific group. Herbert Kelman and V. Lee Hamilton give the following definition of sanctioned massacre:

1. [S]uch a policy may be aimed at an objective other than extermination – such as the pacification of the rural population of South Vietnam, as was the case in U.S. policy for Indochina – but may include the deliberate decimation of large segments of a population as an acceptable means to that end.<sup>17</sup>

2. A second feature of sanctioned massacres is that their targets have not themselves threatened or engaged in hostile actions toward the perpetrators of violence.<sup>18</sup>

3. Dehumanization of the enemy is a common phenomenon in any war situation. Sanctioned massacres, however, presuppose a more extreme degree of dehumanization, insofar as the killing is not in direct response to the target’s threats or provocations. It is not what they have done that marks such victims for death but who they are – the category to which they happen to belong. They are the victims of policies that regard their systematic destruction as a desirable end or an acceptable means.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Markusen & Kopf, p. 63.

<sup>17</sup> H. C. Kelman & V. L. Hamilton, ‘The My Lai Massacre: Crimes of Obedience and Sanctioned Massacres’, in M. D. Ermann & R. J. Lundman (eds), *Corporate and Governmental Deviance: problems of Organizational behaviour in Contemporary Society* (5th edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, 1996, p. 196.

<sup>18</sup> Kelman & Hamilton, ‘The My Lai Massacre’, p. 197.

<sup>19</sup> Kelman & Hamilton, ‘The My Lai Massacre’, p. 205.

Not all cases are entirely clear or mutually exclusive as to category. It seems to me sterile, even distasteful, to engage in irresolvable debates about definitional issues, or to make morally-imbued evaluative comparisons regarding particular episodes. Rather, in a spirit of analysis undertaken with a view to comprehension, this thesis is concerned with situations which involve the mass killing or destruction of civilian out-groups as such groups are identified by the perpetrators, whatever these situations may be termed. In so doing the bulk of my research has come from the field now known as 'genocide studies,' and for this reason, I cannot neglect this terminology. However, it is not enough only to refer to 'genocidal killing' and not 'genocide,' given that action with this aim is not only restricted to killing: a plan to eliminate an essentially-identified group of people can be carried out through other means (as outlined in the Convention). To use Jacques Semelin's phrase, dehumanisation is a '*common problematic*' in all these cases.<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, then, my use of both the terminology of 'genocide' and 'genocidal killing' is intended to serve the purpose enunciated by Kuper when he wrote that by referring to 'genocidal massacre' as well as to 'genocide' he hoped to 'reduce controversy over the selection of cases, so that the human concern for the prevention of genocide [and, we might add, mass killing] may prevail over the almost insuperable problem of precision in classification.'<sup>21</sup>

Before leaving this subject, a final clarification: I have made reference to the fact that mention is also made in this thesis of other situations in which an outgroup is thought to be and/or constructed as less than human, and mistreated, with this claimed basis of legitimacy, in organised and society-wide fashion (for example, episodes of institutionalised slavery). This material is emphatically not used as an example to demonstrate my argument regarding the nature of genocidal dehumanisation. Rather, such cases are relevant to the argument that dehumanisation is one, differentiated phenomenon (within which genocidal discourse can be considered an extreme of a larger continuum). Given that the subject at hand is the

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<sup>20</sup> Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 382; my italics.

<sup>21</sup> L. Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven/Yale, 1981, p. 10.

nature of discursive constructions – which are inevitably social and thus collective – while these kinds of cases may be discussed, it should be emphasised that, in terms of empirical examples, the thesis does not deal with mistreatment or killing which is understood within the contemporary terms of reference of the perpetrator collectivity to be aberrant, as for example in individual murder or ‘radical’ minority groups.<sup>22</sup>

In this section, I have mentioned a large number of cases. The use of such a broad field of highly complex episodes as empirical examples of the phenomenon whose existence I intend to demonstrate may be seen as a potential difficulty. The alternative to my approach would be to look at one or two of these in detail. In a general sense, in the field of genocide scholarship (particularly where it overlaps with that of Holocaust studies) many models have been developed in the context of the in-depth study of one or a few cases. The problematics of this approach in developing a *generalisable* model should be evident. My intent here is to avoid these problematics by beginning from a perspective which takes many different cases into account. This is the only way in which to approach this phenomenon as one related to that of ‘genocide’ in a way which does not either distort the picture thus presented through the lens of individual cases, or fail to provide any evidence that the model presented is in fact generalisable in an empirical sense. In other words, despite the difficulties inherent in the use of empirical examples drawn from such a wide range of diverse episodes, it is the most useful way in which the problem at hand – that of elucidating the nature of dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing – can be approached. Indeed, much of the value and the originality of this thesis consists, not in presenting one or two detailed case studies, but precisely in researching and gathering together a wide collection of

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<sup>22</sup> Here, it may be germane to mention the distinction proposed by Kenneth W. Grundy and Michael A. Weinstein between the criminal and political types of organised violence, where political violence is directed at the maintenance or change of a normative order, while criminal violence, while it may be impersonal or instrumental, is not so directed (K. W. Grundy & M. A. Weinstein, *The Ideologies of Violence*, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus [Ohio], 1974. p. 3). The application of a similar distinguishing model to dehumanising discourse should give some idea of what is proposed here.

material from different episodes in order to demonstrate the validity of my claims about the nature of genocidal dehumanisation. The arguments developed here may then be applied to other episodes in the course of close analyses (a point which will be further discussed in the Conclusion).

## V. 'Genocidal Dehumanisation': Definition and Clarification of the Phenomenon

Given the above definition of the scope of cases considered in this thesis, we may at this point narrow the focus, and ask: what are the specific defining factors of the *phenomenon* I examine? These may be enumerated as follows:

1. I examine episodes in which there is an intent to destroy members of a collectivity defined as such. This intention must exist not only at the level of given individuals but at the level of the collective – it is generally, but not always, implemented by the governing body of a nation state. Action on this intent must take place in a widespread, standardised and/or an organised fashion.
2. The practice of destruction occurs in a situation in which the majority of citizens of the perpetrator society license such mistreatment either through collaboration or through inaction, for whatever reason – that is, every member of a society need not feel such a desire; it is enough that their concern for the victim collectivity, in the context of the consequences of oppositional action, is minimal enough to enable those in a position to do so to enact their destructive and exploitative urges, and to recruit others to carry them out.



3. Utterances, primarily but not solely verbal, are used to identify, categorise and construct the identity of the collectivity marked for destruction.
  
4. Both the use of such language and the treatment meted out to such collectivities are not considered aberrant within the moral terms of reference of the perpetrator society (except inasmuch as the perpetrators may consider them as an extraordinary response to an extraordinary situation which has a finite solution in the destruction of the outgroup) – that is, the use of such language is ‘taken for granted’ within the society, even if there are those who publicly dissent. Thus, as mentioned above, this work does not examine episodes in which an individual or a small group within a society use such rhetoric to call for or justify action against an outgroup when such action is considered illegitimate in the broader context of the society in which the group is found; nor situations where such language is used by individuals or groups where those groups or individuals are not representative of the continuum of expressible opinion within the broader society, and where such language is not considered to be acceptable by those who govern politically, and/or who shape mainstream opinion. Thus it excludes examination of such language use by prejudiced groups considered extremist within their host societies.
  
5. Membership in the collectivity must be considered and defined by the perpetrators in an essentialist fashion. That is, according to the perpetrators, membership in the outgroup must be considered an inherent characteristic which cannot be changed solely by the choice and actions of individuals who find themselves within such a group. Even when, in certain cases, some individuals may be spared as a result of actions undertaken through their own agency (such as religious conversion), it is always the perpetrator who controls the boundaries of the collectivity; the action of such an individual, from the perpetrator perspective, does not necessarily remove their identity as a member of this group *per se*, but spares them the most extreme consequences of membership as long as the larger goal of

destruction continues to be served. In this thesis, that is to say, I am not concerned with the use of dehumanising language towards collectivities which are defined by mutable behaviour (in the eyes of those who have the power to define) and/or collectivities toward which there is no intent to destroy as such. Thus, official dehumanisation of unwanted groups whose disappearance as such would be welcomed but who are constructed as being such because they have behaved in a particular way – for example, asylum seekers or welfare recipients – is excluded.

This definition of the phenomenon points to the fact that the issue of essentialised identity is very important, making this phenomenon qualitatively different from many other forms of prejudice which may, on the surface, appear similar. The question is whether, in the eyes of an ingroup, an outgroup as a collectivity can choose not to be an outgroup defined as such. Thus, ‘cultural racism’ which views other cultures as inferior and whose aim is the assimilation or ‘improvement’ of individuals within such cultures does not qualify; this type of discourse does not, in general, legitimise the mass killing or physical destruction of the outgroup. It is only where self-imposed cultural change on the individual level is considered impossible that destructive action of this kind may be considered a possible solution. It should also be noted that, in terms of the exclusion of outgroups, there is a certain truth in the observation that *in general* a foreigner or a stranger is less human, owed less obligation, than a friend or family member; but simply experiencing the human reality of someone with whom one comes in close and personal context is not necessarily, or even generally, enough to ‘rehumanise’ that individual (as the case of slavery demonstrates). A view which essentialises identity can construct particular groups not only as problematic, but as ‘wrong’ in the very scheme of things.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> In the case of periodic massacre and organised subjugation, which may overlap with slavery, collectives may be seen not as ‘wrong’ *per se*, but as having a particularly ordained place in a scheme of value considered as a vertical hierarchy. Daniel Bar-Tal, in discussing ‘ethnocentric delegitimization,’ suggests this difference in arguing that the

In setting out this definition of the phenomenon to be examined, it may be objected that my argument becomes circular, inasmuch as I argue for a commonality of elements between cases which I have selected on the basis of containing these elements. However, I have defined the cases only in terms of the existence of genocidal intent and of essentialisation, not in terms of *specific functional patterns* of essentialisation and their relationship to action. It is the existence and nature of these patterns for which this thesis mounts an argument.

Here it is also appropriate to explain why I have not included discussion of episodes which could be considered ‘independent variables.’ My research has not uncovered any cases in which the discursive strategy I define as ‘genocidal dehumanisation’ appears *in toto* in the absence of genocide or genocidal killing (though it has certainly been present on the part of individuals and non-representative sections of societies; and, as we will see, genocidal dehumanisation, in its motivatory and legitimatory forms, tends to be present both in the periods preceding and following the actual historical genocidal moment – which is no more than one might expect, given that no discursive type simply appears from nowhere and vanishes into nothing). It is worth noting, however, that though it has not been feasible for me to pursue in any depth non-genocidal cases, such as slavery or apartheid, I have been able to suggest the different type(s) of dehumanisation that would be found in such cases according to my model, and to indicate the existence of actual examples of such utterances in these cases.

The ‘circular’ objection itself can be given two further responses. Firstly, the episodes that I examine range broadly enough, and are different enough in their other features, that the very presence of these common elements in cases which are otherwise so widely diverse

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two main reasons for ethnocentric delegitimization are ‘the desire to completely differentiate the outgroup from the ingroup in order to exclude it from humanity [and] the desire to exploit the outgroup.’ Though these reasons often ‘complement each other, they do not necessarily appear together.’ (D. Bar-Tal, ‘Causes and Consequences of Delegitimization: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism’, *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40 no. 1, 1990, p. 75).

can be considered evidence for their universality as patterns. It is, of course, not possible to evaluate every case of genocide and genocidal massacre in order to prove the universality for which I argue. Secondly, my argument does not rest only on demonstrating through documentation that these elements in fact existed in various different cases; but also on arguing for the *psychostructural* reasons for their necessity in every case of genocide and genocidal killing. The aforementioned objection cannot apply to this second aspect of my argument (which will be laid out in full in Chapter Four).

Having defined the phenomenon in question and the scope of the cases to be examined, I now turn to consideration of the nature of the documentation used in this thesis to identify the presence and the features of genocidal dehumanisation.

## VI. Sources

In taking a comparative approach to genocidal dehumanisation, it is particularly important to demonstrate the existence of the utterances on which I base my claims, and to establish that the statements which I use as evidence in this way are representative, that they are widely acceptable as public/ised rhetoric within their social and/or institutional context (as opposed to being universally acceptable, or entirely outside the possibility of debate), and that they are not considered to be the aberrant opinions of isolated individuals.

Furthermore, the production and consumption of discursive strategy and ideology takes place on the individual and the collective level. Therefore, the phenomenon must be analysed at all strata of public utterance, and also at the level of the individual understanding of perpetrators. Given these two necessities, then, the statements I use to illustrate and demonstrate my argument must be direct, inasmuch as they are not claims about the use of such language made by the authors of secondary literature; they must appear in public

discourse, except when they relate to perpetrators' self-understanding (it is, of course, always possible to find support for virtually any position on the part of some individuals within a society, but this in itself cannot necessarily be considered general evidence of any specific relationship between the society and the opinion); and it is not enough to refer to a single document as definitive general evidence for the existence of a type or subtype, inasmuch as the aim is to demonstrate the representative nature of the rhetoric embodied in any given statement and its existence across a range of different contexts.

Considering this, then, I use 'direct' (as opposed to 'primary') source material to illustrate my argument regarding the existence and use of dehumanising metaphors in genocide and genocidal killing. Examples are taken for the most part from material produced during such episodes: written, visual and oral propaganda material in the media of print (including newspapers and books published by perpetrators), film and radio; printed or visual material which may not necessarily be considered 'propaganda,' such as independent cartoons or editorials; internal communications of official bodies; private letters and communications; and contemporary records from courts and tribunals.<sup>24</sup> Some examples are also taken from material gathered in the aftermath of such episodes, from sources such as interviews with perpetrators, evidence given in trials, and victim testimony.

These examples are characterised as 'direct' in the sense that, wherever they have been sourced, they can be considered direct evidence of the existence of such discourse in whichever episode is under examination. Thus, a Nazi's comment that 'Jews are vermin' would be used as an illustrative example, while a scholar's comment that 'the Nazis viewed Jews as vermin' would not. Having said this, however, these direct examples may be taken from secondary sources: from historical accounts which document such episodes or which gather such material together in one source, or (more rarely) from material created by

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<sup>24</sup> On the importance of sources of this nature, see Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary...', p. 199.

perpetrators, but available in the context of historical documentation, such as Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* or the Nazi 'documentary' film *Der ewige Jude*. Thus the bulk of examples are taken from books and journal articles dealing either with historical accounts of particular episodes, or with thematic exploration of theoretical issues or cultural discourses pertinent to this work.

The fact that the majority of examples used to demonstrate this phenomenon are not taken from primary sources may be raised as a limitation. The value of the present work, however, is in the identification and examination of a common phenomenon, one that occurs in episodes of genocide and genocidal killing which otherwise differ greatly in their essential features. Such examination necessitates, as I have argued above, a multidisciplinary and comparative approach considering a broad range of different cases in order to demonstrate the existence of common features which amount to a general phenomenon. Detailed historical examination of one episode, one primary source or a group of related primary sources would fail to demonstrate such a commonality. On the other hand, to do the vast quantity of research necessary to source every utterance here from primary material would not only entail a far longer work, but is unnecessary from the perspective of the aims of this thesis. For similar reasons, my research is limited to scholarship in the English language, and sources where English translations have been produced; in a comparative thesis of this kind, which necessarily casts a wide net regarding the use of empirical evidence, it is not possible to research in the original language of every case study involved.

The importance of the sets of utterances presented as examples to demonstrate the phenomenon of genocidal dehumanisation lies neither in the collection of various primary sources, nor in the detailed historical analysis of any particular source; but in the compilation of representative examples from diverse episodes. In each case considered, enough

evidence will be tendered to demonstrate that the dehumanising discourse I examine exists both in utterances produced by perpetrators and perpetrator bodies, and as a 'public opinion,' as a general and publicly-acceptable discourse, not simply in a few isolated and unrepresentative examples.<sup>25</sup> The fact that many of these statements appear in public fora such as newspapers, films, and so forth also indicate that they were considered acceptable discourse in the public domain. This in turn indicates, even in totalitarian societies, at least a certain level of acceptance of such views in the population at large, inasmuch as they were seen as 'fit to publish' without major destabilising effect both by those within genocidal political regimes, and by others in positions of power vis-à-vis public discourse in society. In essence, the intent of this work is to define and examine the role of a common phenomenon from a comparative perspective, and it is this which determines my use of documentary material.

Finally, in reference to methodological concerns around textual documentation, in Chapter Three I will have more to say regarding the need to examine both a specific utterance itself, and also the context in which it appears.<sup>26</sup> This should not be read, however, as a 'mission statement' implying that the proximate context of every utterance quoted in this thesis will be extensively examined, in the style of critical discourse analysis. The majority of utterances examined are presented in the typological sections, each of which can be conceived of as presenting a particular narrative or discursive formation. In each instance, the discursive nexus, the historical-institutional context, from which and in which that particular type (we might think of each type as a 'sub-discursive strategy') emerges is examined in some detail, and the provenance of each is examined. However, there is no detailed, case-by-case examination of the specific, proximate context of each utterance,

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<sup>25</sup> On 'public opinion' see Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary...', p. 201.

<sup>26</sup> For an extended consideration of 'context' in a multidisciplinary perspective, see T. A. van Dijk, *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, SAGE Publications, London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi, 1998 (reprinted, 2000), pp. 211-227.

given that the intention of this thesis is to establish, through the identification of widespread discursive similarities in non-aberrant utterances in diverse geographical and temporal episodes, the existence and features of a common phenomenon that is termed 'genocidal dehumanisation.'<sup>27</sup>

## §

My intent in this introductory chapter has been to lay the groundwork for a thorough investigation into my subject – that is, genocidal dehumanisation – and to indicate with clarity what I intend to do in this work, what I do not intend to do, and why, and how I will go about the task so defined.

The substance of the work is an analysis of dehumanisation in genocide, and of the three types (medicalisation, animalisation, and bureaucratic-euphemistic reification) in which it manifests. Chapter Four will deal with the topic of dehumanisation itself and its development in the context of the modern era, and the three chapters following will each explore one of these types. However, given the nature of the project undertaken here – that is, theorising genocide through a multidisciplinary lens, and employing culturally-based theory as an explanatory framework – before embarking on these chapters it is indispensable to ground my work in the field of theoretical approaches to genocide; and to indicate the nature of the theoretical framework that bestows upon my later research its significance, alongside an outline of the way in which this theory will be employed. These concerns are dealt with in the second and third chapters, respectively.

By framing the subject in this manner, my first aim is to arrive at a clear and thoroughgoing survey of genocidal dehumanisation, and to substantiate my claim that it is most accurately

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<sup>27</sup> 'Non-aberrant' should be understood here to refer to utterances which are not considered aberrant within the society in which they are uttered.



and most productively conceived as a discursive strategy. In doing so, I present an argument demonstrating the necessity for dehumanisation in modern genocide and genocidal killing. From the structure thus laid out, I go on to reveal the functions that such dehumanisation performs, and to demonstrate how it does so according to a consistent relationship between content and function in dehumanising discourse. Finally, I list the ways in which genocidal dehumanisation is manifest, showing how each type, in terms of content, has arisen from a confluence of modern discourses. This in turn allows an understanding of the function performed by each.

A general theory of genocidal dehumanisation, as developed in this thesis, will both contribute to historical analysis of episodes of genocide and genocidal killing, and give insight into genocidal tendencies and the unfolding of genocidal discourse in the present. With this aim in mind, we begin our investigation from an important initial question: within the existing field of scholarship on genocide, where can we locate a point of departure for dehumanisation as a subject?

## Chapter 2.

### Approaches To Genocide: Causation, Motivation and 'Human Possibility'

In the previous chapter I established that the purpose of the present work is to reveal the anatomy of dehumanisation through the employment of a multidisciplinary and comparative perspective.<sup>1</sup> This thesis does not attempt to create a model explaining either the occurrence, or the causation of genocide and mass killing, nor to deal with the overall question of motivation for genocide as a primary subject. However, as I have indicated, it does treat the causation of genocide, in terms of the role of dehumanisation as a factor in both the causality and 'human possibility' of genocide. Dehumanisation can play two distinct roles in genocide (a subject upon which I will expand in Chapter Four): legitimisation – universally present in dehumanising genocidal rhetoric but not, in itself, a causal factor – and motivation – present only in some cases, but where it is present, a causal factor. It is important to emphasise that, since genocide is not monocausal, in either of these roles dehumanisation is *one factor among others* which fulfils the 'requirements' for motivation and/or legitimisation in order for genocide and genocidal killing to occur. In other words, dehumanisation appears to be a necessary, though not a sufficient, condition for genocide and genocidal killing, a condition which sometimes, but not always, plays a causal role.

In positing dehumanisation as playing this dual role, it becomes important to examine the literature, firstly, on the causation of genocide, and secondly, on motivations for genocide and the question of how genocide is 'humanly possible.' The second of these questions can be considered a subcategory of the first, in that the question of motivation and how

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<sup>1</sup> While a note of caution should be sounded regarding the term 'anatomy' inasmuch as it is, in itself, a biologically-based metaphor, it is nonetheless an appropriate way in which to indicate our concern with the structure of genocidal dehumanisation as a phenomenon.

genocide is humanly possible is one aspect of the causation of genocide, and dehumanisation itself, the ultimate subject of this inquiry, is one aspect of the question of motivation and human possibility. This should be borne in mind over the course of the following discussion. In presenting a thematic analysis, I hope to demonstrate what these approaches have accomplished, and also indicate the problematics which have emerged for my question within the frame of disciplinary and thematic parameters. Furthermore, I will show the academic strands on which this thesis draws in presenting a model of genocidal dehumanisation. Having done so, I undertake a survey of scholarship on motivation and human possibility which will identify important work for the argument about the nature of dehumanisation which will be presented in Chapter Four, as well as providing some cautions concerning problematics inherent in certain models.

My first aim in this chapter, then, is to examine causatory models thematically, asking what these different approaches can lend to my own conceptualisation of dehumanisation as a facet of genocide and genocidal killing. In doing so, I intend both to give some idea of the nature of the scholarship from which my own work emerges, and to highlight the arguments regarding the nature of the causation of genocide which I will synthesise in presenting a new conceptual model of genocidal dehumanisation. While this examination is structured by theme and not by discipline, it will nonetheless be evident that particular disciplines have leant themselves to specific approaches, and hence this chapter should also demonstrate the way in which models from different disciplines will be applied to my subject in the following chapters. I begin by examining various models concerning the causation of genocide and giving some indication as to where my argument fits in terms of these different conceptual analyses of its occurrence.

This thesis does not posit dehumanisation as a monocausal factor in genocide, nor indeed as a universally causal as opposed to an enabling factor. The overview presented here is not

intended as a critique as such, although I do mention problematic aspects of particular models as they relate to my own argument. Rather, I intend to identify the theoretical fields from which my conceptualisation emerges, and to demonstrate what the relationship of my model is both to these and to other such fields. Thus, I do not intend to take on the encyclopaedic task of providing an exhaustive examination of each of these models, but rather to give a brief overview in which representative works are examined whose content is productive for my own argument, either in terms of premises to be built upon or problematics to be developed or contested. This exercise should help to understand the parameters of the field in which the problem of dehumanisation emerges as such, and how I will address the problem in terms of, and in response to, what has come before. After this first section, in which I examine the literature on causation thematically, I narrow the focus to look at work on the question of motivation and ‘how genocide is humanly possible.’ In each case, my interest is to demonstrate the scholarship upon which my thesis draws, and the areas in which my own argument will be developed.

By the time the conclusion to this chapter is reached, the reader should have a general idea, firstly, about the current state of thinking on the issue of causation of genocide, and, more specifically, how humans come to enact genocidal practices; and secondly, about the arguments which are synthesised in presenting the present model – those which are judged to be relevant and those which are not, and why. In other words, I will provide an introduction both to the scholarship which lays the groundwork on which a multidisciplinary theory of genocidal dehumanisation can be constructed, and to the nature of the lacunae and problematics which the construction of such a model addresses.

## I. Models of the Causation of Genocide and Genocidal Killing

As mentioned in the introduction, the word 'genocide' was coined by Raphael Lemkin in 1944, and enshrined in law in the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948.<sup>2</sup> In 1949, Jessie Bernard published a book entitled *American Community Behaviour* engaging with the question of genocide, and in 1959 Pieter N. Drost's two-volume work on the Convention appeared.<sup>3</sup> After this, there would be almost no significant scholarly work on genocide until the early 1970s.<sup>4</sup> Since this period, however, genocide has come to be considered a topic worthy of such investigation, and the question of causation has, for obvious reasons, been one of vital importance.

There are a number of different factors which have been considered by scholars of genocide (as opposed to those who have dealt with related issues in different fields or with different emphases) to be causatory of genocide and mass killing, and/or of particular episodes (hence allowing the possibility of extrapolation). As well as considering this material, I also examine research which does not deal solely and/or explicitly with questions of genocide, but which has been widely employed in, and considered to be relevant for, the field of genocide studies; or which is particularly pertinent to important questions raised in later chapters. The examination I present in this section is particularly indebted to the scholarship of Michael Mann, Adam Jones, and Helen Fein in synthesising different perspectives on the causation of genocide.<sup>5</sup> For those concerned with issues of causation,

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<sup>2</sup> Lemkin's coining of this term came about as part of an ongoing concern with the mass-scale destruction of human collectivities. For an overview of Lemkin's life and work in the context of the Convention and the concept of 'genocide' see J. Cooper, *Raphael Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> F. Chalk & K. Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analyses and Case Studies*, Yale University Press in co-operation with the Montreal Institute For Genocide Studies, New Haven & London, 1990, p. 12.

<sup>4</sup> Chalk & Jonassohn, p. 13.

<sup>5</sup> M. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 18-30; A. Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction*, Routledge, London, 2006, pp. 261-324; H. Fein,

Fein also gives a useful warning regarding the distinction between *preconditions*, and *aspects*, of genocide and warns that we must not confuse the two, a precaution which is worth bearing in mind over the course of the following pages.<sup>6</sup> It must be noted that the models presented here are themselves 'ideal types,' and many if not most analyses (as opposed to syntheses), though emphasising one or another of these explanatory models, do not fit precisely into that model. This can be considered in a positive light inasmuch as monocausal explanations are inherently oversimplistic, a fact now recognised by most (though not all) scholars writing on the subject.

Explanations of the causation of genocide, then, include psychological models, socio-cultural models, political models, economic-demographic models, and bio-evolutionary models. The first three – psychological, socio-cultural and political – may be considered the models of the causation of genocide to which the most scholarly attention has been devoted, and also those of the greatest importance to this thesis. For dehumanisation as a subject of inquiry, economic, demographic and bio-evolutionary concerns are of lesser relevance. The presence or absence of economic need or greed, or of demographic pressure – the two major factors most often posited as causatory in economic-demographic frameworks – are not influential factors for the presence or absence of dehumanisation given their existence in the non-discursive material realm (as opposed to representations of such needs or pressures). The question of bio-evolutionary aspects of genocide are only relevant inasmuch as the question arises as to whether humans are innately either disposed, or alternately disinclined, to violence toward other humans – a question which is dealt with at length in Chapter Four (but which will be foreshadowed in this chapter). For these reasons, these approaches are afforded less attention in this section. I begin, then, by examining psychological approaches.

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*Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*, SAGE Publications, London, 1993 (first published as *Current Sociology* 38 (1) Spring 1990), pp. 32-50.

<sup>6</sup> Fein, *Genocide*, p. 41.

## 1a. Psychological Models

Given the importance of the internalisation and internal production of dehumanising discourse on the part of the individual perpetrator, psychological explanations are particularly germane to the present inquiry. Many early theories of genocide, particularly those based around analysis of National Socialism, posited the psychopathology of individual perpetrators. This perspective would extrapolate to models of cultural pathology such as the concept of the 'authoritarian personality,' developed by Theodor Adorno and others and shared by Wilhelm Reich, or Daniel Goldhagen's argument regarding a uniquely German eliminationist antisemitism.<sup>7</sup> However, such theories, which may be problematic inasmuch as they conveniently disassociate responsibility from more universal social factors, have, for the most part, been discredited or fruitfully problematised.<sup>8</sup> In this thesis, we will see the way in which perpetrator discourse, rather than relating solely to the nature of the individual psyche, draws upon existing socio-cultural tropes in constructing texts which represent the meaning of genocidal practice. Social psychology in particular has identified this problematic as such, and an important aspect of the discrediting of the 'psychopathological' model is found in the experimental research of social psychologists Stanley Milgram and Philip Zimbardo, which has demonstrated that those who inflict harm need have no sadistic or cruel disposition; indeed, Zimbardo notes that sadists are generally selected out of roles as torturers and killers, because they are unpredictable and unreliable.<sup>9</sup> James Waller also

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<sup>7</sup> On the authoritarian personality, see T. W. Adorno et al, *The Authoritarian Personality*, Harper, New York, 1950. For a discussion of political-psychological categorisation of personality types and its relevance to warlike or aggressive tendencies, see G. Cashman, *What Causes War?: An Introduction to Theories of International Conflict*, Lexington Books, San Francisco, 1993, pp. 39-42.

<sup>8</sup> Having said this, however, arguments concerning the essential 'deviance' or lack of 'development' of perpetrators continue to be made; see for example S. K. Baum, 'A bell curve of hate?', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 4, December 2004.

<sup>9</sup> P. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*, Random House, New York, 2007, p. 290.

explicitly rejects this position, which he calls 'the dead end of demonization.'<sup>10</sup> Social psychologists such as the abovementioned scholars have contributed a great deal to the study of dehumanisation as a concept, and the way in which it may be applied in genocide (given that genocidal perpetrators are not available as research subjects except, with difficulty, in a post-hoc situation).<sup>11</sup> Of particular importance to the current study are concepts contributing to a model of the organised reproduction of discourse and practices which produce a certain object, and which give the individual a moral 'script' in relation to that object within which to operate in enacting genocidal practice.

Psychoanalytic, as well as psychological, explanations have been constructed not only regarding individual perpetrators, but also on the collective level.<sup>12</sup> Israel W. Charny, for example, reads genocidal perpetration as a result of a dialectic between life-affirming, and life-denying forces;<sup>13</sup> this concept sees perpetration, that is, the control of the power over life and death, as a manifestation of the individual's attempt to manage her or his own human fear of death (Robert Jay Lifton also employs this perspective<sup>14</sup>). Such psychoanalytic readings point to the importance of the difference in understanding between the perpetrator's self, and the victim as other, with regard to action taken toward the victim. In terms of their content, however, they have remained largely speculative.

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<sup>10</sup> J. Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (2<sup>nd</sup> revised edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, pp. 98-106.

<sup>11</sup> In the field of social psychology, the work of Daniel Bar-Tal, Albert Bandura, Nick Haslam, and Emanuele Castano is particularly insightful, and relevant to this thesis, as will be evident throughout the work.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of psychoanalytic explanations, see J. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (trans. C. Schoch), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 17-21. Research addressed not directly to genocide, but dealing with questions of identity and collective conflict from a psychoanalytic and psychological perspective, can be found in the work of Vamik Volkan (see for example *The Need To Have Enemies and Allies: from clinical practice to international relationships*, J. Aronson Inc., Northvale [New Jersey], 1988; *Killing in the Name of Identity: A Study of Bloody Conflicts*, Pitchstone, Charlottesville [Virginia], 2006).

<sup>13</sup> See Fein, *Genocide*, pp. 46-47; see also E. Markusen & D. Kopf, *The Holocaust and Strategic Bombing: Genocide and Total War in the Twentieth Century*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1995, pp. 49-50.

<sup>14</sup> See Markusen & Kopf, p. 51.



If individual psychopathological demonisation is a dead end, and collective psychoanalytic conceptions are speculative, what does psychology have to tell us about the causation of genocide and genocidal killing?<sup>15</sup> Ervin Staub has devoted significant attention to the causation of genocide from a psychological-cultural perspective. In *The Roots of Evil*, Staub addresses himself to 'the origins' of genocide and mass killing, taking the perspective of personal goal theory as a starting point.<sup>16</sup> His analysis synthesises previous models in order to understand how the processes they examine impact psychologically on individuals, and hence (in this analysis) on groups, to bring about genocidal action. According to Staub, while genocide results from a number of influences, these can be divided into 'a few important classes.'<sup>17</sup> The origins of genocide, in this model, lie in the following factors: difficult life conditions (in which aggression results either from a sense of frustration or a sense of threat, whether that threat is 'concrete' or a threat to one's identity or self-conception<sup>18</sup>); the negative psychological needs and goals which these conditions create, and action toward their fulfilment; a gradual progression along a 'continuum of destruction'; cultural-societal self-concepts, particularly a sense of superiority combined with an underlying self-doubt, authoritarianism, and monolithic rather than pluralistic cultures; and socialisation and resocialisation.<sup>19</sup> 'Genocidal dehumanisation' as I have defined it encompasses a number of these factors, including a sense of threat and resulting psychological states, the existence of

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<sup>15</sup> For an investigation of the problematics in the (dis)connection between historiography and psychology in the context of scholarship on the Holocaust (despite a somewhat problematic approach to questions of agency, character and disposition), see H. Zukier, 'The "Mindless Years"? A reconsideration of the Psychological Dimensions of the Holocaust, 1938-1945', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> E. Staub, *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 28; see also E. Staub, 'Moral Exclusion, Personal Goal Theory, and Extreme Destructiveness', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990.

<sup>17</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, p. 35.

<sup>19</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, pp. 13-29. For Staub's two tables explaining the occurrence of genocide, see pp. 21, 233; for a model of the 'influences and processes contributing to genocide and mass killing' see E. Staub, *The Psychology of Good and Evil: Why Children, Adults, and Groups Help and Harm Others*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 300.

Like others mentioned above, Staub's work also proposes the self-selection of violent or 'antisocial' individuals (*The roots of evil*, p. 69), with all the inherent problematics of such a conception.

particular concepts regarding self and other, and the exclusion of particular collectivities from a monolithically-conceived ingroup.

Another important work emphasising systemic-psychological factors is Christopher Browning's landmark study *Ordinary Men*, which differs from Milgram and Zimbardo in Browning's emphasis upon the horizontal power and influence of the collective, rather than the vertical power and influence of hierarchical-institutional structures.<sup>20</sup> Browning's scholarship puts the emphasis for action on systemic structures, careerism, and the influence of fellow-perpetrators, arguing against theses which see either ideology or pathology as determining factors. The relevance for our investigation is the question of the way in which the ingroup conceives of itself as having an influence on the conception of the outgroup (explored in Chapter Four), the nature of bureaucratic organizations and bureaucratic discourse (Chapter Seven), and the fact that discursive constructions need not be overtly ideological in order to motivate action.

The very title of Browning's book is a critique of the view of perpetrators as psychologically pathological. The question of loyalty to peers and organizations, raised by Browning, indicates a particularly relevant criticism of individual-pathological psychological approaches: as Albert Bandura puts it, '[i]t is the morally justified and principled resort to destructiveness that is of greatest social concern but is largely ignored in psychological analyses of inhumanities.'<sup>21</sup> The focus of these analyses tends to be on the so-called 'transgressive' individual rather than on the collective and institutional; and it tends to be on acts which are read as unprincipled transgressions rather than on normative or 'principled' harm. The critique raised by scholars such as Browning and Bandura points to the fact that the psychological problems posed by committing harmful acts require moral justification.

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<sup>20</sup> C. R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*, Penguin, London, 2001.

<sup>21</sup> A. Bandura, C. Barbaranelli, G. V. Caprara, & C. Pastorelli, 'Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 71, no. 2, 1996, p. 372.

Thus, perpetrators' self-understanding, rather than reflect that which can seem obvious to the critical observer, must draw on discursive resources before, during, and after harmful acts; and these resources are collectively acceptable, collectively constructed, and become available at the level of collective consumption.

From the other side of the question of the psychology of the individual and the collective, Staub notes that 'social psychology is not just individual psychology writ large' (a point also taken up by Fein); we cannot analyse a 'society' as a unit, in order to arrive at an understanding for motivations behind certain actions, in the same way that might be done for an individual.<sup>22</sup> Not only are there many possible causatory factors for genocidal practices, but, as this thesis will show, even within one factor (dehumanisation) there are various functions and types. This question, along with others in the social-psychological realm, is addressed in Leonard S. Newman and Ralph Erber's collection *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust*, which, despite focussing on the Holocaust, contains a great amount of useful insight into genocide more generally. In this work, Newman and Erber emphasise crisis, fear and threat, in combination with culturally specific practice, as causatory of targeting and scapegoating; as well as the roles of obedience, conformity, and the dialectical relationship between the individual and the collective.<sup>23</sup> Once again, we see the vital importance of the perception of threat as a causatory factor, but one whose manifestation in reaction is determined by the nature of pre-existing and evolving cultural forms.

Here, then, we have some important elucidations of the psychological states of perpetrators of genocide, in particular the issue of the perception of threat as a motivation, as well as some vital pointers toward the importance of the relationship between

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<sup>22</sup> Fein, *Genocide*, p. 49.

<sup>23</sup> L. S. Newman & R. Erber (ed.s), *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 326-344.

collectivities and collective practices, and the psyche and actions of the individual. In expanding the issue regarding collectivities, we come to analyses which deal with socio-cultural practice.

## Ib. Socio-cultural Models

While there is a clear distinction to be drawn between models which stress individual and group psychology, and those which emphasise socio-cultural factors (often emerging from analysis of discourse and language), in practice these often overlap. In terms of social psychology, some theorists whose work we will encounter regarding dehumanisation have made important contributions. A prime example is found in the research of Albert Bandura, who posits that aggression is largely learned from the social environment, and that therefore 'the form [it] takes, the situations in which it occurs, its frequency and intensity, and the targets against which it is demonstrated are largely determined by social experience,' and are reinforced by structures which reward such behaviour.<sup>24</sup> Christian Tileagă, in discussing othering and moral exclusion, specifically argues that there is a need to address the problems of prejudice, ideology and the moral order through a 'discursive psychology' approach.<sup>25</sup> These arguments point to the determining role played by the socio-cultural environment – a key underpinning of the conception of genocidal dehumanisation presented here – as is the question of what psychological rewards are provided, or necessities fulfilled, by genocidal, and, more specifically, dehumanising behaviour and belief systems.

In examining socio-cultural models, an important distinction to be recognised is that between essentialist and anti-essentialist constructions. Essentialist theories focus on

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<sup>24</sup> Paraphrased in Cashman, p. 33.

<sup>25</sup> C. Tileagă, 'Representing the 'Other': A Discursive Analysis of Prejudice and Moral Exclusion in Talk about Romanies', *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, vol. 16, 2006, pp. 22-24.

putatively unique cultural characteristics of a perpetrator group, and often, though not always, specifically on racism and prejudice.<sup>26</sup> Ironically, such constructions often essentialise the cultural group to which they refer even while arguing against stereotypes.<sup>27</sup> In this thesis, which points to dehumanisation as a common factor in genocide, the aim is to particularise cultures through understanding how particular culture shapes discourse and practice, and hence the different manifestations taken by genocidal dehumanisation, while avoiding the pitfalls of identifying any specific culture as uniquely pathological through a comparative approach identifying the general, and generalisable, patterns of functionality played by dehumanisation in all such cases.

Early culturally-based models, since largely discredited, proposed a 'straight path' along which a steadily increasing prejudice culminated in genocide. Models in this vein tend to focus on the historical nature of intergroup relationships in the pre-genocidal period (both in terms of discourse and practice), and to seek contingent factors which caused a non-genocidal *modus vivendi* to become genocide. Socio-cultural models of this kind carry the danger of tipping over into the kind of cultural essentialism mentioned above, the most notorious example being Goldhagen's thesis regarding a uniquely eliminationist anti-Semitism in Nazi Germany as the cause of the *Shoah*:<sup>28</sup>

Not economic hardship, not the coercive means of a totalitarian state, not social psychological pressure, not invariable psychological propensity, but ideas about Jews that were pervasive in Germany and had been for decades induced ordinary Germans to kill

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<sup>26</sup> For a discussion of the problematics of 'culturalist' approaches, see Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>27</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Many criticisms have been made of Goldhagen's work, from various perspectives. For an edited collection, see F. H. Littell (ed.), *Hyping the Holocaust: scholars answer Goldhagen*, Cummings & Hathaway, New York, 1997. For a refutation of Goldhagen from a social psychology perspective, see L. S. Newman, 'What Is a "Social-Psychological" Account of Perpetrator behaviour?: The Person Versus the Situation in Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*', in Newman & Erber, pp. 43-67. For a criticism of Goldhagen from the perspective of moral psychology and ethical reasoning, see R. Kamber, 'Goldhagen and Sartre on Eliminationist Anti-Semitism: False Beliefs and Moral Culpability', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol.13, no.2, 1999, pp 252-271.

unarmed, defenseless Jewish men, women, and children by the thousands, systematically and without pity.<sup>29</sup>

A similar, but more complex view of genocide, presented by Norman Cohn, sees it as a consequence of utopian ideological mythologising (spearheaded by a charismatic leader or elite).<sup>30</sup> A second widely discredited psychological-sociocultural theory is that of 'scapegoating,' whereby genocide and mass killing is understood as the majority group projecting the blame for hardship or difficult social conditions onto a minority.<sup>31</sup> While we have already identified the problems with these types of oversimplistic and/or totalising cultural models, they do re-emphasise the importance of cultural scripts and of ideology in both the decision to take action, and, more crucially for this thesis, in the narratives perpetrators construct concerning the reasons and justifications for such action.

Other theories focus not on the particular culture of specific perpetrator groups, but on specific discourses and/or belief systems. A common perspective, for example, would see the ultimate cause of genocide and genocidal killing as racism, and/or nationalism. While I have already mentioned my perspective on these factors in the introduction, it is true that the importance of the modern nation-state in genocide and genocidal dehumanisation is indeed crucial, and there is a more nuanced argument to be made regarding state nationalism which will be explored in Chapters Five and Seven. However, in themselves, as monocausal explanations these are unsatisfactory, given the existence of nationalism and racism in non-genocidal situations. A focus on nationalism also falls somewhere between a socio-cultural (nationalist discourse) and a political (the nation-state as a political form)

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<sup>29</sup> Daniel J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Abacus / Little, Brown and Company, 1996, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> See Fein, *Genocide*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>31</sup> For a re-examination and new proposed model of scapegoating theory, see P. Glick, 'Sacrificial Lambs Dressed in Wolves' Clothing: Envious Prejudice, Ideology, and the Scapegoating of Jews', in Newman & Erber, pp. 113-142.

model, indicating that crucial aspects of the analysis of genocidal phenomena are to be found at the interstices of disciplinary investigation.

Thus far I have mentioned many problematics of particular socio-cultural explanations; but despite the possibility of a tendency to essentialise, socio-cultural analyses are by no means inherently flawed. The possibility of analysing genocide from the perspective of the perpetrator (which this thesis sets out to do) is a valuable strength of sociocultural models. The social psychologists Daphna Oyserman and Armand Lauffer, for example use the concept of 'cultural frames' to understand 'how the out-group is perceived in a collectivistic cultural worldview.'<sup>32</sup> Cultural practice in the historical context can also be accorded detailed analysis in these models. Contentions of the intimate relationship between modernity and genocide, brought to attention in Zygmunt Bauman's groundbreaking book *Modernity and the Holocaust*, have since been argued by many others. Bauman attributes the Holocaust and, by extension, genocide, to the socio-cultural conditions of modernity, namely, its four core features: nationalism, 'scientific' racism, technological complexity, and bureaucratic rationalisation (Bauman also incorporates Milgram's insights).<sup>33</sup> As we will see in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the forms taken by genocidal dehumanisation are intimately shaped by all of these discourses.

The contention regarding the role of modernity is set up in opposition to the earlier view, straddling socio-cultural and bio-evolutionary theories, which held that genocide was an atavistic throwback particular to aberrant nations who had turned back on the human march of 'progress' and 'civilisation' (in this context Bauman mentions Max Weber, Karl Marx and

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<sup>32</sup> D. Oyserman & A. Lauffer, Armand, 'Examining the Implications of Cultural Frames on Social Movements and Group Action', in L. S. Newman & R. Erber (eds), *Understanding Genocide: The Social Psychology of the Holocaust*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2002, pp. 162-187.

<sup>33</sup> Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (New York), 1989. For detailed treatment of modernity, see pp. 83-116; for Bauman's commentary on Milgram, see pp. 151-168.

Norbert Elias<sup>34</sup>). The 'atavistic' model can be seen to be related to the 'ancient hatreds' thesis, which sees a cyclical history of hatred and bloodshed between two groups (thus flattening present differences in morality and action, and very often depicting both perpetrators and victims as 'uncivilised'), which at certain moments causes genocide.<sup>35</sup> Bauman refutes such models by emphasising the connection between rationality and genocide, without falling back on oversimplified concepts such as the 'rational actor' and 'strategy' theories found in the work of scholars such as Irving Horowitz.<sup>36</sup> In other words, there is a problem in associating the discourses which form the foundations of genocidal practice with positive-teleological notions of progress. Genocide is enacted for specific reasons which, though they have historical antecedents, emerge from contemporary conditions. Bauman's argument, however, is not entirely unproblematic: while he raises the essential question of what 'human nature' is in terms of the psychological relationship to harming others, his concept of the need to neutralize 'primeval moral drives'<sup>37</sup> in the perpetration of genocide raises a similar question to that found in the theories of Zimbardo and Waller, in making an assumption that people are by their nature 'good,' 'moral,' or at least 'ordinary' – that is, that they are inherently disinclined to participation in genocide (a central problematic for this thesis, which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter Four).

Related to Bauman's work in its examination of the nature of modernity and the role of technology in culture, is Eric Markusen and David Kopf's *The Holocaust and Strategic Bombing* (1995). These authors draw a connection between genocide and the emergence of total war, a connection which they also see as being established in the social-psychological book

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<sup>34</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 12. This is not to say that these theorists do not have anything useful to tell us about genocide; in particular, Weber's theory of the state as monopolising the legitimate use of force will be very important for this thesis.

<sup>35</sup> For analysis of these positions, see Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 18-20.

<sup>36</sup> Horowitz, *Taking Lives*; see also I. L. Horowitz, *Genocide: State Power and Mass Murder*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick (New Jersey), 1976.

<sup>37</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 188.



by Markusen and Lifton, *The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat*.<sup>38</sup> The warfare-genocide connection, often overlooked in older scholarship, has been emphasised more recently by other authors including Paul Bartrop, Martin Shaw, and Christopher J. Fettweis.<sup>39</sup> Markusen and Kopf argue that the major connections are as follows: that total war often serves as a catalyst for genocide; that both involve the deliberate massacre of non-combatants; that both are generally conducted by nation-states in the name of national security; that both are antithetical to certain principles of democracy (the most problematic of these assertions); and that both have been facilitated by similar psychological, organisational, and scientific-technological factors.<sup>40</sup> In creating this conceptual framework, the authors synthesise psychological, organisational, and scientific-technological factors, again indicating the interconnected nature of these realms in understanding genocide.<sup>41</sup> Throughout this thesis, and particularly in Chapter Five, we will draw upon the insight regarding the close relationship not only between war and genocide as practices, but between *discourse* around war and around genocide, in showing that there is a purposiveness here which relates both to the metaphorical transference of realms of practice from one situation to another, and to the depiction of an outgroup as a threat.

Finally, anthropological analysis has also focussed on the discursive cultural construction of meaning and its implementation in action.<sup>42</sup> However, this has often occurred, as is the nature of anthropology, in detailed case studies rather than in syntheses, as for example in

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<sup>38</sup> Markusen & Kopf, p. 51.

<sup>39</sup> P. Bartrop, 'The relationship between war and genocide in the twentieth century: a consideration', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2002, pp. 519–532; M. Shaw, 'The general hybridity of war and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2007, pp. 461–473; C. J. Fettweis, 'War as catalyst: moving World War II to the center of Holocaust scholarship', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003, pp. 225–236.

<sup>40</sup> Markusen & Kopf, p. 55.

<sup>41</sup> Markusen & Kopf, pp. 79–89.

<sup>42</sup> See Jones, pp. 296–300.

Alexander Laban Hinton's treatment of the Cambodian genocide, *Why Did They Kill?*<sup>43</sup> I have already indicated that my intent is not to engage in detailed case-study analysis; rather, for my present purposes, anthropological analyses have proved invaluable as a source of material on cultural features of genocide, including the presentation of documentary texts, which can be used both to indicate the specific forms genocidal dehumanising discourse takes, and to reveal the relationship of likeness between such discourse in different episodes.

As this overview demonstrates, socio-cultural approaches, despite their inherent risks, have been able to point to discursive and pragmatic connections between genocide and non-genocidal practices, to re-emphasise the importance of socio-cultural factors and the vital but vexed relationship between historical antecedent and contemporary circumstance, and to address the link between the individual and the collective. With the importance of these insights established, we can turn to examine political concepts of causation, which tend to focus more specifically on collective and structural aspects.

### Ic. Political Models

Adam Jones, a political scientist and genocide scholar, writes that '[t]he core concern of political science is power: how it is distributed and used within states and societies' (while international relations approaches make a similar analysis between, rather than within, states and societies).<sup>44</sup> While theory around 'power' will not be a key concern for this thesis, the enactment of practice – that is, the way in which systems and the individuals within them operate to manifest particular activities – is a core issue here. Like other fields, political science and international relations approaches do not exist in isolation; there has been

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<sup>43</sup> A. L. Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?: Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide*, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2005.

<sup>44</sup> Jones, p. 307.

significant overlap with other models, as, for example, in Stuart J. Kaufman's 'symbolic politics' analysis of 'ethnic war.'<sup>45</sup> Overlap of these types of approach has occurred particularly in the fields of analysis of the psychology of political leaders, in examinations of political language, and also in the concept of 'operational codes,' sets of political belief systems about the nature of political life (including such questions as whether the political universe is one of harmony or conflict, whether the future is predictable, how much control one can exert over it, and so forth) which will shape the action of leaders.<sup>46</sup> The nature of these common areas demonstrates the centrality of concerns around language and symbolism, the discursive power and productivity of the organization, and the nature of the individual psyche.

In terms of analyses of political systems, as opposed to leaders, a number of models concern the causation of genocide through particular forms of governance. The terms 'democide' (coined by R. J. Rummel as 'government mass murder') and 'politicide' (in the scholarship of Barbara Harff and Ted R. Gurr) have both been employed in the context of political analyses. Rummel contends that power is the determining cause of genocide, and thus that, since, according to this argument, totalitarian regimes are more absolutely powerful than democratic ones, genocide is essentially a product of authoritarianism and totalitarianism, and is prevented by democracy.<sup>47</sup> This argument is tied in to the 'democratic peace debate' (that is, controversy over the theory that 'democracies' never, or almost never, fight each other or commit genocidal killing).<sup>48</sup> However, in regard to genocide this thesis is highly problematic given colonial genocide, the problematics around definitions of 'democracy,' and the intimate involvement of Western 'democratic' regimes with genocidal regimes in such areas as the Central and South Americas, Indonesia, Cambodia, and so

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<sup>45</sup> S. J. Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*. Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 2001.

<sup>46</sup> Cashman, pp. 50-51.

<sup>47</sup> Jones, pp. 307-309,

<sup>48</sup> Jones, p. 314.

forth.<sup>49</sup> The material presented in this thesis suggests that it is not the *nature* of governance so much as the *forms* – that is, central, bureaucratised, and with strict idealised geographical boundaries – that create the conditions for genocide, and for modern genocidal dehumanisation.

A similar argument to Rummel's is mounted by political sociologist Horowitz. According to his conception, 'genocide ... is the consequence of certain forms of unbridled state power.'<sup>50</sup> Horowitz examines the benefits and problems inherent in 'functional' as opposed to 'existential' visions of genocide,<sup>51</sup> but creates a problematic typology of 'societal types,' one of which is 'genocidal societies'<sup>52</sup> which he understands to exist on a 'life-and-death continuum'<sup>53</sup> (his distinction between societies that do, and do not, take human lives on behalf of state power as the 'fundamental distinction in the twentieth century' is also highly problematic in an age of warfare and capital punishment).<sup>54</sup> Elsewhere, Horowitz also employs highly problematic concepts such as 'criminality' and 'deviance' in regard to genocide.<sup>55</sup> The 'democracy vs. totalitarian' approach is open to the same criticisms as Rummel's, and we have already mentioned the problematics of perceiving genocidal behaviour as somehow aberrant. However, the productive side to this model for our purposes is Horowitz's argument that analysis of social structure in terms of formal organisation is necessary to explain a system, but not sufficient to explain the entire society, an argument in which he describes his concern as the establishment of a 'sociobiology ... grounded in the polity rather than zoology.'<sup>56</sup> Horowitz also provides a number of valuable warnings: against a close association between political or economic systems, and the

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<sup>49</sup> On colonial genocide in this context see Jones, pp. 315-316.

<sup>50</sup> Horowitz, *Genocide*, p. 330.

<sup>51</sup> Horowitz, *Genocide*, pp. 23-40; see also *Taking Lives*, pp. 297-317.

<sup>52</sup> Horowitz, *Genocide*, p. 42; see also *Taking Lives*, pp. 155-156.

<sup>53</sup> Horowitz, *Taking Lives*, p. 178.

<sup>54</sup> Horowitz, *Genocide*, p. 6; and see Markusen & Kopf, pp. 45-46.

<sup>55</sup> Horowitz, *Taking Lives*, p. 74.

<sup>56</sup> Horowitz, *Genocide*, pp. 68, 71.

personal safety of citizens; against particular sociocultural arguments given the psychosocial similarities between warfare and genocide;<sup>57</sup> and against seeing genocidal violence as either solely individually violent, or as solely systematically violent.<sup>58</sup> He also provides the useful concept of genocide as a product of the collectivisation of moral obligation – and the moral obligation to involvement in genocide is a theme which is bound up both with vertical and horizontal collective influence, and also with response to perceived threat, two crucial issues in an explanation of genocidal dehumanisation.<sup>59</sup>

Other scholarship on the connection between genocide and governmental forms emerges from international relations theories examining the concept of international norms and prohibition regimes in the occurrence (or otherwise) of genocide and genocidal killing, particularly as regards the issue of the legitimacy of action.<sup>60</sup> In Chapter Four, we will see that the framing of genocidal action on the global level in an era of mass media has something important to tell us about perceptions of the legitimacy of genocide, and about the influence of such perceptions on the discourse which thus becomes necessary to give genocide moral meaning on both the individual and the collective level.

While valorisation of particular political models can be an essentialising exercise, political analysis can provide an important counterweight to the kind of cultural essentialism and historical progressivism seen in the previous sections. In a counter to the argument for the overall ‘civilising’ tendencies of democracy, Michael Mann, in *The Dark Side of Democracy*, takes Bauman’s argument and extends it to connect ethnic cleansing not only with

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<sup>57</sup> Horowitz, *Taking Lives*, pp. 156-160.

<sup>58</sup> Horowitz, 2002, p. 212.

<sup>59</sup> Horowitz, 2002, p. 55.

<sup>60</sup> See Jones, pp. 316-320.

modernity, but with democracy (a political ideal Mann nonetheless endorses).<sup>61</sup> Mann focuses on ‘murderous ethnic cleansing,’ which includes but is not limited to genocide (and which roughly corresponds to what I term ‘genocidal killing’).<sup>62</sup> Mann’s explanation of this phenomenon, which he characterises as ‘essentially political’ in terms of its causation, posits a model in which the four sources of social power are ideological, economic, military, and political; and he argues that ‘murderous ethnic conflict concerns primarily *political power relations*,’ though as it develops other forms of power become involved (we should note that Mann’s usage of the term ‘ideology’ does not correspond to its usage in this thesis, as outlined in the next chapter).<sup>63</sup> According to Mann, ‘political power is inherently territorial, authoritative, and monopolistic.’<sup>64</sup> Ethnic cleansing is favoured by the combination of nationalism, statism and violence.<sup>65</sup> Mann argues further that ethnic cleansing, though not unknown before the modern age, is intimately connected with democracy because democracy entwines *demos* (‘the population’) with *ethnos* (‘the nation’ in the sense of an ethnic group). Modernity has meant that older social models of class-based hierarchy were replaced by situations in which ethnicity became the main form of social stratification.<sup>66</sup> He argues for the relevance of two different models of the nation in the modern age, ‘liberal’ and ‘organic’;<sup>67</sup> these correspond fairly closely with a conception of ‘civic nationalism’ as opposed to ‘ethnic nationalism.’ While Mann’s argument concerning political systems remains problematic, his efforts in synthesising other studies and bringing them to bear on the political perspective, as well as problematising oversimplistic concepts which relate ‘democracy’ to ‘peace’ and ‘totalitarianism’ to ‘genocide,’ is exemplary. Furthermore, these

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<sup>61</sup> For an example of the connections between the discourse of democracy and genocidal action, see D. Li, ‘Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, pp. 14-15.

<sup>62</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 12, 17-18.

<sup>63</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 6, 30-33; original italics.

<sup>64</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 33.

<sup>65</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 8.

<sup>66</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 3-5.

<sup>67</sup> Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 55-69.

concerns will be important for this thesis: in later chapters, I will demonstrate the way in which the modern nation-state is intimately entwined with genocidal discourse and practice. Chapter Five will pay particular attention to the issue of the development of the modern nation state, the tension between democratic and homogenising tendencies, and the relationship of this form to conceptions of ethnicity and the possibility of the genocidal dehumanisation of newly-conceptualised outgroups.

A common problem in political analyses is the nature of the connection between individual and collective. Many theories see what Kaufman has termed 'manipulative leaders' as the cause of genocide.<sup>68</sup> Benjamin A. Valentino, for example, argues, in a top-down model, that 'an understanding of mass killing must begin with the specific goals and strategies of high political and military leaders, not with broad social or political factors.'<sup>69</sup> Valentino calls his a 'strategic' perspective 'which suggests that mass killing is most accurately viewed as an instrumental policy ... designed to accomplish leaders' most important ideological or political objectives and counter what they see as their most dangerous threats,' emerging from 'frustration with conventional military and political strategies for dealing with their victims.'<sup>70</sup> Valentino bases this argument on the uncontroversial fact that societies require only public indifference, not support, for genocidal policies, and that participation is a result of situation and (in a much more controversial, and largely discredited, argument) that it is otherwise explained by the 'selection' of sadistic or fanatical individuals and by elite manipulation.<sup>71</sup> Valentino's approach is useful, however, in suggesting that attempts to foster cultural diversity and 'democratic freedom,' which may seem like obvious anti-genocidal techniques in terms of analyses focussing on social cleavage or political systems, may be

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<sup>68</sup> Kaufman, *Modern Hatreds*, pp. 5-7.

<sup>69</sup> Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the Twentieth Century*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Valentino, pp. 3-4.

<sup>71</sup> Valentino, pp. 6, 30-65.

useless or even dangerous in terms of genocide prevention.<sup>72</sup> Furthermore, the point that only indifference and not firm ideological support are required for genocide can be used to elucidate the question of what attitude need be held regarding particular actions toward specific outgroups on the part of perpetrators and the public in the broader genocidal society. These issues will be explored in Chapter Four. While we might well contest the determining importance of leaders, consideration of their goals may well be of use if it causes us to ask why, and in what cultural context, leaders might conceive of society in ways which lead to the pursuit of genocidal policies.

Political models, then, have something important to tell us about the involvement of the nation-state, the political processes which are incumbent upon its adoption as a normative global form of governance, the perception of collectivities in response to this discursive model, and the relationship of national or political power to violence in the modern age. They highlight productive questions about the relationship between leaders and 'the public' in the enactment of genocide; and in doing so they also focus attention on inter-group interactions *within* perpetrator societies in as far as these are implicated in the causation of genocide. All of these are important factors for my conceptualisation of dehumanisation.

## §

I have already mentioned that, in comparison to the models already explored, economic, demographic and bio-evolutionary explanations of the causation of genocide are less relevant in the context of a focus on genocidal dehumanisation. Despite this, these models must both be recognised as important strands of thought, and given an examination which will reveal what light they may shed upon the problem being addressed in this thesis.

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<sup>72</sup> Valentino, pp. 236-7.



## Id. Economic and Demographic Models

On some views, economic and demographic explanations have remained largely ignored as a result of the general humanities and social sciences orientation of genocide research. However, demographic arguments have been particularly prevalent in relation to Rwanda; there has not been much discussion of whether these arguments might apply to other episodes, though this may be a fruitful area of research. 'Ecological resource scarcity' is the term used by Peter Uvin to refer to a Malthusian narrative, arguing that, in a general sense (as opposed to *only* in Rwanda),

overpopulation and land scarcity unavoidably lead to social conflict and communal violence.

When countries have exceeded their "carrying capacity," there is no other outcome possible than famine and/or conflict, allowing nature to restore ecological equilibrium. This is unfortunate but unavoidable (except through major progress in containing population growth).<sup>73</sup>

This argument may be put either in a 'harder' version, in which case it is seen as the sole reason for genocide (Uvin mentions scholars including James Patterson, Maurice King, and Luc Bonneaux, as well as various U.N. officials, who have implicitly or explicitly put forward this argument); or a 'softer' version in which other factors are taken into consideration (in this context, Uvin mentions Gerard Prunier, Jean-Claude Willame and others).<sup>74</sup> Villia Jefremovas (writing from an anthropological perspective) though also examining (broadly) political conditions in relation to long-term 'dynamics of inequality' in Rwandan society,<sup>75</sup> as

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<sup>73</sup> P. Uvin, 'Reading the Rwandan Genocide', *International Studies Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 2001, pp. 81-83. For a more detailed analysis of resources and agriculture in Rwanda and their connection to genocide, see P. Uvin, 'Tragedy in Rwanda: The Political Ecology of Conflict', *Environment*, vol. 38, no. 3, 1996, pp. 6-29.

<sup>74</sup> Uvin, 'Reading the Rwandan Genocide', pp. 81-83.

<sup>75</sup> V. Jefremovas, *Brickyards To Graveyards: From Production to Genocide in Rwanda*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 2002, p. 3.

well as cultural aspects in terms of propaganda and the colonial legacy,<sup>76</sup> emphasises Rwanda's economic collapse along with drought, the economic consequences of war (particularly the fact that this meant that major investment was made in arms and the military) and a Malthusian population 'bomb' as the ultimate cause of the conditions in which genocide occurred.<sup>77</sup> The connection of the economic collapse in Rwanda to genocide bears similarity to theories concerning the relationship of the economic collapse in pre-Second World War Germany with the rise of Nazism. A Malthusian argument is also in evidence in scholarship such as Richard Rubenstein's *The Age of Triage*.<sup>78</sup> This argument, however, seems more likely to appear in texts which do not take genocide as their primary subject, and/or those outside the realm of the 'academic' *per se*, such as Jared Diamond's popular works, *Guns, Germs and Steel* and *Collapse*.<sup>79</sup>

Economic arguments have also been mounted regarding the *Shoah*, in scholarship which considers the Nazi looting of the Jews and the profits to be made from their and others' 'disappearance' as primary factors in genocide, or at least as much more important factors than previously recognised. Götz Aly's controversial book *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial Warfare and the Nazi Welfare State* argues that an important and overlooked aspect of Nazism, and in particular the support by 'ordinary Germans' for the Nazi party, was the plunder and looting of Jews and of other European nations.<sup>80</sup>

In both Rwanda and Nazi Germany, what we see is a situation during a war (bearing in mind the relationship between genocide and warfare) brought on, at least in part, either by

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<sup>76</sup> Jefremovas, p. 112-113.

<sup>77</sup> Jefremovas, pp. 109-115.

<sup>78</sup> R. Rubenstein, *The Age of Triage: Fear and Hope in an Overcrowded World*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1983; see also Fein, *Genocide*, pp. 41-42, and Markusen & Kopf, pp. 42-44.

<sup>79</sup> J. Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel: A Short History of Everybody for the Last 13,000 Years*, Vintage, London, 1998; *Collapse: How Societies Choose To Fail or Survive*, Penguin, London, 2005, pp. 311-329.

<sup>80</sup> G. Aly, *Hitler's Beneficiaries: Plunder, Racial Warfare and the Nazi Welfare State* (trans. Jefferson Chase), Metropolitan, New York, 2006.

pressure or (in the case of Nazi Germany) by the perception of population pressure. This may also be related to the typical modes of production of a given society, inasmuch as these may place particular limits on population growth. For our purposes, the relevant factor is that in these cases there is both a clear material motivation for genocide, but one which is not *in itself necessarily morally legitimate*, and which may hence demand some other form of moral justification on the part of the perpetrator. Scholarship from this perspective, such as that of Jefremovas, has also noted the way in which these material pressures play out through the faultlines of discursive practice emerging from evolving social and cultural conditions; and in these situations we see discourse in which one or more othered groups are represented as a (demographic) threat. We will examine the specific view of the other as a biological-demographic menace in Chapter Five; while Chapters Six and Seven will give some insight into the role of pre-existing modes of production (whether agricultural or industrial) in the killing process.

Speaking of modes of production, we should note that a classic Marxist analysis, very much out of favour academically, would see genocide as an extreme instance of the measures taken by a ruling class, and/or, in the international context, the various forces of global imperialism, to displace the oppressive nature of modern capitalism onto a scapegoat (such as the 'capitalist Jew') and ensure that power remains in their hands; such an argument sees the working classes of perpetrator nations as victims of exploitation themselves, while the victims of genocide are simply the 'weakest link' in a chain of exploitation, involving a 'divide and rule' strategy, in the quest to hold on to power.<sup>81</sup> While class conflict per se is not our subject here, what this analysis does usefully remind us of is the fact that the identities of

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<sup>81</sup> See for example T. Grant & A. Woods, 'A month into the bombing campaign: A Marxist analysis of the Balkan crisis', 1999, retrieved 30 April 2007, <<http://www.marxist.com/Europe/kosovo6.html>>; for an interesting problematisation of an orthodox Marxist view which nonetheless remains within the spectrum of Marxist thought, see M. Intosh, 'Marxism and the Holocaust', retrieved 25 April 2007, <[http://internationalist-perspective.org/IP/ip-archive/ip\\_49\\_holocaust.html](http://internationalist-perspective.org/IP/ip-archive/ip_49_holocaust.html)>.

perpetrators and victim groups should not be naturalised or essentialised; rather, they are culturally produced in order to serve certain purposes.

Economic models *per se*, then, are not in themselves highly relevant to the present investigation. I have noted, however, a number of ways in which such analyses are germane to particular aspects of this thesis; and, before leaving the subject, the significance should also be noted of the nature of economic management in the modern era, particularly as regards its relationship to the centralised bureaucratic nation-state. This is a subject to which we will return in Chapter Seven.

Finally, we turn to the other approach which tends to an orientation away from the humanities and toward the sciences: bio-evolutionary explanation.

#### 1e. Bio-evolutionary Models

Literature relevant to genocide written from a bio-evolutionary perspective encompasses a huge body of research focussed not so much on 'genocide' as such, but on the nature of human aggression and violence. The causation of warfare and collective violence, in particular, has often been the subject of bio-evolutionary analysis, and this section will employ the work of scholars such as Greg Cashman and R. B. Zadonc whose aim has been to explain, or to synthesise models of these events rather than of genocide *per se*. Nonetheless, without entering into a lengthy review of this field, it is possible to examine perspectives which are pertinent to our analysis. There is, at times, significant overlap between the realms of biological and psychological explanation as regards the question of 'human nature,' and we will see this in relation to important questions about the human psyche addressed by both of these forms of analysis.

Bio-evolutionary models generally begin from an assumption that humans have an inherently aggressive nature (a theory shared by thinkers as diverse as Thomas Hobbes, William James, and Sigmund Freud<sup>82</sup>). Ethnological and anthropological arguments for an innate human drive, a need for, or propensity to aggression, considered as having (or having once had) evolutionary species-preserving functions, have been proposed by Konrad Lorenz (himself deeply implicated in Nazi ideology during the Nazi period), Lionel Tiger, Raymond Dart, Robert Ardrey and others.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, for Lorenz, 'aggression' *per se* only takes place between members of the same species (although Lorenz and others have also noted that there are few animals apart from humans which either kill their own kind, or which do so en masse).<sup>84</sup> Thus, in contrast to the literature we have already surveyed (and which we will examine in greater detail in Chapter Four) which sees humans as innately disinclined to enact violence upon their fellows, this contrary view suggests that they (we) are basically inclined to do so. In terms of this argument, aggression is often related to territoriality, which in turn provides 'us and them' conceptions.<sup>85</sup> Ardrey has also suggested that war, in particular, satisfies human needs for identification, security, and stimulation.<sup>86</sup> Ethnological arguments, however, have been extensively criticised, and in his overview of this literature Cashman concludes that the substantive evidence is weak.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Cashman, p. 15.

<sup>83</sup> Cashman, pp. 16-18. See also K. Lorenz, *On Aggression* (trans. M. Latzke), Methuen & Co., London, 1966., pp. 17-39. For an overview of 'ethnocentrism' from a bio-evolutionary perspective, see V. Reynolds, V. Falger & I. Vine (eds), *The Sociobiology of Ethnocentrism: Evolutionary Dimensions of Xenophobia, Discrimination, Racism and Nationalism*, Croom Helm, London & Sydney, 1987.

<sup>84</sup> In Cashman, pp. 16-17.

<sup>85</sup> Cashman, pp. 19-20.

<sup>86</sup> In Cashman, pp. 20-21.

<sup>87</sup> Cashman, pp. 21-24. See also A. Rapaport, *Conflict in Man-Made Environment*, Penguin, Maryland, 1974, pp. 109-122; M. E. Clark, 'Human Nature: What We Need To Know About Ourselves In The Twenty-First Century', *Zygon*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1998, pp. 647-648.

With regard to genocide, this argument may be extended to suggest that it is part of hard-wired 'human nature' for humans to periodically turn extreme violence upon each other, and that genocide is nothing more than a more efficient and large-scale extension of the kind of 'tribal warfare' which is seen among non-human social animals. A significant aspect of this construction is the argument that the purpose, or at least one function, of modern human social organization is to minimise and constrain an omnipresent impulse to lawless violence; from this premise, it may be argued either that genocide represents a failure of such organizations, or, alternatively, that this very system means that innate violence is repressed and therefore periodically erupts on a massive scale.

The dominant evolutionary argument for the existence of ethnic conflict (and we should recall that by no means all genocide could, or should, should be termed 'ethnic conflict' as such; indeed, the terminology itself is problematic) rests on the thesis of *primordialism*: '[p]roponents argue that peoples' ethnic identities have biological and even genetic foundations, and that the motivation for ethnic and kinship affiliation comes from these socio-psychological forces internal to the individual and related to primordial human needs for security and, more importantly, survival.'<sup>88</sup> In other words, biological and evolutionary imperatives entrench hatred and fear of the other.<sup>89</sup> A more complex, though nonetheless problematised, view has been taken by research which has linked bio-evolutionary models with social-scientific and psychological models, thus taking into account the interconnection of extrinsic and intrinsic influences in examining causation.<sup>90</sup>

There are two important aspects here which are relevant to a discussion of genocidal dehumanisation. The first is the question of whether humans are by nature violent, and

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<sup>88</sup> Frank P. Harvey, 'Primordialism, Evolutionary Theory and Ethnic Violence in the Balkans: Opportunities and Constraints for Theory and Policy', *Canadian Journal of Political Science / Revue canadienne de science politique*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2000, pp. 39-40.

<sup>89</sup> Harvey, p. 41.

<sup>90</sup> Harvey, pp. 46-47; Cashman, pp. 24-27.

hence predisposed to genocide, or whether they are, for any number of possible reasons, not so predisposed. The second, which depends on the answer to the first, is whether the role of 'society' is to restrain violence, to channel it, or to encourage its expression in certain forms. There is the further issue of whether these factors are determining of genocide in themselves. The research outlined above has been applied in various ways in the field of genocide studies. Many scholars accept that there is a general genetic potential for aggression, and/or individual predispositions to or against aggression, while de-emphasising its importance as a factor.<sup>91</sup> This issue has been explored and problematised by Zadonc in an important article on the 'zoomorphism of human collective violence.'<sup>92</sup> Another critique from an influential social psychologist is that of Henri Tajfel, who described theories regarding an instinct for aggression (Freudian as well as strictly biological) as 'blood-and-guts' theories.<sup>93</sup> In exploring the reasons for harmful behaviour Milgram gives consideration to bio-evolutionary models, but concludes, from his own psychological testing of the subjects in his experiment, against any finding that modern society represses 'natural' evolutionary aggression, inasmuch as his subjects seemed to derive no satisfaction (of the kind that one might expect from the release of long-pent-up aggression) in the harm they did.<sup>94</sup> Ultimately, such 'blood-and-guts' arguments remain highly controversial, particularly in the context of the causation of genocide.

What can we conclude from all of this? Either/or propositions are often oversimplistic, and polarised arguments as to whether humans are innately inclined or disinclined to violence, and whether societies repress or create violence, I will argue, are both appropriate subjects

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<sup>91</sup> For example, Staub, *The roots of evil*, pp. 35, 53. For discussion of this issue, see Fein, *Genocide*, p. 33.

<sup>92</sup> R. B. Zadonc, 'The Zoomorphism of Human Collective Violence', in Newman & Erber, pp. 222-238.

<sup>93</sup> In M. Billig, 'Henri Tajfel's "Cognitive aspects of prejudice" and psychology of bigotry', *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 41, 2002, pp. 173-174. On the problematics of instinctivism, see also N. Solkoff, *Beginnings, Mass Murder, and Aftermath of the Holocaust: Where History and Psychology Intersect*, University Press of America, Lanham/New York/Oxford, 2001, pp. 67-70.

<sup>94</sup> S. Milgram, *Obedience To Authority: An Experimental View*, Pinter & Martin, London, 2005 (first edn 1974), pp. 125-132, 166-168.

for this criticism. In Chapter Four, I contend that people are neither inclined nor disinclined to violence, and in particular genocidal violence, but rather that certain factors, both historical and in the moment of action, influence particular types of action. Biological models, however, indicate that not all of these can be reduced to rational cognitive processes. That some level of human propensity for aggression and domination may form a foundation for violent action, one which is connected to ingroup outgroup evaluations and which is influenced, or triggered, by other factors, is also a consideration in a *psychological* model of the enactment of genocidal violence. In other words, we need not agree with strong bio-evolutionary conclusions about causation, but rather, we might recognise the significance of the nature of the questions being asked.

### §

This, then, is a brief look at the major thematic strands of thinking regarding the causation of genocide, and the relevance they have for this inquiry. None of these approaches are mutually exclusive. In any of these models, dehumanisation can be seen to have a role to play, whether primary or secondary; but this is not to say that questions of emphasis do not arise. My own analysis, emphasised throughout this thesis, is that dehumanisation is sometimes a causal (motivatory) and sometimes an enabling (legitimatory) factor in genocide and genocidal killing. In either case, my analysis conceives dehumanisation as a *socio-cultural* and *psychological* factor (either as a cause, or as an enabler) of genocide, one which takes a discursive form based on conditions including the political, and which exists among an array of other causatory and enabling factors which variously fall both within and outside of these two factors. Thus, for example, political science-based analyses such as that of Leo Kuper and others have argued for the importance of myth and symbolism (to which dehumanisation is intimately linked), while scholars such as Lorenz have linked bio-evolutionarily based concepts such as pseudo-speciation to dehumanisation. Meanwhile, the



adoption of the political model of the nation-state and of bureaucracy as systems of governance have created particular discourses and given them purchase, allowing their application in contexts outside the realm of the purely political. Hence we see the interlocking factors which contribute to the existence and function of a particular type of genocidal dehumanisation. Some indication of similar examples has been given throughout this chapter, and they might be expanded in relation to each of the models presented above; I will examine such arguments in more detail in the chapters examining genocidal dehumanisation itself, and the types in which it manifests.

However, in a general sense, in positing dehumanisation as a legitimating and/or motivating factor I take what might be termed a 'socio-cultural constructionist' view of genocide. That is, in relation to dehumanisation, I do not concern myself with causatory arguments stemming from evolutionary biology regarding aggression and violence, nor with economic and demographic factors, though I do not reject either of these as influential. Furthermore, on the basis of the research outlined above, I discount the argument that dehumanising individuals are somehow 'selected' on account of an aberrant individual disposition. It is worth re-emphasising here the point, explored in more detail in Chapter Four, that participation in genocide is neither normative nor aberrant; it is too complex a behaviour to be considered in either of these ways. Discourse both stems from and acts upon the individual (and collective) psyche; but the psychological functions performed by genocidal dehumanisation are not wholly discursive in themselves. However, the elements which make up genocidal dehumanisation as a discursive strategy are drawn from various narrative-discursive strands, including the national-political and the racial-biological. In order to understand this phenomenon as such, it is therefore necessary to utilise perspectives from, and heed problematics raised by, all of these fields of analysis; the summary above should give some idea of what these in fact are, and of how they will be developed over the course of the thesis.

Having employed such a framework to examine both thematic models of the causation of genocide, and their applicability to the topic at hand, we next sharpen the focus to inquire into the question of motivation and the ‘human possibility’ of genocide and genocidal killing.

## II. Motivations for Genocide and the Question of ‘How is it Humanly Possible?’<sup>95</sup>

Exploring broader questions of approaches to causation is an important task in helping to understand what theoretical tools, and what arguments, can be brought to bear in revealing the contours of genocidal dehumanisation. More proximate concerns, however, are the relationship between genocidal motivation and dehumanisation; and also the question of how genocide is ‘humanly possible,’ that is, how people can participate in acts which seem to the observer so obviously and so extremely cruel and immoral. These two subjects – that concerning motivation for genocide, and the question of how it is humanly possible – are by no means identical (for example, we might consider the ‘ideological killer’ whose ideology does not mean s/he is not sickened and disgusted enough by the physicality of the action to choose not to kill, at least directly). However, they share enough common ground that they may be considered together. In introducing this issue, I am not unsympathetic to Fein’s ‘questioning of the question’: she writes that, given the long-term record of killing on behalf of the state, we might direct focus not on why individuals *will* do so, but on the *right* of the state to authorise killing (a right which is often taken for granted).<sup>96</sup> However, given that in some situations the populace at large (as opposed to

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<sup>95</sup> The very formulation of the question ‘how is it humanly possible’ is problematic in that it assumes two foregone conclusions which I argue in this thesis, are misconceived: firstly, that there is a connection between ‘humanity’ and ‘humaneness,’ and, secondly, that the normative position regarding the perpetration of genocide is one of non-participation and that therefore perpetrators must be somehow induced to participate against the inclinations of their essentially ‘good’ or ‘ordinary’ initial position. Nonetheless, the *sentiment* expressed in this phrase – that is, the difficulty in understanding how another person could engage in acts which to most observers seem so clearly wrong – is a clear articulation of the issue at hand.

<sup>96</sup> Fein, *Genocide*, p. 44.

most individuals involved in the process) has not given widespread support or consent to killing, the questions posed here remain, it seems to me, useful ones which have much to tell us about ‘macro’ as well as ‘micro’ level issues, and the nature of their relationship;<sup>97</sup> as well as identifying particular problems in conceptualising issues around these subjects.

A number of writers have synthesised the literature on the question of motivation and that of how it is ‘humanly possible’ to kill other human beings in an organised and institutionalised fashion.<sup>98</sup> As we will see, the question of motivation is *sometimes* relevant to the function of dehumanisation, but the issue of how it is possible to act genocidally – that is, how such action can be considered legitimate – is *always* so. Hence, in introducing a discussion of these questions, it is appropriate to begin with a passage from Bandura concerning the human possibility of genocide conceptualised as ‘moral disengagement.’ According to Bandura such disengagement involves the following factors:

redefining harmful conduct as honourable by moral justification, exonerating social comparison and sanitising language ... focus[sing] on agency of action so that perpetrators can minimise their role in causing harm by diffusion and displacement of responsibility ... minimising or distorting the harm that flows from detrimental actions; and ... dehumanising and blaming the victims of the maltreatment.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> A prominent example of a case in which there was widespread public opposition to killing can be found in the case of Nazi ‘euthanasia’; although it is also worth noting that this protest took place outside of a wartime context.

<sup>98</sup> See for example T. Blass, ‘Psychological Perspectives on the Perpetrators of the Holocaust: The Role of Situational Pressures, Personal Dispositions, and Their Interactions’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1993, pp 30-50; H. C. Kelman & V. L. Hamilton, ‘The My Lai Massacre: Crimes of Obedience and Sanctioned Massacres’, in M. D. Ermann & R. J. Lundman (eds), *Corporate and Governmental Deviance: problems of Organizational behaviour in Contemporary Society* (5th edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, 1996, pp. 180-207.

<sup>99</sup> A. Bandura, ‘Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency’, *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2002, p. 102.

While Bandura distinguishes dehumanisation from the other processes he mentions, in looking at discursive dehumanisation as it is conceptualised (in Chapter Four) and revealed (in Chapters Five to Seven), we will see that it fulfils, directly or indirectly, all of the functions listed in this passage. In doing so we will come to understand the way that such dehumanisation allows moral disengagement from its object, and hence performs an indispensable function in legitimising destruction.

From the general issue of moral disengagement, we may turn to scholarship on the analysis of *specific* motivations. An introductory problematic is found in the fact that a great deal of analysis synthesising perspectives on motivation – most notably that of James Waller and Ervin Staub (but also others such as Philip Zimbardo) – has approached this question as a problem of ‘evil.’<sup>100</sup> On the one hand, we may say that if we are to employ the concept of evil then the subject of genocide or genocidal killing is perhaps the least controversial example. On the other, however, the concept is not only inextricably bound up (in Western thought) with moral binarism and the legacy of Christianity, it is also inherently highly subjective and emotive. Furthermore, it presupposes an answer to the question, discussed in the previous section, of whether people are innately inclined to behave in ‘good’ or ‘evil’ ways. Hence, the use of such a term, particularly when refracted through the disciplinary lenses of psychology and the social sciences, invisible-ises the adoption by the scholar of a complex and controversial system of values and beliefs, as well as raising many other problematics which are only tangentially related to the questions of motivation and the ‘human possibility’ of genocide. For these reasons, I would argue that the question of

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<sup>100</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*; Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect*; Staub, *The roots of evil* and *The Psychology of Good and Evil*. Staub does pay some very circumscribed attention to the problematics of theorising ‘evil’ (*The Psychology of Good and Evil*, pp. 47-51). An author who has not conceptualised the problem in this way is Mann: for his list of motives for genocide, see Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 27-29. In an earlier and shorter work, Mann uses extensive statistical evidence to evaluate a posited seven different possible motivations for Nazi perpetrators, and examines the evidence for the relative strength of each (see M. Mann, ‘Were the Perpetrators of Genocide “Ordinary Men” or “Real Nazis”? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2000, pp. 331-366).

'evil' is one which is best left to be examined through the lenses of theology and philosophy. Having sounded this note of caution, however, it should be recognised that these authors have nonetheless produced insightful syntheses of the arguments around these questions.

The most thorough of these can be found in psychologist James Waller's exhaustive work *Becoming Evil*. This book provides an exhaustive overview of arguments concerning different motivations for genocide, and proposes a model of motivation which synthesises these different approaches. Waller approaches this question as a process rather than an outcome, and distinguishes between proximate and ultimate causes, to create a 'flow-chart' style model of the way in which 'ordinary people' commit genocide and mass killing.<sup>101</sup> His model begins with ultimate causation: the evolutionary-biological makeup of 'human nature' (in the process problematically assuming a hierarchical distinction between humans and animals, and rejecting social constructionist views) to argue that our history as competitive hunter-gatherers, in the context of group rather than individual natural selection, favours in-group niceness, but between-group nastiness. This has endowed us with the psychological mechanisms which make us 'capable of committing genocide and mass killing when activated by appropriate cultural, psychological, or social cues.'<sup>102</sup> In other words, we see here the argument already outlined above, that (put in very obvious terms) humans both have the capacity to engage in genocidal action, and that there is some biological basis for the kind of psychological constructions which are involved in intergroup harm. But the question of interest both for Waller and for the present inquiry remains: how does it happen that this possible propensity is actuated in genocidal practice?

In answering this question, Waller turns to three proximate influences, none in themselves sufficient: *cultural construction of worldview, psychological construction of the Other, and social construction of cruelty*. As we will see, while the psychological construction of the other is the

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<sup>101</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 138.

<sup>102</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 155-161.

most closely related of these to the subject of genocidal dehumanisation, neither of the remaining two influences are irrelevant to the subject or unconnected to its nature and functions.

According to Waller, each of these causes contains three causal subcategories. The concept of 'cultural models,' lenses (which differ from society to society) 'through which we interpret our social world and make judgements about appropriate responses,'<sup>103</sup> is used to evaluate three worldviews which are implicated in genocide: collectivistic values which define individual identity and values in reference to the group and which create ingroup-outgroup positive-negative categorisation; authority orientation, in which the social world is ordered (or in which this type of order is valorised) in a clear, hierarchical, vertical fashion with clearly delineated spheres of power;<sup>104</sup> and the establishment of hierarchies of social dominance (which is explained by the evolutionary desirability of the avoidance of constant intergroup violence), which creates ideological commitment to a system of ideological hatred.<sup>105</sup> All of these factors point to the importance of the cultural construction of identity, and to the way in which identity roles, not only those of victims as outgroup member but also the ingroup identity as understood by perpetrators, and the specific roles allotted within perpetrator collectives, give rise to motivations for genocidal action.

Next, Waller raises the question of the psychological construction of the Other (which Waller also terms the 'social death of the victims,' a phrase with its origin in Orlando Patterson's comparative study of slavery), specifically, the ways in which victims are excommunicated from the perpetrators' moral community and turned into objects in the

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<sup>103</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 172.

<sup>104</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 179.

<sup>105</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 82-88.

perpetrators' eyes.<sup>106</sup> Here again we find three subcategories: us-them thinking, consisting of ethnocentrism and, conversely, xenophobia; moral disengagement, in which, through moral justification, dehumanisation, and euphemistic labelling of actions, perpetrators justify their actions and distance themselves from the moral implications of those actions;<sup>107</sup> and blaming the victims for their own suffering (a process which takes place on the part of both perpetrators and bystanders), which is related to the psychological self-protective mechanism of 'just-world thinking' and the reduction of perpetrator guilt.<sup>108</sup> Once again, the way in which categorisation constructs morality is clearly in evidence; given that this factor is the most central to the subject of dehumanisation, we will deal with all of the abovementioned issues at greater length in Chapter Four.

Finally, Waller examines the third proximate influence, the social construction of cruelty. By this, Waller refers to 'the power of the immediate situation' to 'enable perpetrators to initiate, sustain, and cope with their acts of brutality.'<sup>109</sup> Such situations (which are the focus of Zimbardo, Milgram and Browning) are created in three ways. Firstly, they are created by professional socialisation into an organisation, involving escalating commitments to organisational goals, ritualistic conduct, and the merging of the role with the individual's identity as an individual (reflecting a continuum from compliance, to identification, to internalisation<sup>110</sup>).<sup>111</sup> Secondly, they are created by group identification, in which individual conscience is repressed and locally generated values come to dominate, responsibility is diffused and the individual undergoes a process of 'deindividuation' within a bureaucratic system, and in which rational self-interest (either professional or personal) as an individual within a system influences action, particularly as over time actors come to have a vested

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<sup>106</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 198. See also Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London, 1982.

<sup>107</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>108</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 212-218.

<sup>109</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 230.

<sup>110</sup> See Kelman & Hamilton in Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 241.

<sup>111</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 232-242.

interest in that system and external groups come to be seen as a source of threat (whether to the ego/sense of self, or in a more literal sense).<sup>112</sup> Thirdly, they are created by binding factors of the group, encompassing conformity to peer pressure, 'kin recognition cues' which come to operate within institutionalised groups, and patriarchal gender norms which valorise aggressive and competitive masculinity (which is not to say that this factor only operates upon males).<sup>113</sup> Of Waller's three influences, this third is the least relevant to the issue of the perpetrator construction of a victim identity. However, implicit in this aspect of motivation are the conditions of modern bureaucracy and collective dynamics; and, as we will see in Chapter Seven, the same bureaucratic discourse which enables and motivates genocidal action also works upon the construction of the human object of action. As will be evident, then, while Waller does not argue for the sole centrality of dehumanisation, his model involves many factors which are vital to the present discussion of the subject, and, in particular, for my argument that dehumanisation is a necessary condition for genocide.

Who else has given attention to the question of motivation and human possibility in ways which may inform our analysis? Others include Staub, Zimbardo and Milgram. Staub examines motivations for aggression (within his analysis of the causation of genocide), and the situations which may psychologically intensify the effects of, or indeed bring into existence, such motivations.<sup>114</sup> These may occur on the individual and the cultural level, but Staub emphasises that aspects of culture are *processes* that occur among individuals.<sup>115</sup> It will become clear that this reminder that genocide, and thus dehumanisation, is not a static process, is very important. Motivation for genocide, dehumanising narratives, and genocidal action, are all evolutionary processes not only on the collective, but also on the individual level. As such, they cannot be understood through taking a cross-section solely of the

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<sup>112</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 243-258.

<sup>113</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 258-269.

<sup>114</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, p. 51.



moment in which genocidal action is committed, but must be placed in the context of historical-developmental processes both at the level of individual psychology, and in its relationship to collective and social circumstances.

Moving from the individual-psychological to the external, Zimbardo and Milgram both examine the *situations and systems* which operate to produce harmdoers. Zimbardo gives as his research question, 'to understand the processes of transformation at work when good or ordinary people do bad or evil things.'<sup>116</sup> Before embarking upon an analysis of aspects of Zimbardo's work useful for our inquiry, we should point to two problems it embodies, problems, however, through the exploration of which concepts of genocidal dehumanisation can be fruitfully developed. Zimbardo's moral binarism as expressed in this formulation (inherent in which is the concept that there is a relationship between 'ordinary' and 'good'), which is accompanied by a binary distinction he draws between an Apollonian nature which resists harm, and (the release of) a Dionysian harmful nature, are highly problematic in themselves, as we will see in Chapter Four.<sup>117</sup> A second problem arises in the assumption that the everyday lives of these 'ordinary' (or 'good') people do not involve harming others, a highly contentious position; indeed, later in this thesis I will demonstrate that one of the ways in which genocidal dehumanisation can function is because it draws a similarity between 'morally legitimate,' 'everday' harm, and the harm carried out in genocide.

These issues notwithstanding, in his nuanced examination of the influence of systems and situations, as opposed to individual propensities, Zimbardo's scholarship, building on the foundations of Milgram's experimental findings, is important for an examination of genocidal motivation. According to Zimbardo, perpetrators of harm may be divided into three types, which he argues are identical to the types Lifton found in *The Nazi Doctors*: eager (and brutal)

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<sup>116</sup> Zimbardo, p. 5.

<sup>117</sup> Zimbardo, pp. 305-6.

zealots, methodical workers, and reluctant participants.<sup>118</sup> For each of these types, I will argue, we can see how dehumanisation can influence participation: in the identity-based ideology held by the zealot, the euphemisation of the victim on the part of the worker, and the legitimisation of harmful action for the morally reluctant. Zimbardo presents a list of methods, extrapolated from Milgram's research, by which 'ordinary citizens' come to engage in harmful behaviour. These are: contractual obligation; the creation of meaningful roles; the imposition of a set of arbitrary rules to be followed and enforced; altering the semantics and thus the reality of harmful action; diffusing responsibility; beginning with seemingly insignificant harmful acts whose harmfulness increases only gradually; beginning with a 'just' authority figure who becomes 'unjust' once authority is accepted; making 'exit' costs high and allowing verbal, but only verbal, dissent (hence reducing psychological dissonance); and offering an ideology to justify the use of any means to achieve a seemingly desirable or essential goal.<sup>119</sup> Some of these (for example, altered semantics and an ideology of threat) are more central to our inquiry than others; but in Chapters Four to Seven we will see the importance not only of semantics in themselves, but also of the structures within which they are found, structures which give form to particular words and actions on the basis of the relationship of individuals to collective discursive systems and the way in which such systems structure moral psychology.

Despite problematics with specific elements of their models, a more general relevance of both Zimbardo's and Milgram's conceptions is that each essentially argues for the power of the situational, and the systemic, in causing people to commit harmful acts against others. While Milgram's emphasis is more on vertical power (social hierarchies and obedience) and Zimbardo's (like Browning's, though to a lesser degree) also gives significant weight to

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<sup>118</sup> Zimbardo, pp. 208-209. In mentioning Lifton's work in terms of motivation, it should be noted that Waller problematises Lifton's concept of 'doubling' as an explanation for perpetrators' actions (as well as Milgram's 'agentic state'); Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 113-125.

<sup>119</sup> Zimbardo, pp. 273-274.

horizontal power ('peer pressure'), both Milgram and Zimbardo find that people who do not test for any psychological pathology, and who for the most part would self-report as being unable or unwilling to take harmful actions against others (indeed, as Bandura notes, empirical studies tend to show that '[a]lmost everyone is virtuous at the abstract level'<sup>120</sup>), are extremely likely to do so with alacrity if placed in situations which are structured in a certain way. In other words, we cannot assume either that perpetrators of genocide are psychologically abnormal, nor, conversely, that 'psychologically normal' people are basically good or that it takes a great deal of persuasion, or an overwhelming motivation, to induce them to participate in genocide. Furthermore, there are many motivations for such participation, which include both vertical and horizontal pressures based on particular, internalised narratives. In Chapter Four, we will explore the way in which dehumanisation can either in itself be a motivation for genocide (when the discursive element of threat is present), or can solely legitimate given the presence of other motivations. The research presented above, which will be further pursued in that chapter, both gives some idea about the multiplicity of genocidal motivation, and the complex relationship between primary motivation for action and the factors and influences which make such action psychologically possible in the context of the existence of such motivation.

The aforementioned are works which deal *explicitly* with the research question of motivation and 'human possibility.' Before leaving the subject, I turn to scholarship which treats a major aspect of these related questions, or which offers an individual argument rather than synthesising other research into the topic.

In exploring essentialising characterisations of the other, it is important to sound a note of caution regarding conceptualisation of 'hatred' of the other. My concern here is not with theorising hatred as such, but with the question of the functional construction of the

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<sup>120</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 115.

collective other in regard to the questions of whether that collective poses a threat to the ingroup, and what action may legitimately be taken toward that collective. However, some scholarship using synthesis to explain the psychology of perpetrators remains stymied by a view which sees hatred as an irrational end in itself, an end which is unrelated to the actions of the hated.<sup>121</sup> To argue against this approach is by no means to say that those within target groups bring victimisation upon themselves or deserve to be victimised, but rather to re-emphasise that we must attempt to understand the formation of the worldview of perpetrators in terms of external factors, in order to understand their actions.

An example of a more considered treatment is found in Alexander Laban Hinton's *Why Did They Kill?*, his detailed treatment of genocide in Cambodia. In his conclusion, Hinton examines the general question of 'why people kill,' and the question of 'how genocide comes to take place,' as a conclusion to his more specific analysis. As well as obedience (through the lens of Milgram), Hinton examines the concept (related to Kuper's emphasis on genocide as a process, not a phenomenon) of 'genocidal priming,' including as a factor the top-down manufacturing of difference.<sup>122</sup> In terms of motivation, Hinton identifies to a number of factors we have already examined: ideology, obedience, localised knowledge, group-level dynamics, and distancing.<sup>123</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, Hinton's anthropological focus on localised knowledge is timely in emphasising the importance of the way general narratives take different forms (though not functions) in specific circumstances; as is his emphasis on the way motivation changes over time.<sup>124</sup> More specifically, Hinton notes that it is necessary for ideology to be 'put' to people in such a way that it 'takes,' generally by

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<sup>121</sup> Two examples of work which fall prey to this and other problematics are: N. J. Kressel, *Mass Hate: The Global Rise of Genocide And Terror* (revised and updated edn), Westview, Cambridge [Mass.], 2002; and a work which is, unfortunately, often used as a source on dehumanisation and motivation, D. Grossman's *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (paperback edn), Back Bay Books, Boston/New York/London, 1996.

<sup>122</sup> Hinton, pp. 280-286.

<sup>123</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 295-6.

<sup>124</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 288.

canalising pre-existing popular or widespread cultural discourses, and that this canalisation establishes various 'channels' which perpetrators 'tune into' in their activities as meaning-making beings.<sup>125</sup> In the following chapters, we will see the ways in which the specific forms taken by narratives of genocidal dehumanisation are drawn from existing discourses and shaped by the particular circumstances in which they come into being, and in which they are put to use. Ultimately, Hinton suggests that 'a more comprehensive explanation must move from macro-level historical process to local-level sociocultural dynamics to psychological mimetics, with the understanding that all of these levels of analysis are linked and cannot be understood in isolation.'<sup>126</sup> In the introduction, I have already emphasised the well-made point put here: that dehumanisation, as an aspect of genocide, exists across a number of different planes and social levels, and that in order to understand it analysis must take place which recognises this and which is aimed at pinpointing the relevant features of each. Thus, it is with this statement in mind that we will approach the subject of dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing in the following chapters.

In recognition of its importance for my argument, and as an introduction to the following chapter, the final place in the present survey is given to Stanley Cohen's *States of Denial*. This book is a valuable and, in the field of genocide studies, a neglected examination of the way in which the human mind, paradoxically, is capable of concealing from itself what it does not want to know (the paradox consisting in the fact that, in order not to know something, we must know what it is that we do not want to know). In the case of genocide, the mind refuses to consciously comprehend, or to admit comprehension of, the actuality and the significance of harmful acts (whether on the part of perpetrator, beneficiary or bystander). How does this not-knowing function? Cohen divides denial into three categories: literal ('nothing happened'), interpretive ('what is happening is really something else') and implicatory ('what's happening is justified'). Furthermore, denial includes cognition

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<sup>125</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 287, 289, 294.

<sup>126</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 298.

(acknowledgement), emotion, morality, and action.<sup>127</sup> In looking at dehumanisation, we will see literal denial that the object is human; interpretive denial of the meaning of the action taken toward that object, based on the reshaping properties of discursive accounts; and the justification of such action, whether it is justified as legitimate or as necessary.

Denial takes place through what Cohen calls 'accounts' (also known as 'motivational accounts' or 'vocabulary of motives'). For our purposes, we might conceptualise such personalised accounts as the narratives or scripts, mentioned above, which may be available as particular discursive formations. Accounts 'serve to realign people to groups whose norms and expectations they have confounded'; they are not the same as post-facto rationalisations, but must also be present before and during action.<sup>128</sup> Accounts may be justifications ('those who I killed deserved to die') or excuses ('killing is immoral, but I had to follow orders').<sup>129</sup> Excuses are defensive and passive, while justifications, which are closely linked to ideology, are active.<sup>130</sup> In line with the argument presented elsewhere in this thesis regarding to the 'truth value' of perpetrator statements, Cohen writes that we need not necessarily be concerned with whether these accounts are genuinely believed, or are (self) deceptive.<sup>131</sup> Rather, these denying accounts, in order to be credible, must draw on shared cultural vocabularies, and are related to organisational 'groupthink' which 'protects illusions from uncomfortable truths and disconfirming information.'<sup>132</sup> Given this, Cohen argues that '[t]here is no contrast between pure, prior ideological commitment and situational pressures such as obedience' – accounts are often jumbled and inconsistent, but it is not in consistency that their power lies;<sup>133</sup> furthermore, the relationship of contradictory elements to each

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<sup>127</sup> S. Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering*, Polity, Cambridge, 2001, p. 9.

<sup>128</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 58.

<sup>129</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 59.

<sup>130</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 59.

<sup>131</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 63.

<sup>132</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 64, 66.

<sup>133</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 77.

other is not logical, but ideological.<sup>134</sup> We will explore these features considered as aspects of dehumanisation in more detail in Chapter Four, and will see them manifest in Chapters Five to Seven.

A vital aspect of dehumanisation as strategic function is that it need not make fanatical ideological converts of all within the perpetrator society; rather, it must contribute to a social environment in which, as well as willing perpetrators, there are unconcerned or supportive bystanders. Cohen points to the importance of this issue when he writes that, in terms of the top-down creation of denial, reliable public indifference is more valuable than enforced compliance: ‘everyone recognizes the lie, but nobody cares.’<sup>135</sup> Cohen calls this ‘a post-modern version of the Oedipal state: knowing and not-knowing at the same time, but also not caring.’<sup>136</sup> Cohen’s position – that accounts which deny inconvenient knowledge serve to make possible the enactment of serious harm toward fellow human beings – is one which is central to the argument of this thesis. The theory of ‘accounts,’ which are here viewed through the lens of ‘discourse’ (though an ‘account’ is perhaps better considered a sub-discursive formation), provides an entrée to the concerns of the following chapter.

## §

In this chapter, I have examined thematic models of causation, and the issue of motivation and how genocide is ‘humanly possibly.’ In doing so, my aim has been, firstly, to demonstrate where, in the general context of scholarship on genocide, my argument is located; secondly, to demonstrate and acknowledge the arguments which my own model takes as its foundation and point of departure; thirdly, to point both to particular lacunae in need of exploration, and to specific pitfalls which I hope to avoid in the development of my

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<sup>134</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 103.

<sup>135</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>136</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 116.

argument; and fourthly, to bring the reader's attention to concepts which are particularly useful in my analysis of genocidal dehumanisation, concepts which should be borne in mind throughout, and to which we will return in Chapter Four in the course of a more detailed discussion of particular facets of dehumanisation.

This discussion, then, has been intended to ground my own argument, to inform it, and to situate it within a universe of scholarly discourse about genocide. In so doing I have given some idea of my conception of the realm within which my problem lies, and the means through which it should be approached as an object of inquiry. I have not, however, touched upon the nature of my approach in hermeneutical terms, that is, the heuristics I employ –in particular, concepts of 'discourse' and 'ideology' – in approaching my subject matter from a documentary perspective; nor have I examined the nature of such analysis as a form of analysis, or my reasons for deciding upon a particular theoretical deployment as the best way in which to approach my subject. In Chapter Four, I will apply the scholarship presented in this chapter to the specific subject of genocidal dehumanisation. Given the nature of this thesis as a work employing texts to construct a model of a process, however, before I embark on this task it is necessary to outline the theoretical approach which I will employ in order to do so; it is to this task which I turn in the next chapter.



## Chapter 3.

### **Discourse, Ideology and Language: Theoretical Considerations**

In this chapter, I turn to the consideration of methodology, theoretical approaches, and, in the process, to definitional issues regarding methodological terminology. My purpose is to outline the nature of the approach that I will apply to the documentary material I present, and to give reasons for choosing this particular approach. Our concern here is the development of ideas about the relationships between texts, and between texts and practices, in the manifestation of power in action: and the two theoretical heuristics which are most appropriate to this field of inquiry are those concerning 'discourse' and 'ideology.' The focus of this chapter will therefore be the application of these concepts to the present subject matter.

Clearly, the history of these terms and the different ways in which they may be formulated are topics which in themselves are subjects of extensive ongoing theoretical investigation. Here, however, I do not intend either to outline the history of terminologies or the debates over their meaning and usage, but rather to outline the way in which I will employ them in revealing something about genocidal dehumanisation. Initially, an overview of concepts and definitions of these two terms are examined, and their specific usage in this thesis is clarified. I go on to ask how these two terms can be connected in a methodological sense, giving particular consideration to the Critical Discourse Analysis approach. Finally, I turn to the issue of social constructionism, and give some indication as to how a discursive, social-constructionist analysis may actually be applied to genocidal dehumanisation as an object of inquiry.

## I. Discourse: A Foucauldian Diagnosis

*[T]o speak is to do something – something other than to express what one thinks[,] to translate what one knows ... to show that a change in the order of discourse does not presuppose ‘new ideas’ ... but transformations in a practice, perhaps also in neighbouring practices, and in their common articulation.*

- Michel Foucault<sup>1</sup>

This work is premised on the methodology of the analysis of texts. I argue from the position that discourse, manifest in texts, constructs meaning, and therefore ‘reality.’ Verbal (and visual) manifestations are intimately entwined in, and indeed may constitute, the enactment of power. They speak of the self-understanding, the (socialised) identity, of the speaker, and they speak also of the culture and cultural understandings from which that speaker, and the enunciation itself, has emerged. The reasons why this position is an approach which makes it possible to get to the heart of the issue of genocidal dehumanisation are outlined over the course of this chapter. I begin with the subject of ‘discourse.’

In the present work, the term ‘discourse’ is applied not so much in relation to the history of and broader traditions around the concept (which would include the work of figures from Ferdinand de Saussure, Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan and Michel Pêcheux to Judith Butler, among many others), but with specific reference to the formulation of Michel Foucault. On this model, ‘discourse’ describes a set of communicative utterances based on a common ‘knowledge’ (in the sense of a belief system interpreting reality, rather than a true as opposed to a false understanding of reality) which is intimately connected with, and which is productive of, power. Discourse therefore constructs systems of power, but it is also a manifestation of such systems. Hence discourse can be seen both as a strategy and a

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<sup>1</sup> M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (trans. A. M. S. Smith), Routledge, London & New York, 2002, p. 230.

manifestation, constructing knowledge in particular ways which essentialise certain understandings and exclude others. So it becomes evident that it is a system of the construction of meaning, and thus of apprehended 'reality.'

How did Foucault employ the term 'discourse'? Firstly, he himself recognised that his use of the term was not universally defined, that he treated it 'sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.'<sup>2</sup> Over the course of his body of work (in terms of the analysis of particular discursive subject matters rather than his critical, meta-discursive work on the scholarly project<sup>3</sup>) he also took two different focuses, the 'archaeological' and the 'genealogical,' with the first more centred on autonomous discourse, and the second on the conception of power.<sup>4</sup> A shift took place in the nature of his primary analysis, from concern with 'discourse' to concern with 'power/knowledge.' In this thesis, I will chiefly explore the Foucauldian conception of 'discourse' in the archaeological sense (though in the typological sections of the work, particularly in relation to the conditions of modernity, I will have occasion to make mention of the relevance of Foucault's genealogical model of the operations and 'technologies' of power).

Though we are most closely concerned with Foucauldian discourse rather than Foucauldian power per se, it is worth noting at the outset that Foucault understood the way in which the possibilities of knowledge were intimately related to power, and the way in which power, as a productive rather than solely a repressive force, inheres universally in the social. The documents in which we can trace genocidal dehumanisation are a body of texts produced by perpetrators regarding their own practices. Given this, an approach is needed which allows

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<sup>2</sup> In N. Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003, p. 123.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse' (trans. I. McLeod), in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston/London/Henley, 1981, pp. 70-73.

<sup>4</sup> N. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 49.

the tracing both of distinctive narratives, and of the historical-philosophical confines within which such narratives developed; hence, the adoption of ‘discourse,’ a term which can be used both to examine texts in this light and to shed illumination on the connection between text and non-textual practice. It is my intent in this thesis to trace the nature of what will be defined as a particular *discursive strategy*, termed ‘genocidal dehumanisation,’ which constructs reality (and therefore action) and the course of the operations of power by the manifestation of a knowledge which makes claims about the nature of ‘human-ness,’ both in terms of essence and in terms of action.<sup>5</sup> Given that the concept of ‘discourse’ and the way in which it constitutes meaning is central to the argument of this work, then, and given varying technical usages of the term and the concept, I present here a brief examination of the meaning of the terms ‘discourse,’ ‘discursive formation’ and ‘strategy’ as employed by Foucault, and as they will be used in relation to dehumanisation in this thesis, with particular reference to the application of these concepts to specific aspects of my argument (thus foreshadowing these aspects).<sup>6</sup> This discussion, and that which follows concerning ideology, is also, in a more general sense, intended to clarify my approach to my subject, the way in which I intend to synthesise a coherent argument from diverse disciplinary-methodological strands of scholarship.

My approach follows the ‘archaeological’ model of the concept of discourse and discursive formations, as outlined in Foucault’s major work dealing with methodological issues, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969). This work ascribes the following characteristics to

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted here that the use of the term ‘discursive strategy,’ used in a Foucauldian sense, should not be confused with Jürgen Habermas’ distinction between strategic and communicative discourse in late capitalism. See N. Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Longman, Essex, 2001, pp. 163-164.

<sup>6</sup> Both Foucault’s use of ‘discourse’ as a term of analysis, and other aspects of his research, have come under criticism from many quarters. Influential scholars who have critiqued Foucault’s work include Jacques Derrida, Jürgen Habermas and Slavoj Žižek, among others. In this chapter, however, rather than diverting attention away from my object (genocidal dehumanisation) by embarking upon a necessarily lengthy examination of these complex debates, I wish to explain why in analysing *that object specifically* the concept of ‘discourse’ – and, in particular, Foucault’s conception of it – is a valuable and effective heuristic.

'discourse': that it is a system of representation which exists in a particular historical moment;<sup>7</sup> that nothing has any inherent meaning outside of discourse; that the object of discourse is not objectively identifiable, but rather that discourse constitutes its topic, in this case, the personified subject;<sup>8</sup> that discursive meaning is personified in a subject; that a discursive formation can be characterised as an enunciatively regularised, connected group of statements formulated according to certain self-created rules, which are the conditions of its existence;<sup>9</sup> and that discursive formations contain practices for dealing with this personified subject. Such an analysis examines the emergence, delimitations, and grids of specification of a discursive formation;<sup>10</sup> and it recognises the nexus between 'institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification [and] modes of characterization' which constitute the object of such a formation and from which it emerges, even as every statement in the discursive field reconstructs its own past and presents it as truth.<sup>11</sup> At this point it should also be re-emphasised that, as stated above, Foucault wrote that his own conception of 'discourse' treated it 'sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements,' and that this concept should therefore not be considered the rigorous establishment of a model or a theory, but rather the opening up a possibility of a model, the freeing of 'a coherent domain of description.'<sup>12</sup>

By taking a comparative and multidisciplinary approach to the subject of genocidal dehumanisation as a discursive nexus and a discursive strategy, I aim to recognise and trace the factors enumerated above. Hence, in Foucauldian terms, I am not concerned with

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 131.

<sup>8</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 35-36.

<sup>9</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 36-42, 51, 66, 89, 130, 162. For a conception of the 'statement' see Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 89-127.

<sup>10</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 45-47.

<sup>11</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 49-50, 140.

<sup>12</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 90, 128-129.

ascertaining the objective truth or falsehood of the claims made by genocidal perpetrators regarding their victims;<sup>13</sup> in demonstrating internal inconsistencies in such claims; or in evaluating these claims as justificatory or mitigatory factors in universal terms (as opposed to the terms of perpetrators themselves).<sup>14</sup> That is to say, my analysis is not concerned with the relationship between 'words and things,' with each viewed in essentialist terms, but rather with the way in which 'words,' or rather, statements, signs or enunciations, are in fact practices which do not (only) reflect but which constitute meaning and which form their own objects, with the understanding that these objects and/or practices are objects external to the discursive order: discourse, as a 'field of statements ... must be articulated on something other than itself.'<sup>15</sup> In a phrase particularly germane to the subject of this thesis, Foucault writes that discourse is 'a violence we do to things ... a practice which we impose on them.'<sup>16</sup> Ultimately, then, I will use the concept of discourse to demonstrate the way in which dehumanisation constructs its objects, outgroups and victim groups, in the process of enacting enunciative and physical practice toward them

According to Foucault, general discourses (such as medicine, the science of living beings, etc) form themes or theories, which he terms 'strategies';<sup>17</sup> these strategies are deployed within discursive formations, but are not secondary elements of independent discursive rationality; and they have *functions* in the non-discursive field of practices, appropriations, interests and desires.<sup>18</sup> Genocidal dehumanisation (and, more generally, dehumanisation overall) is not, properly speaking, a discourse itself, but a discursive formation which can be

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<sup>13</sup> Though, as the reader will be aware, this issue has already been raised in discussion regarding the usefulness of, firstly, the concept of the actuality of threat in terms of the perception of threat, and secondly, claims made for 'rational'/'irrational' or 'pragmatic'/'existential' distinctions in genocidal types. See Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', pp. 54-55.

<sup>14</sup> See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 52-53; see also pp. 142-143, 168-9.

<sup>15</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 53-54, 137; see also p. 182.

<sup>16</sup> Foucault, 'The Order of Discourse', p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 71.

<sup>18</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 75-76, 77-78, 179-180.

considered a strategy of this kind, within which we find a typology of sub-themes, of specific *narratives*. As we will see, this particular strategy arises from the coalescence of a nexus of discourses contingent upon the conditions of modernity, and consists in the creation of a particular, essentialised collective object in a universe of such objects, a creation which moreover contains the manner(s) in which this object is to be treated. The concept of a 'discursive strategy' also elucidates the question of the representativeness of particular utterances, by demonstrating the way in which the 'property of discourse' – in the sense of access to speech, understanding and investment in decisions, institutions or practices – is confined to particular groups.<sup>19</sup>

In examining the discourses of modernity in each of the following chapters, I embark upon a (necessarily brief) exploration of what Foucault terms the 'economy of the discursive constellation' to which any particular discursive formation belongs. Such an exploration also helps to understand the emergence of specific particularities from the entire range of possibility.<sup>20</sup> In analysing the historical emergence of modern genocidal dehumanisation, and therefore the origins of its features, we will bear in mind Foucault's conception of 'change' (or rather, 'transformation') neither as purely cause (that is, the viewpoint that change, as a universal law, is its own principle and thus the endpoint of explanation); nor purely as effect (that is, only in terms of external causation with change as an outcome).<sup>21</sup> This conception of change, as applied to the emergence of modern dehumanisation, is particularly germane to the concept of dehumanisation as a strategy with its own internal momentum, and as a self-

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<sup>19</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>20</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 74. The 'discursive constellation' concept, though separate, can be considered in conjunction with that of the *episteme*, 'the totality of relations that can be discovered, for a given period, between the sciences when one analyses them at the level of discursive regularities.' The *episteme*, in Diane Macdonnell's words a 'ground of thought,' is that which allows an understanding of the constraints and limitations which are imposed upon discourse in any given moment, making possible 'the existence of epistemological figures and sciences' (D. Macdonnell, *Theories of Discourse: An Introduction*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1986, p. 87; Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 211-212).

<sup>21</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 190-191.

fulfilling prophecy, in which utterances removing the humanity of individuals within a collectivity accompanies practice which does so in the non-verbal realm.

The conception of genocidal dehumanisation as a strategy is also useful in the commonly understood sense of the word 'strategy,' inasmuch as it is instructive to ask what ends are served by this strategy and why such a strategy comes to be employed to fulfil these ends. What we are dealing with here is, in Foucauldian terms, 'discursive practice.'<sup>22</sup> Knowledge, which is the created object of discourse, is intimately connected with power and practice; and it is at this locus that we find the exercise of the discursive strategy of (genocidal) dehumanisation in its various manifestations. This will be particularly apparent in my analysis of the *ideological function* of modern scientific discursive formations (specifically, the life sciences and the science of bureaucratic management) with regard to genocidal dehumanisation.<sup>23</sup> In the conclusion to *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, Foucault describes his analysis as a *diagnosis*: it is in this spirit that I approach the discursive strategy of genocidal dehumanisation.<sup>24</sup>

All this is not to say, however, that my analysis is *entirely* in conformity with Foucault's vision for an 'archaeology,' particularly as regards his definition of this enterprise as non-interpretive, non-documentary, and unconcerned with the relating of discourse to what precedes, surrounds or follows it.<sup>25</sup> In particular, firstly, I trace the historical origins of genocidal dehumanisation (though not in terms of entirely unprecedented originary statements or individuals<sup>26</sup>) in a manner aligned to the employment of 'the history of ideas'

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<sup>22</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 131.

<sup>23</sup> See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 203-205.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 227. 'Diagnosis' is in itself a medical metaphor, and therefore should be approached with caution; however, its use in this context is employed in the sense of an understanding of a theoretical problem, rather than an actually existing problem where the aim is to remove or destroy this problem.

<sup>25</sup> Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 155.

<sup>26</sup> See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 165.



as a method, examining influences and the exchange and transmission of information (in opposition to which Foucault sets up his 'archaeology' – though he also denies that this analysis takes place outside of the dimension of a general history, that it engages with the question of mobility and 'the rhythm of events' and 'maps temporal vectors of derivation'<sup>27</sup>). Secondly, while I do not pursue the concept of a psychological truth *concealed* by statements, but attempt to understand them in their own terms, I expend some effort elucidating the psychological states which I understand to be the *causes for the existence* of such statements, with particular regard to intention and motivation (both for discursive and non-discursive action), and with some attention (as we have already seen) given to causation.<sup>28</sup> Thirdly, I do consider these psychological states and their expression in practice to contain an underlying unity of a certain kind (hence my argument regarding dehumanisation as a continuum) which expresses itself in the form of 'dehumanisation,' though this unity is not without contradictions and irregularities, which are themselves enlightening as to the nature of this strategy.<sup>29</sup> Finally, I do not dispute Foucault's later assertion that the contestation which takes place through discourse is not only a contestation over representations as part of systems of dominance, but that discourse in itself 'is the power which is to be seized';<sup>30</sup> but it should be borne in mind that it is not this contestation *in itself* which is the subject of our inquiry here, but the consequences of the success of particular strategies. Therefore, my employment of Foucault's concept of discourse in my analysis should be understood, firstly, as a guide, and secondly, as an important conceptual tool, but as one among others, rather than as a single definitive method to be followed.

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<sup>27</sup> See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 155-156, 179, 182, 185-186.

<sup>28</sup> See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 179-180, 189.

<sup>29</sup> See Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 173.

<sup>30</sup> In Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 51.

This discussion of the way in which I intend to deploy Foucault's model to my subject will demonstrate that my approach focuses on the determining role of culture and the social. Specifically, my argument can be considered constructionist inasmuch as it is an argument that enunciation constitutes meaning and therefore determines 'reality' – a concept which is more fully treated in the following chapter.<sup>31</sup> The 'reality' thus constituted is, in the analysis I undertake here, 'reality' as understood by the perpetrators of genocide and mass killing.

A moral objection may be raised to this approach. It is therefore important to state that, in taking it, I do not intend in any measure to justify perpetrators, to deny the agency of victims, or to 'invisible-ise' victims or their suffering. Rather, I hold that in order to understand the perpetration of genocide it is vital to analyse the self-conceptualisations and conceptualisations of others in the discourse of individuals and collectivities involved in the perpetration of genocide. In Eagleton's words (regarding theories of ideology), if theorising is to have any value at all 'it is in helping to illuminate the processes by which ... liberation from death-dealing beliefs may be practically effected.'<sup>32</sup> However, it is *in the very act of doing so and in order to do so* that the nature of the social construction of reality by perpetrators must be revealed.

A second, empiricist objection may be that there can be no proof for a link between discursive dehumanisation, and action. There are two replies to this objection. The first is, simply, to say that I am concerned with commonalities between what occurs in enunciation and in non-discursive practice, and that one of the aims of this thesis is to use documentary material to demonstrate the predictability of the link between particular types of

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<sup>31</sup> For an early, lengthy treatment of the concept of the social construction of reality from a sociological perspective, see P. L. Berger & T. Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1966.

<sup>32</sup> Eagleton, p. 224.

dehumanising utterances and particular actions;<sup>33</sup> the second reply will be found in my examination of the emerging work being done in the field of social psychology which empirically links dehumanisation to the mistreatment of the dehumanised group.<sup>34</sup>

The discussion thus far should summarise both my basic theoretical position as regards my conception of my subject matter and its place in the wider realm of the social and the world of objects and events; and also deal with some problems which may immediately be seen to arise from this position. Foucault's conception of 'discourse' (as part of an 'archeological' project) is not enough in itself to determine the method of approach of this thesis, particularly given Foucault's de-emphasising of the deployment of a wide range of documentary materials in order to demonstrate the features of discourse or strategy. The next step, then, is to broaden our theoretical horizons, and inquire into other useful theoretical models which emerge from complementary positions, asking how they can be employed in the analysis at hand. This task may be begun through an approach to the second key concept to this thesis, that of 'ideology.'

## II. Ideology

Thus far, I have primarily discussed the work of Michel Foucault. Though Foucault resisted the concept of ideology, this concept is one that is of major utility to our investigation, for reasons which will become apparent in the following discussion.<sup>35</sup> In general terms, the notion of ideology is a useful heuristic to explore the relationships between texts, practices,

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<sup>33</sup> It is also worth examining Foucault's response to the possible criticism of his analysis 'not having to establish [its] explicit, rigorous scientificity' – see Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, pp. 227-229.

<sup>34</sup> More on this topic will be mentioned in the social psychological research presented in the following chapter.

<sup>35</sup> Dan Stone suggests that the framework of Foucauldian biopolitics explains the *mechanics* of the Holocaust, whereas a focus on ideology is necessary to explain the genocidal *impetus* (D. Stone, 'Biopower and Modern Genocide', in A. D. Moses [ed.], *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, Berghahn Books, New York & Oxford, 2008, pp. 170-171).

and the political realm in the manifestation of power in action, questions which have also been developed in conceptions of 'discourse.' Given all of this, the term 'ideology' also requires definition as to its usage here. Examination will then be made of the use and features of the concept in recent theory, specifically in the work of Terry Eagleton and Teun A. van Dijk. As will become clear, most of the scholars whose texts I examine have linked the concept of discourse to that of ideology. In dealing with this connection, I will employ the sociolinguistic work of Norman Fairclough and the Critical Discourse Analysis approach.

### Ila. Ideology in Contemporary Thought and in 'Discourse': Conceptions and Definitions

The term 'ideology' was initially coined by Antoine Destutt de Tracy in the aftermath of the French Revolution. From this point, the concept develops over time through the work of scholars including Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, Karl Mannheim, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, Clifford Geertz and Paul Ricoeur. Originally intended by Destutt de Tracy to indicate the study of ideas, the term came to be used as an indication of a political distortion of verifiable reality (still its connotation in common parlance). This conception, however, has since been fruitfully problematised, both in terms of its application outside the purely political realm, and in the negative connotations and positivistic attitude inherent in the concept of falsified representation. For the present work, it's important to note that the complexification of ideas concerning 'ideology' flowered into recognition of the importance of cultural construction both within and outside the realm of the strictly political, particularly in the understanding of the Subject; of the problematics, for particular theoretical objectives, of defining particular worldviews or texts as either accurate or distorted representations of reality; and of the multidirectional nature of ideological discourse both within different strata of society, and inasmuch as the individual is both subject to, and produces, ideological representations related to her or his own practice.

How are we to conceive of ideology? For our purposes, given that the vast majority of, though not all, genocides are committed at the behest of and in the name of the nation-state and national governments, the nature of ideology as a typical form in which *politicised* thought is expressed, and particularly as a resource related to the implementation of *political* programs, is important to our inquiry. When referring to ‘the political,’ however, we should also take into account the fact that, although the concept of ideology is inextricably entwined with that of the political, ideology itself has by no means been considered only to be concerned with the realm of public politics in the classical sense (this broad conception of ideology has been developed to its fullest extent in the various narratives of ‘identity politics’ developing from the 1960s and 1970s). For example, in discussing the role of ideology in moral exclusion and harmdoing, Ervin Staub suggests that ‘[i]deologies may be regarded as group goals, with desired outcomes, associated ways of thinking, and networks of cognitions.’<sup>36</sup> Michael Freeden notes the way in which, as well as its classical politic usage, the term has been used by historians to mean a system of ideas or an organizing idea, and in literary and cultural studies ‘as a critical concept referring to the structure of dominance around almost any idea or theme.’<sup>37</sup> In taking these issues into account, then, some scholars have separated the concept of a ‘political ideology’ from that of ‘ideology’ in general.<sup>38</sup> In the present work, we will be examining ideology at the interface of politics (in representational and structural terms) and culture.

How do these conceptions link back in with our use of the concept of discourse? With the emerging perspectives of post-structuralism, post-Marxism, and, specifically cultural discourse analysis (as opposed to linguistic discourse analysis), a conception of ideology focussing on identity (rather than class, as in the original Marxist critique) developed. While

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<sup>36</sup> E. Staub, ‘Moral Exclusion, Personal Goal Theory, and Extreme Destructiveness’, *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, p. 54.

<sup>37</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p. 122.

<sup>38</sup> See for example Freeden, *Ideology*, pp. 32, 51-52, 54.

this perspective took a critical approach to ideology and focussed on the way it is naturalised and internalised within (or 'written on') the subject, it had no misgivings regarding the rejection of an empiricist model in which there is an objectively-ascertainable 'reality' which ideology conceals and sublimates. While Foucault is seen as the *doyen* of the concept of discourse, other theorists such as Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Slavoj Žižek have proposed, in terms of ideology, that all practices are discursive and that the social order is entirely constructed; discourse is then an integral part of the human condition, and ideology is a necessary illusion which, however, does not conceal an ultimate reality.<sup>39</sup> Laclau and Mouffe, in particular, argue that discursive formations are structured both through language and through institution, ritual and practice.<sup>40</sup> On this view, in terms of the analysis of ideology itself, '[i]nstead of condemning [it] as false, it should be recognized as a powerful indicator of the ways in which people actually construe the world.'<sup>41</sup> Discourses, in the words of Freeden, become 'the communicative practices through which ideology is exercised.'<sup>42</sup> We may explore the issue of the connections between discourse and ideology in more depth, and at the same time further the explication of the theoretical standpoint of this thesis, through examination of the work of Terry Eagleton and Teun A. van Dijk which take ideology as their primary subject.

I begin, then, with a return to the question of a definition. Eagleton proposes that the term 'ideology' has many useful meanings, some of which are incompatible, and '[t]o try to compress this wealth of meaning into a single comprehensive definition would thus be unhelpful even if it were possible.'<sup>43</sup> While one tradition conceives ideology as deception in a universe of true and false cognition, others, whose approach is more sociological than

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<sup>39</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, pp. 110-111; Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, pp. 20n22, 66.

<sup>40</sup> Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*, p. 79.

<sup>41</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, p. 112.

<sup>42</sup> Freeden, *Ideology*, pp. 105-109.

<sup>43</sup> T. Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (revised and expanded edn), Verso, London & New York, 2007, p. 1; see also p. 222.

epistemological, are concerned with 'the function of ideas within social life [rather] than with their reality or unreality.'<sup>44</sup> As should already be obvious, it is this second conception of ideology which will be employed in this thesis: as van Dijk puts it, 'we need a pragmatics of use of ideology rather than a semantics of truth.'<sup>45</sup>

Any conception of ideology, Eagleton continues, must understand it to be connected, not only to (rigid) belief systems or sets of ideas, but to power and the legitimation of power.<sup>46</sup> In particular, one function, which is not necessarily universal (inasmuch as not all social interests are seen to need rationalisation) but is highly germane to our own inquiry (in that those involved in genocide generally do), is to *rationalise* social interests: 'on this view ... ideologies can be seen as more or less systematic attempts to provide plausible explanations and justifications for behaviour which might otherwise be the object of criticism.'<sup>47</sup> Eagleton suggests that ideology is a matter of 'discourse' rather than a matter of 'language' inasmuch as it must be concerned with specific language use in context: 'ideology is a function of the relation of an utterance to its social context.'<sup>48</sup>

Ultimately, argues Eagleton, however we define ideology we should not be bound to an empirical representation, but see it in lived relations.<sup>49</sup> 'A successful ideology must work both practically and theoretically, and discover some way of linking these levels' – '[v]ery often, it refers to the way in which signs, meanings and values help to reproduce a dominant social power; but it can also denote any significant conjuncture between discourse and

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<sup>44</sup> Eagleton, p. 3.

<sup>45</sup> van Dijk, p. 130. For Eagleton's discussion and refutation of the 'false consciousness' conception of ideology, see pp. 12-26; for van Dijk's, see pp. 96-98.

<sup>46</sup> Eagleton, pp. 5-6, 54-56. Eagleton notes that this legitimatory function need not mean that the power in question is the power of a *dominant* social group.

<sup>47</sup> Eagleton, pp. 51-52.

<sup>48</sup> Eagleton, p. 9; see also p. 223.

<sup>49</sup> Eagleton, p. 30.

political interests.<sup>50</sup> In the final analysis, in order to reconcile the two extreme positions of ideology as disembodied ideas, or as behaviour patterns, we can regard ideology 'as a discursive or semiotic phenomenon,' emphasising both its materiality and the fact that it is essentially concerned with meaning.<sup>51</sup> A more specific concept is that of ideology, not as a particular set of discourses, but as a particular set of effects within discourses.<sup>52</sup> It is with this distinction between the theory of practice, and practice itself, and with the relationship between ideology and discourse, in mind, that we go on to examine van Dijk's formulation of ideology.

Teun A. van Dijk begins by suggesting that a theory of ideology needs to be multidisciplinary.<sup>53</sup> Drawing on the work of other scholars such as Stuart Hall, he takes, as key terms, *cognition*, *society*, and *discourse*<sup>54</sup>; the specific introduction of the concept of cognition is particularly important for the psychological aspects of our inquiry (it should be noted here that van Dijk uses the term 'discourse' to refer to specific communicative events, and to the 'accomplished ongoing "product" of the communicative act,' in contrast to the more Foucauldian sense in which it is generally employed in this thesis<sup>55</sup>). Discourses, writes van Dijk, 'are not the only ideologically based social practices [but] they certainly are the most crucial ones in the formulation of ideologies in their social reproduction.'<sup>56</sup> Therefore, 'if we want to know what ideologies actually look like, how they work, and how they are

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<sup>50</sup> Eagleton, pp. 48, 50, 221.

<sup>51</sup> Eagleton, p. 194. The discursive nature of ideology has also been acknowledged in the realm of social psychology; see for example M. Billig, 'Henri Tajfel's "Cognitive aspects of prejudice" and psychology of bigotry', *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 41, 2002, p. 184.

<sup>52</sup> Eagleton, p. 194.

<sup>53</sup> Van Dijk, p. 5. Scholars dealing with similar issues in other fields have also expressed this opinion – for example, social psychologists George Gaskell and Colin Fraser on 'widespread beliefs': see G. Gaskell & C. Fraser, 'The social psychological study of widespread beliefs', in G. Gaskell & C. Fraser (ed.s), *The Social Psychological Study of Widespread Beliefs*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1990, pp. 15-17.

<sup>54</sup> Van Dijk, p. 5.

<sup>55</sup> Van Dijk, pp. 193-197.

<sup>56</sup> Van Dijk, p. 6.



created, changed and reproduced, we need to look closely at their *discursive manifestations*.<sup>57</sup> In this context, van Dijk defines ideologies as ‘the basis of the social representations shared by members of a group’ which ‘allow people, as group members, to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, *for them*, and to act accordingly.’<sup>58</sup> Ideology must be understood as the ‘interface between social structure and social cognition.’<sup>59</sup> Therefore, ‘ideologies’ are ‘a specific type of (basic) mental representations shared by members of groups, and hence firmly located in the minds of people ... [but] this does *not* mean that they are therefore *individual* or *only* mental.’<sup>60</sup> They are ‘the *foundation* of the social beliefs shared by a social group,’ embodying truth criteria as well as specific values.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, a given individual who holds an ideology or ideologies need not explicitly understand ideologies as intellectual systems, or even understand the principles of ideologies, for these ideologies to function as models for that individual.<sup>62</sup>

In his development of this basic model, van Dijk maintains that cultural knowledge is the foundation of social cognition, and therefore of all evaluative beliefs.<sup>63</sup> In particular, we may hold a ‘culturally shared moral order,’ which gives rise to a ‘preferred social and moral order,’ and which is the basis of judgements about and sanctions against ‘moral deviance.’<sup>64</sup> These shared moral orders are dynamic: they may, and do, shift from being the opinions of a specific group to being held by an entire society, and vice versa.<sup>65</sup> ‘Ideological institutions’ are created, which ‘have as their task the “realization” of a shared ideology.’<sup>66</sup> Here we may reflect upon the relationship between dehumanisation and conceptions of morality and

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<sup>57</sup> Van Dijk, p. 6, original italics.

<sup>58</sup> Van Dijk, p. 8, original italics.

<sup>59</sup> Van Dijk, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> Van Dijk, p. 48, original italics.

<sup>61</sup> Van Dijk, p. 49, original italics.

<sup>62</sup> Van Dijk, p. 99.

<sup>63</sup> Van Dijk, p. 39.

<sup>64</sup> Van Dijk, pp. 39-40, 72.

<sup>65</sup> Van Dijk, p. 40.

<sup>66</sup> Van Dijk, p. 186.

moral legitimacy, a subject which we will explore further in the following chapter. Van Dijk also suggests that many (though not all) ideologies are structured by and organised around the categories of 'problem' and 'solution,' something which becomes very clear in narratives of dehumanisation.<sup>67</sup> A particularly germane concept for the events we will examine is that of the 'script,' 'the knowledge people have about the stereotypical events of their culture.'<sup>68</sup>

## IIb. The Narrative Subject and the Question of Moral Legitimacy

The concept of the 'script' provides the context in which specific accounts or narratives are constructed, a process which we will explore in depth in relation to genocidal dehumanisation in Chapter Four. Here, the concept can be developed to demonstrate the 'ground' from which dehumanising narratives and beliefs are synthesised. Van Dijk's conception of ideology as 'script' can be related to that of J. M. Balkin, who sees ideology as 'cultural software and its effects': cultural understanding includes beliefs and judgements, as well as the cognitive mechanisms which produce and fashion them.<sup>69</sup> Narrative is a particularly important ideological effect.<sup>70</sup> Narratives give us a 'plot' which frames our understanding of events: '[w]e recognize patterns of behaviour as meaningful in terms of patterns we are already familiar with,' bestowing legitimacy and authority on that which is expected and allowing us to comprehend the exceptional and unusual.<sup>71</sup> '[C]ultural expectations, stored in narrative memory, help frame social reality.'<sup>72</sup> Thus, narratives are also normative; once a 'stock story' is accepted, 'it is used to filter and organize all of the evidence subsequently presented,' and evidence which does not conform will tend to be

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<sup>67</sup> Van Dijk, p. 66.

<sup>68</sup> Van Dijk, p. 58.

<sup>69</sup> Balkin, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Balkin, p. 188.

<sup>71</sup> Balkin, p. 190-191.

<sup>72</sup> Balkin, p. 191.

discounted or ignored.<sup>73</sup> Media of mass communication play a particularly determining role in both the creation, and the development of such 'social myths,' but this is by no means to say that there is a one-way relationship between their production and their consumption.<sup>74</sup> Narratives not only frame understandings; 'they also invite us to play them out in our lives,' and hence they are not only tools of understanding, but tools of action.<sup>75</sup> In Balkin's words, they 'make themselves true' – they are 'mechanisms of self-fulfilling prophecy.'<sup>76</sup> We will examine in some detail the playing-out of particular narratives and scripts in the typological chapters. Here, however, having examined the role of narrative in ideological belief, we ask how such a narrative process constitutes not only the subject's understanding of what is perceived as external, but the subject's understanding of his or her own subjectivity and its relationship to those perceived externalities.

As we have seen, human existence embodies cultural information.<sup>77</sup> Our subjectivity, then, is socially constituted: as van Dijk puts it, in regard to intergroup relationships, 'ideologies are representations of who we are, what we stand for, what our values are, and what our relationships are with other groups, in particular our enemies or opponents.'<sup>78</sup> This conception encompasses the following group characteristics as understood by the group itself: membership, activities, goals, values/norms, position and group-relations, and resources.<sup>79</sup> Thus, both the identity and the interests of the group are defined through ideology; 'identity' also consists in the construction of inclusion and exclusion from the group itself; and this process takes place both through intragroup discourse, and intergroup discourse.<sup>80</sup> Collective attributes, however, do not necessarily apply to every individual

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<sup>73</sup> Balkin, pp. 191, 197.

<sup>74</sup> Balkin, p. 205.

<sup>75</sup> Balkin, p. 208.

<sup>76</sup> Balkin, p. 213; see also p. 215.

<sup>77</sup> Balkin, pp. 14-15.

<sup>78</sup> van Dijk, p. 69.

<sup>79</sup> Van Dijk, pp. 69-70.

<sup>80</sup> Van Dijk, pp. 70, 125, 159-160.

within a group; given individuals have multiple and sometimes conflicting identities (as constructed by ideology).<sup>81</sup> In the following chapter I explain that it is because of these internal identity conflicts that the discursive strategy of dehumanisation becomes a psychological necessity.

We have discussed the conceptualisation of dehumanisation as a discursive strategy; van Dijk points to a number of possible problematisations of this concept. The most important, for our purposes, is the question of the primacy of ideology or action: for example, were racist ideologies invented to justify the subjugation of African peoples, or were African peoples subjugated because they were already seen as inferior?<sup>82</sup> I examine the relevance of this question to my own subject through the examination of dehumanisation as (one) motivating factor, and/or a legitimating factor, in genocidal action. The role of ideologies in domination is that they 'monitor and organize group knowledge and attitudes and hence the beliefs that members need in order to construct the models controlling the actions that implement domination,' particularly through the construction and maintenance of consensus.<sup>83</sup> An important point is that it is only in certain situations that *ideological* legitimation is necessary.<sup>84</sup> In our examination of the conditions of modernity and the modern subject as perpetrator, it becomes clear why and how such legitimation came to be a necessity in modern genocide.

In discussing the issue of legitimisation we should also consider that of morality. Ideology is intimately connected to and constitutive of morality or the moral order.<sup>85</sup> In discussing the function of dehumanisation, the vital relevance of the object of morality, that is, to whom or what a moral duty is owed, should have become clear. Ideology is a tool which can

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<sup>81</sup> Van Dijk, p. 72.

<sup>82</sup> Van Dijk, p. 164.

<sup>83</sup> Van Dijk, p. 167.

<sup>84</sup> Van Dijk, p. 165-167.

<sup>85</sup> See for example Balkin, pp. 29-31.

manipulate this object. According to cultural sociologist Robert Wuthnow, ideology can be understood as a set of signal utterances which ‘express or dramatize something about the moral order’;<sup>86</sup> successful ideologies become institutionalised.<sup>87</sup> Ideology shapes and informs the nature of understandings of moral obligation, and understandings of moral obligation are in turn played out in particular types of action. ‘Our sense of justice,’ writes Balkin, ‘inevitably has a narrative character.’<sup>88</sup> Ultimately, (constructions of) meaning, and of moral order – for both the individual and the collective subject – are not socio-culturally separate, and cannot be analysed as such.

### III. Discourse and Ideology Redux

At this point in a discussion of contemporary conceptions of ideology as a social construct, it is germane to return to the question of my own position, as regards an approach to deepening an understanding of the relationship between ‘discourse’ and ‘ideology’.

This work is premised on a constructivist understanding of the nature of ‘reality’ and the relationship between meaning and the material (and is therefore sympathetic to an understanding of ideology which extends it beyond the classical realm of the political). As a shorthand, we could say that enunciation determines meaning, and meaning determines practice. However, as I have mentioned, this work in itself is not an attempt to mount a philosophical argument regarding the existence or otherwise of a universally verifiable ‘objective reality’ which may or may not be distorted in representations; rather, it sees this question as irrelevant to its aims and concerns, which are to understand dehumanisation, in theory and as practice, on its own terms, with particular reference to the question of

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<sup>86</sup> Wuthnow, p. 145.

<sup>87</sup> Wuthnow, p. 151.

<sup>88</sup> Balkin, p. 209.

identity in the construction of the other. In taking these aims, the concept of an objectifiably identifiable and universally consistent *purposiveness* is accepted, although this is by no means to argue for conscious purposiveness on the part of any individual actor involved in the existence of discourse and ideology.

Given the above, then, I do not discard the concept of 'ideology' in favour of that of 'discourse' and 'discursive strategy,' nor do I see them as incompatible tools of analysis. Rather, as analytical tools, they can be employed in such a way as to create a complementary relationship.<sup>89</sup> I have outlined above the way in which reading text, utterance and practice as discourse allows an understanding of the dimensions and characteristics of the phenomenon at hand. As part of such an endeavour, the issue of evolving systems of meaning and their relationship to morality is vital. The concept of ideology can be used to explicate this dimension of the problem. In this thesis, then, previously-developed criticisms which have been made possible as a result of the championing of one concept over the other can be resolved by employing both of these and so, it is to be hoped, avoiding the weaknesses and blind points of each, if such they are. Discourse, and discourses, can be understood to shape the conditions from which and in which ideology emerges, and ideology can thus be considered in itself a discursive strategy; but at the same time, ideologies, though not monolithic or unchanging, can be considered to have an historical existence which is *adaptive* to historical alterations in the nature of discursive regimes.

It should now be very clear that the term 'ideology' is not used in this thesis to refer to a 'false' or 'distorted' conception. As Balkin puts it, 'narrative structure is irrelevant to truth.'<sup>90</sup> Scholarly analysis which critiques ideologies either from a moral, or an intellectual

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<sup>89</sup> For examples of general critiques of the conception of a complementary relationship between these terms (including that of Foucault) – as opposed to specific critiques of the use of both terms as they are deployed together in this work – see Balkin, p. 262; Macdonnell, p. 83.

<sup>90</sup> Balkin, p. 214.

perspective (as one would a political philosophy) is a dead end in terms of understanding the political impact of ideology and practice.<sup>91</sup> Rather, it is imperative to ask what purpose ideologies serve, and how they go about doing so.<sup>92</sup> Having said this, however, it must be re-emphasised that it should not be the role of research into genocide and mass killing to take a 'morally neutral' approach to its subject matter.<sup>93</sup> Throughout this work it should be evident that the intent of my research is not to mitigate or provide excuses for genocidal action. It is not my ultimate aim here to morally evaluate the discourses I examine (a task which, in the case of genocide and mass killing, is neither original nor necessary), nor to dissect their intellectual logic or coherence. In order to achieve my goals, neither of these activities is in fact useful given that my aim is firstly, to *understand the functional nature* of particular discourses, discursive strategies, and ideologies, and secondly, to understand *what the consequences are in action* of their coming into being, their existence and dissemination. The primary way in which this process takes place is through the use of language.

### IIIa. Language and Ideology

Language as manifest in texts (with some minor mention of visual imagery) is the subject of the investigation which takes place in the following chapters. Given that this is the source material in which, I argue, the discursive strategy I posit is manifest, it is necessary to ask what is the best way to approach the study of language in text from the perspective of theories around discourse and ideology. It is apposite to turn to the discipline of socio-linguistics, in which various works have considered more closely these connections. In Robert Hodge and Gunter Kress' foundational work of 'critical linguistics,' *Language as Ideology*, it is suggested that '[i]deology involves a systematically organized presentation of

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<sup>91</sup> Freedon, *Ideology*, p. 71.

<sup>92</sup> Freedon, *Ideology*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>93</sup> On this subject see Eagleton, p. 8.

reality,' a presentation which takes place primarily through language.<sup>94</sup> The object of language is coerced into taking the linguistic form in which any given situation is presented as the 'real form,' whereas in fact what is being presented is a 'surface form' dependent on the choice of language used to describe that situation.<sup>95</sup> The usage of language involves the process of classification, which is 'at the basis of language and thought.'<sup>96</sup> Classification itself, as an intellectual strategy, is 'an instrument of control' (as we will see in Chapter Seven).<sup>97</sup> Classification systems, however, are not universal; they are particular, existing only in discourse.<sup>98</sup> Individuals 'mov[e] between the given system and the content to be classified.'<sup>99</sup> Thus, perceived 'reality' is constrained by the existing system, but is open to reclassification.<sup>100</sup> It will become evident in the following chapters that the use of language to create certain out-groups as such and to classify them in certain ways is vital to the process of dehumanisation; our concern will be with the development and manifestation of such systems.

Furthermore, continue Hodge and Kress, subgroups within society evolve or create kinds of languages which serve to 'reinforce a sense of identity within the group and to exclude outsiders.'<sup>101</sup> These 'anti-languages' are 'device[s] for managing reality, creating the necessary counter-reality' in accordance with the ideology of the group (the example given is that of soldiers' language which names the enemy as 'gooks,' bombs as 'products' and so forth).<sup>102</sup> Hodge and Kress describe this type of language as 'defensive, protecting its community from direct grasp of problematic reality ... it reveals, through its evasions, what

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<sup>94</sup> R. Hodge & G. Kress, *Language as Ideology* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Routledge, London, 1993, p. 15.

<sup>95</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 28.

<sup>96</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 62.

<sup>97</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 108.

<sup>98</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 64.

<sup>99</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 65.

<sup>100</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 65.

<sup>101</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 71.

<sup>102</sup> Hodge & Kress, pp. 71-72.



parts of reality are problematic for that community.<sup>103</sup> Finally, 'anti-languages' are inexplicable without reference to the nature of the collectivity in which they are found, and its place in the larger social structure.<sup>104</sup> The way in which ideology may thus be concealed in language, beneath the level of conscious critical awareness, means that, unlike the direct presentation of (political) ideology, it does not appear as coercive and is therefore less likely to be resisted; and it also accommodates contradictions more easily.<sup>105</sup> In genocide, the nature of dehumanisation as a strategy is precisely to employ a particular narrative, manifest in a particular (very often metaphorical or euphemistic) language, to conceal from the perpetrator the problematics s/he feels regarding the situation in which s/he finds him- or herself.

In regard to Foucauldian discourse, Hodge and Kress point out that Foucault 'rejected language [*langue*] as a model for the study of discourse,' that he argued, in *Power/Knowledge*, that '[t]he history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of a language: relations of power, not relations of meaning.'<sup>106</sup> However, they argue that, *contra* Foucault's statement, there need not be a dichotomy between these two positions, and that to acknowledge this is to recognise that language and power, meaning and social process, are interdependent.<sup>107</sup> This is a vital insight for the present work. Such recognition reveals the way in which the terms and concepts with which we are working, that is, discourse and ideology, language and practice, are intimately intertwined. Given that all of these concepts are employed in developing an argument about the emergence and functions of a dehumanising discursive strategy, it becomes necessary to turn to analyses which combine all of these models into one perspective in order to understand how this may be accomplished from a theoretical (as opposed to a *strictly* methodological) perspective. Norman

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<sup>103</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 77.

<sup>104</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 77.

<sup>105</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 82.

<sup>106</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 153.

<sup>107</sup> Hodge & Kress, pp. 153-154.

Fairclough's work in critical discourse analysis synthesises all of these concepts and delineates a relationship between them, revealing the productive possibilities of their intersection within a conceptual model.

#### **IV. Language, Power, and Critical Discourse Analysis**

##### **IVa. The Cultural Turn**

The present inquiry, we have thus far established, takes as its subject the relationship between language (in the broadest sense) and action, understanding both as related forms of practice. In order to do so, it uses the concepts of discourse and ideology as a theoretical framework, and employs a multidisciplinary approach to the study of their embodiment in language. How are we to constitute disparate heuristic and disciplinary approaches into a coherent understanding of the phenomenon, the process and the utterances which we have taken as the object of inquiry? To find an answer, we must turn to work which has taken a similar goal. I do not intend to apply *holus bolus* the exact methodologies employed by any of these approaches, nor to outline every facet of each approach in detail, but rather to identify and analyse theoretical models which have used similar concepts, from similarly interdisciplinary fields, and drawn similar connections between them, to those which I employ in this thesis. I use these to inform my own approach, particularly by demonstrating the connections between the concepts I employ, given their origins in diverse scholarly disciplines. This discussion should also give some further idea as to the necessity of taking this kind of approach to a subject such as that presently at hand.

We have already had an entrée into such approaches in examining the work of Hodge and Kress. A number of other scholars have used the concepts of discourse and ideology in

concert, or examined the nature of an analytical synthesis of these conceptions. Particularly useful, from a conceptual point of view, is the way in which critical discourse analysis (CDA), as exemplified in the work of Norman Fairclough, approaches the study of text/s from a multidisciplinary perspective which is concerned with the existence in practice of language, meaning, discourse, ideology, and power. However, as we shall see, I do not intend to directly apply the micro-level linguistic methodology of CDA to the texts that I incorporate as evidence for my argument, but rather to examine its approach in order to see how it may help to comprehend the connections between these concepts, and how, here, I may use such comprehension to inform my own approach to understanding the existence, the function, and the historical context of what I have termed the discursive strategy of genocidal dehumanisation as it is manifest in textual documents.

In examining these works, we must begin with a brief overview of those basic concepts, relevant to our enquiry, emerging from what has often been called the 'cultural turn' in humanities and the social sciences. In the late 1960s, Roland Barthes described a distinction between denotation and connotation in signs or signifiers. Denotation is the descriptive and literal level of meaning of a signifier, while connotation connects it to the cultural codes of meaning in which it exists.<sup>108</sup> The connotative meaning becomes naturalised, and thus hegemonic, creating 'myths.'<sup>109</sup> Jacques Derrida deepened the concept of an unstable relationship between signifier and signified by positing that meaning, and what we understand as 'truth,' is *entirely* constructed by the play of interconnected signifiers and the systems of representation which contain them.<sup>110</sup> We have already treated Foucault's analysis of the construction of meaning through discourse, and its relationship to power; Ludwig Wittgenstein (and later Richard Rorty and Anthony Giddens) gave a heavier emphasis to the

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<sup>108</sup> C. Barker & D. Galasiński, *Cultural Studies and Discourse Analysis: A Dialogue on Language and Identity*, SAGE Publications, London, 2001, p. 5.

<sup>109</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 5.

<sup>110</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 9-10.

pragmatic and social nature of language, to its character as a tool (though with no implication of intentionality) – that is, the question most profitable to ask is not, ‘how do we explain language as a system,’ but ‘how is language used in the context of its social circumstances.’<sup>111</sup> Thus, language does not *represent* practice; it is practice, and its relationship to materiality is one of causality<sup>112</sup> (a particular theoretical focus, one highly relevant for our own inquiry, has been on identity and metaphor in the language process<sup>113</sup>). Given that this is the way in which social power operates, descriptions of the social order become ‘stories with consequences,’ and social change occurs through the re-description of the social order.<sup>114</sup>

A criticism of one aspect of these approaches has been that, in their concentration on examining the nature of language as a system or systems of grammar, they have failed to analyse actual, ‘living’ language-utterances of speaking subjects.<sup>115</sup> According to this argument, there is a need for theoretical exploration which considers persons as social actors who employ language ‘tools’ in particular contexts.<sup>116</sup> In this light, I suggest that an approach which combines discursive psychology with the analysis of language-in-use can show how social constructions are built, designed and deployed, and to what end.<sup>117</sup> In the terms of such an approach, ideology may be understood as ‘the forms of power/knowledge [in the Foucauldian sense] used to justify the actions of persons or groups and which have specific consequences for relations of power.’<sup>118</sup> Another answer to such criticism, relevant to this inquiry, may be found in the words of Hodge and Kress regarding their work on the first Gulf War:

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<sup>111</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 15, 39, 44.

<sup>112</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 15-18.

<sup>113</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 58, 61; see also Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), pp. 99-100.

<sup>114</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 47, 57.

<sup>115</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 21.

<sup>116</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 21.

<sup>117</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 21-22.

<sup>118</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 25.

What we do [in contrast to the efforts of investigative journalists and others] may seem in contrast to be ludicrously or culpably irrelevant, ignoring the reality of human suffering in our concern with language. But the nature of our concern with language is inseparable from a concern with the wider issues that are raised by the war, including the vexed issues of 'truth' and 'what really happened' ... All the major ideological struggles will necessarily be waged in words ... The forms of analysis, the ways of reading that we seek to develop are neither unitary nor self-contained, but operate as components of a broader set of strategies of interpretation deployed on a diverse and unstable set of objects...<sup>119</sup>

In the following discussion, I will reveal the way in which a CDA framework can be employed to combine historical, psychological and language-based perspectives to reveal not only the nature, but also, crucially, the functions-in-action of genocidal dehumanisation.

#### IVb. Critical Discourse Analysis

Having given brief consideration to the emergence of the 'cultural' approach to language and its relevance for our subject, we can now turn to the question of CDA itself. There is no accepted universal definition of critical discourse analysis, which emerges from various linguistic, semiotic-discursive and socio-cognitive methodologies.<sup>120</sup> However, there are a number of important common aspects which are relevant to our inquiry. A CDA approach assumes, *inter alia*, that discourse is socially constitutive; that it is ideological (in the sense described above; ideology in discourse has also been described as 'the attempt to fix meaning for specific purposes'<sup>121</sup>); and that text is intertextual and meaning is accumulative, inasmuch as the meaning of any given text is dependent on its relationship to other meanings

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<sup>119</sup> Hodge & Kress, p. 161.

<sup>120</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 62.

<sup>121</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 66.

and systems of meaning.<sup>122</sup> Louis de Saussure and Peter Schulz note that CDA is a particularly useful approach in identifying manipulative discursive practices.<sup>123</sup> Our inquiry here, however, in contrast to much CDA, will not be concerned with the technical analysis of utterances in a linguistic sense. Rather, we will take a macro-level focus on what CDA terms ‘vocabulary’:<sup>124</sup> the analysis of the usage of terminology and connotation in given utterances. CDA itself, when applied at the micro-level, can be, as Chris Barker and Dariusz Galasiński point out, ‘a labour-intensive, micro-linguistic enterprise requiring a lot of time and, as such, it is very difficult to apply to a large corpora of texts.’<sup>125</sup> The current work, premised on comparative and wide-ranging investigation of texts and utterances, therefore aims to ask what this theoretical framework can tell us regarding the nature of language and discourse, without employing these methods in quantitative micro-level analysis of texts. This is done through examination of the work of Norman Fairclough, who is one of the founders of the model of critical discourse analysis, as well as an important figure in studies of language and ideology.<sup>126</sup>

In outlining his approach to critical language study, Fairclough details the various disciplines dealing with language use, describing two concepts in particular which are of use to this enquiry: from pragmatics, that of ‘speech acts,’ the recognition that an utterance is a form of action;<sup>127</sup> and, from cognitive psychology, the insight that an utterance is not merely ‘decoded,’ but is interpreted and comprehended according to the representations stored in

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<sup>122</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp. 64-69.

<sup>123</sup> L. de Saussure & P. Schulz, ‘Introduction’, in L. de Saussure & P. Schulz (ed.s), *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, language, mind*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2005, p. 5.

<sup>124</sup> Barker & Galasiński, pp.73-74.

<sup>125</sup> Barker & Galasiński, p. 26; for a description of micro-level CDA, see also Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), pp. 91-116.

<sup>126</sup> Due to considerations of space and relevance, we will not consider here Fairclough’s entire oeuvre relating to CDA, but rather the salient features for our inquiry of his development of this concept as an approach to text and language.

<sup>127</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 9.

the psyche of the consumer of that utterance, the *resources* of that consumer.<sup>128</sup> These two facets play out in the context of discourse and ideology as manifest in language; in examining various works, we can put together a good picture of a CDA understanding of ideology, of discourse, and of the nature of the conceptual relationship between the two. In so doing, we will reveal the functionality of language in the implementation and maintenance of specific regimes of practice.

#### IVc. Fairclough on Ideology

*[I]n so far as changes in practices and restructurings can be said to embody representations, propositions or assumptions which affect (sustain, undermine) relations of power, they can be said to be ideological.*<sup>129</sup>

– Norman Fairclough

Fairclough understands ideologies as ‘significations/constructions of reality (the physical world, social relations, social identities), which are built into various dimensions of the forms/meanings of discursive practices, and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination.’<sup>130</sup> Language, according to Fairclough, is not only invested by ideology, but is a material form of ideology.<sup>131</sup> With the advent of the modern age, the exercise of power (and thus, domination and oppression) is increasingly achieved through the ideological workings of language (which includes visual as well as verbal language).<sup>132</sup> Since the use of language is the commonest form of social behaviour, and also the one in which we rely most on ‘common-sense’ assumptions,

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<sup>128</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>129</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 80.

<sup>130</sup> Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, p. 87.

<sup>131</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 73.

<sup>132</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, pp. 2, 27-28

ideology, language, and power are intimately linked;<sup>133</sup> my own inquiry will examine the way in which the view of an outgroup as legitimate targets for destruction becomes such a 'common-sense' possibility. Ideology, furthermore, is both a property of structures which 'constitute the outcome of past events and the conditions for current events,' and a property of particular discursive events which 'reproduce and transform their conditioning structures.'<sup>134</sup> Therefore, both specific utterances, and their context, must be analysed in order to understand ideology.

While ideology is embodied in form as well as content, 'it may be useful to think of ideologies in terms of content-like entities which are manifested in various formal features.'<sup>135</sup> The manifestation of ideology in text is the focal point of this concern. According to Fairclough, there is 'a widespread underestimation of the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relations of power.'<sup>136</sup> In terms of the manifestation and enactment of power, a particular aspect of ideology, as expressed in language, is the way in which it is an exercise of power which manufactures consent or acquiescence, as opposed to coercive exercises such as the use of physical force.<sup>137</sup> It is in disguising its own ideological nature that ideology becomes naturalised, automatised, 'common sense.'<sup>138</sup> Here again, then, we see why the analysis of language is important in an approach to examination of participation in genocide.

From this perspective we can expand our investigation by asking what relationship Fairclough posits between discourse and ideology, and how his model is useful to this inquiry.

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<sup>133</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 2; see also van Dijk, pp. 102-107 on 'common sense.'

<sup>134</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, pp. 71-72; see also Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 88-89.

<sup>135</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 75.

<sup>136</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 1.

<sup>137</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>138</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 82; see also van Dijk, pp. 102-107, on 'common sense.'



## IVd. Fairclough on Discourse

Despite specifically evoking Foucault, Fairclough's concept of discourse, in being concerned with close readings of *specific* verbal texts, differs from that of Foucault.<sup>139</sup> The theoretical insights provided by Foucault's work which Fairclough suggests are most important for his own approach are, firstly, a constitutive view of discourse (i.e., the way in which it constitutes its own object); secondly, 'an emphasis on the interdependency of the discourse practices of a society or institution'; thirdly, 'the discursive nature of power'; fourthly, 'the political nature of discourse'; and fifthly, 'the discursive nature of social change.'<sup>140</sup> All of these are relevant to our model of dehumanisation as a discursive strategy. While Fairclough's conception of 'discourse' is far less embracing than the Foucauldian model I employ, his conceptual model of language, and of analysis which takes language and utterance as its subject (as this thesis does), shares the perspective that utterances are, in themselves, actions and social practices which are inter-related with non-linguistic physical actions and physical practices.<sup>141</sup> Fairclough argues that, when taking language as the subject of inquiry, we can employ 'discourse' to mean internally variable 'ways of representing aspects of the world,' including representations of possible worlds as well as present reality as conceived in discursive terms.<sup>142</sup> Discourses constitute 'nodal points in the dialectical relationship between language and other elements of the social.'<sup>143</sup> Specific texts may thus include various different discourses.<sup>144</sup> Elsewhere, he defines discourse as 'language as a form of social practice.'<sup>145</sup> Discourse itself reflects ideological power which may inhere in ideologies

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<sup>139</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 82. For Fairclough's problematisation of the use of Foucault's work in a CDA approach, which are not relevant to the argument of this thesis, see *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 37, 56-61.

<sup>140</sup> Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, pp. 39, 41-43, 55-56.

<sup>141</sup> Fairclough, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 73; see also p. 74.

<sup>142</sup> Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, p. 124, 126.

<sup>143</sup> Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, p. 126.

<sup>144</sup> Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, p. 128.

<sup>145</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 20.

of nationhood, citizenship, religion, science and medicine, or other institutionalised ideologies. Particularly germane to our inquiry is the contention that the use of a particular combination of specific metaphors is a defining characteristic of different discourses.<sup>146</sup> There is also what Fairclough terms a ‘felicitous ambiguity’ in the terms ‘discourse’ and ‘practice’ in that they can refer either to what people do on a particular occasion, or what they do habitually in a given situation, either to action or to convention; the felicity lies in the way in which the social conventions underlying any individual instance are thereby revealed.<sup>147</sup> In our examination of the language of perpetrators and their actions, we will see the way in which these things are intimately intertwined.

Fairclough writes that analysis must take place ‘between texts, processes and their social conditions, both the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutional and social structures ... between *texts, interactions, and contexts*.’<sup>148</sup> In this work, the section on the theory and practice of dehumanisation will deal with the different natures of these, and the way in which they each create and condition dehumanisation, while my typology will address examples of these utterances and examine the broader socio-historical context, that is, both the constitutive systems and collectivities, and the discursive interactions, from which the different types emerge.

Ultimately, Fairclough’s model of the relationship between power, discourse, and ideology is that ‘conventions routinely drawn upon in discourse embody ideological assumptions which come to be taken as mere “common sense,” and which contribute to sustaining existing power relations.’<sup>149</sup> ‘Preconstructed semantic systems’ have the power to ‘generate particular visions of the world which may have the performative power to sustain or remake

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<sup>146</sup> Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, pp. 131-132; Fairclough refers both to ‘lexical’ metaphors, and also to ‘grammatical’ metaphors in which processes are represented as things.

<sup>147</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 28.

<sup>148</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power*, p. 26, original italics.

<sup>149</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), p. 64.

the world in their image.<sup>150</sup> A discourse type which is successfully established as dominant, is naturalised and legitimised.<sup>151</sup> Ideological naturalisation takes place at the level of the meaning of linguistic expressions, at the level of situational types within the interactional social order, and at the level of the subject position.<sup>152</sup> This structure also sets ‘interactional routines’ which are associated with particular discourse types.<sup>153</sup> Such naturalisation is described as ‘the most formidable weapon in the armoury of power.’<sup>154</sup> The following chapters will provide evidence of the way in which this process has occurred both regarding genocidal dehumanisation as an overall strategy (Chapter Four), and as regards particular types of dehumanisation and the discursive sources upon which they draw (Chapters Five through Seven).

In using Fairclough’s work to understand our subject, then, it is not his close, linguistic approach to texts which is of use to this inquiry, but his conception of understanding textual utterances, and specifically the way in which the concepts of discourse and ideology can be employed to reveal specific, functional aspects of language. As I have already stated, it is not my aim to take specific texts and subject them individually to intensive scrutiny and analysis; rather, it is my intent to use such utterances as evidence of the way in which a discursive strategy of genocidal dehumanisation emerges, exists and functions in the social context.

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<sup>150</sup> Fairclough, *Analysing Discourse*, p. 130.

<sup>151</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), p. 76. This process should never be considered complete, but rather a matter of degree.

<sup>152</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), pp. 87, 89.

<sup>153</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), p. 81.

<sup>154</sup> Fairclough, *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), p. 87.

## V. Language, 'Reality' and the Social

The theme of this chapter has been the functional importance of language in action. Before we leave the subject, it is necessary to deal in more depth with the question of social reality and the connection between language, and non-verbal practice. In examining this question, Pierre Bourdieu writes that 'the most resolutely objectivist theory' must take account of the way in which agents enact a labour of representation in order to 'impose their own visions of the world or the vision of their own position in the world, that is, their social identity.'<sup>155</sup> Bourdieu terms this process the 'methods of objectification.'<sup>156</sup> While I do not intend to fully detail Bourdieu's concept of language and symbolic power, there are a number of aspects of his model which are particularly relevant to our inquiry.<sup>157</sup> According to Bourdieu, the meaning of the present is always open (and thus, we might add, always contested).<sup>158</sup> Relations of power are present not only in the physical world, but also in people's minds, and they determine structuring principles and categories of perception of power relations.<sup>159</sup> Thus, knowledge confers the formidable social power to establish collective and consensual 'common sense.'<sup>160</sup> Ultimately, the social world is, in itself, a symbolic system.<sup>161</sup> The struggle 'for the imposition of the legitimate vision of the social world' is, specifically, a struggle for a monopoly on legitimate *naming*.<sup>162</sup> In our context, the power to name with legitimacy is the power to determine who deserves to live, who to die, and who (or 'what') may legitimately have such a fate enacted upon them.

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<sup>155</sup> P. Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', in Lyn Spillman (ed.), *Cultural Sociology*, Blackwell, Massachusetts, 2002, p. 69.

<sup>156</sup> Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', p. 71.

<sup>157</sup> For a short introduction to this concept see P. Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (ed. J. B. Thompson, trans. G. Raymond & M. Adamson), Polity Press, Cambridge, 1991, pp. 163-170.

<sup>158</sup> Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', p. 69.

<sup>159</sup> Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', p. 70.

<sup>160</sup> Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', p. 70.

<sup>161</sup> Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', p. 71.

<sup>162</sup> Bourdieu, 'Cultural Power', pp. 70-72; on the power to name, see also Barker & Galasiński, p. 56.

How does this process of definition come to exercise such determining power? In his book *The Construction of Social Reality*, John R. Searle describes the structure of social reality as 'weightless and invisible': it is entirely naturalised.<sup>163</sup> Facts, which may be created institutionally, can 'exist *relative to the intentionality of observers, users, etc.*' that is, relative to a functionality assigned to an object. Furthermore, this meaning construction takes place in a field of *collective intentionality*.<sup>164</sup> Many of these facts are in themselves created by a performative utterance (thus making the linguistic element partly constitutive of the fact itself) and they can only exist in a set of systemic relationships to other facts.<sup>165</sup> The creation of new facts is intimately entwined with the creation, conferral and imposition of power.<sup>166</sup> Searle takes a number of telling examples, such as the choice by American authorities not to call the Korean war a 'war,' but rather a 'conflict,' so as not to be acting unconstitutionally; or 'murder,' where, because of the process described above, 'killing, under certain circumstances, counts as murder, and murder counts as a punishable crime.'<sup>167</sup> But all of these, except the 'brute' fact of killing (and even that, in historical terms), are open to collective redefinition, because they are created by a process of linguistic or symbolic representation.<sup>168</sup> Language is not (only) *descriptive*, but *constitutive* of reality; the existence of social facts can happen only 'by forms of human agreement that essentially involve the capacity to symbolize.'<sup>169</sup> Dehumanisation, then, can fulfil its functional role in genocide and genocidal killing because of the power of language to constitute reality through the purposive deployment of specific symbols within discursive systems of meaning.

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<sup>163</sup> J. R. Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, The Free Press, New York, 1995, pp. 4, 47.

<sup>164</sup> Searle, pp. 23-24.

<sup>165</sup> Searle, pp. 34-37, 54-55.

<sup>166</sup> Searle, pp. 96-97.

<sup>167</sup> Searle, pp. 50, 89.

<sup>168</sup> Searle, pp. 76-77, 99-100.

<sup>169</sup> Searle, pp. 120, 228.

## VI. Conclusion

We have covered a great deal of theoretical ground in this chapter. How can we briefly summarise thus far in relation to the object of analysis? My inquiry here is centred on culture and the construction of meaning. I argue that this construction takes place through discourse and ideology manifest in language and text; in doing so I draw on theoretical models from diverse disciplines. It has been necessary, then, to examine the work of other scholars who have employed similar approaches. This discussion has been intended neither as an exhaustive dissection of the theories presented nor, in any *individual* case, as an exact guide to the approach undertaken in this work, but rather as a series of relevant signposts to, and explanations of the nature of, the way in which I will approach the material presented in this thesis. One final example of such an approach, this time applied to a subject which is not too distant from the present concern, will serve to conclude my discussion of the nature of a theoretical approach to the topic of genocidal dehumanisation.

In his examination of war, the sociologist Philip Smith argues that, rather than the traditional rationalist, realist and state-focussed paradigm which has been prevalent in the social sciences, there is a need to 'decode the ways in which constituencies and players make sense of wars and the situations that might lead to them'; that is, to understand collective violence as a cultural act underpinned by the popular will (as in the theories of Jean-Jacques Rousseau) or by collective conscience (as in those of Émile Durkheim).<sup>170</sup> In order to do this, analysis must take as its subject legitimating public discourse and claims, 'working through the cultural logic behind ... utterances and reconstructing the cultural systems through which ... claims make sense to others.'<sup>171</sup> The causal role of culture should be

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<sup>170</sup> P. Smith, *Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2005, pp. 4-7, 223-224. As we will see in later chapters, war, both historically and in terms of its frameworks of meaning, is intimately connected to genocide.

<sup>171</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, pp. 10-11.

understood as contributory, though not sufficient; negative symbolism is not solely causal (in the sense of being the only cause), but neither is it solely a rationalisation for action driven by a more material motivation.<sup>172</sup> The process of the construction of a particular image of 'the enemy,' oriented around norms of reason and the quest for mutual consensus, does not occur after the fact of enmification itself.<sup>173</sup>

Smith proposes an approach which synthesises the analysis of categorisation through dualistic moral criteria, with narrative structures considered in context.<sup>174</sup> In employing such a synthesis,

we should think about the role of narratives in real social life (the social science approach) and how these will have implications for the ethical or normative regulation of social action (the moral philosophy approach), and do this through a generalizable theory of culture (the structuralist understanding) that takes narratives as a canteen of cultural tropes and genres and not as a smörgåsboard of infinite variety.<sup>175</sup>

We 'will find empirical regularities in war-generating discourse,' in which similar or identical discursive positions, interpretive moves, and efforts to understand events and legitimise or de-legitimise particular courses of action can be recognised, in the course of which familiar cultural codes are applied to events and actors.<sup>176</sup> Our analytical task (following scholars such as Ricouer and Geertz) is to locate meaningful fragments of culture (that is, utterances) and systematically relate these to each other.<sup>177</sup> The primary aim of the present work is to define the presence and the nature of such a systematic relationship – to reveal the

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<sup>172</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, pp. 11, 208.

<sup>173</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, pp. 209, 211.

<sup>174</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, p. 14.

<sup>175</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, p. 19.

<sup>176</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, p. 35.

<sup>177</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, p. 36.

'anatomy' of genocidal dehumanisation – by collating texts and presenting them in contexts both historical and contemporary, discursive and practical.<sup>178</sup>

In the process of *revealing* discursive-ideological systems, questions of functionality and purpose in the realm of non-linguistic practice inevitably arise. Smith's work aims to connect the study of meaning determination through culture, with outcomes based on the action of agents, by suggesting that 'culture-structures provide the moral horizons and schemas of value that afford internalized motivations for action,' while also 'establishing genre resources to construct stories that helpfully interpret [agents'] world.'<sup>179</sup> In other words, culture is both 'a sphere of motivation and value *driving* action,' and 'a sense-making resource *for* action.'<sup>180</sup> Here we might think in particular of the dual roles of dehumanising discourse in motivating and legitimating genocidal actions (a subject which will be discussed at length in the following chapter). Ultimately, to uncover the intricate mechanisms of such systems is to engage with the non-linguistic purposes which determine them, and which they in turn determine.

This chapter has provided both a framework through which the role of text in constructing reality may be apprehended, and some theoretical tools – in particular, the concepts of discourse and ideology – with which to do so. In concluding, it is germane to turn to a quote from one of the too few scholars who have utilised cultural theory in discussing genocide. In introducing his work *Balkan holocausts*, David MacDonald writes:

Throughout this book, I will be using a form of discourse analysis to explore the themes, ideas and vocabulary present in Serbian and Croatian propaganda. I have used a qualitative

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<sup>178</sup> On the use of the term 'anatomy' in this context see Chap. 2, n1.

<sup>179</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, p. 43.

<sup>180</sup> Smith, *Why War?*, p. 44, original italics. Smith also provides a detailed rebuttal of those he calls 'culture-skeptics,' who would deny any causal role to culture; he argues instead for a multidimensional model in which reasons for action include both the normative and symbolic, and the rational and strategic (pp. 47-50).



method of analysing primary material, isolating their most important themes and images.

This is in line with Oliver Thomson's suggestion of paying attention to 'the more obvious pattern frequencies that come from a general view of contents.' This book, however, strives not only to present an analysis of general themes and ideas in Serbian and Croatian historical revisions but also to analyse the vocabulary and structure of their language and how it has been used.<sup>181</sup>

In the present work, a similar approach is taken, in that there is no attempt to array as many examples as possible of a particular type of dehumanising utterance to prove its existence (though for every type numerous examples are given in order to demonstrate that any such utterance is not an aberration, nor related solely to the perspective of a single individual). Neither is this thesis an attempt to take one, or a few, highly significant utterances or texts and analyse them exhaustively to the exclusion of others. Rather, my objective is, firstly, to use texts and utterances to identify common patterns of the construction of meaning and common patterns of vocabulary; secondly, to examine the historical-discursive context in which and from which these patterns emerged; and thirdly, to ask what function these pattern-ed texts serve, and to suggest a typology of narratives. The ultimate aim of this endeavour is to provide a conception which will both make the concept of 'dehumanisation' a more precise instrument of the analysis of historical episodes of genocide and genocidal killing; and which will allow the concept to serve a predictive function in examining language and discourse for genocidally dehumanising tendencies in contemporary societies. Having equipped ourselves with these tools, we may go on to examine genocidal dehumanisation itself in a more exact and a closer light.

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<sup>181</sup> D. B. MacDonald, *Balkan holocausts?: Serbian and Croatian victim-centred propaganda and the war in Yugoslavia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester (New York), 2002, p. 12.

## Chapter 4.

### Dehumanisation

The existence of dehumanisation in episodes of genocide and genocidal killing has been well documented. It has been empirically demonstrated that 'people who are given punitive power treat dehumanised individuals more ruthlessly than those who have been invested with human qualities.'<sup>1</sup> So why, we might ask, does dehumanisation not 'go without saying'? After all, it has often been shown that humans, as 'categorising animals,' have a very common, and likely universal, psychological predisposition to create discriminations along the lines of 'us' and 'them,' and to ascribe positive characteristics to 'us' and negative characteristics to 'them'; and argued also that the existence of such categorisation has an evolutionary rationale as a dispositive for group cohesion, and hence competitive survival.<sup>2</sup> Ervin Staub elaborates:

Recent research in psychology has shown that human beings have a tendency to divide the world into 'us' and 'them.' They use seemingly trivial information to create ingroups and outgroups and then discriminate against members of the outgroup ... Seemingly, people use available information to divide themselves into an ingroup and an outgroup. Obviously, people group themselves in many ways ... and they may consider others who do not belong to their group as different and less worthy. But the ties that bind people to significant

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<sup>1</sup> A. Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency', *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2002, p. 109; A. Bandura, C. Barbaranelli, G. V. Caprara, & C. Pastorelli, 'Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 71, no. 2, 1996, p. 366, 371; A. Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement of Moral Control', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 38-41.

<sup>2</sup> On this issue, see M. Deutsch, 'Psychological Roots of Moral Exclusion', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 21-25. See also Daniel Bar-Tal on ethnocentrism: D. Bar-Tal, 'Causes and Consequences of Delegitimization: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 73-78.

ingroups are much stronger than this: deep affective associations, shared understandings, common goals, and the perception of a shared fate.<sup>3</sup>

It may seem that there is no need to spend any further effort on this propensity; that we may simply accept that it takes place, and that effort would be more fruitfully spent examining other aspects of the occurrence of genocide and genocidal killing.

But the problem I address here is not the question of whether this seemingly universal 'us and them' process happens in fact. Rather, it is the question of why, in some circumstances, a *particular* manifestation of such characterisation is related to genocidal violence, and of what, in fact, this relationship consists. For this reason, as well as the fact that racial or national groups are not the only victims of genocide, I will not have a great deal to say about theories of the racial or national other as such. Rather, I am concerned with the question of the construction of an outgroup by an ingroup in the context of the direction of genocidal violence toward that outgroup. That is, the focus of my concern is not the huge topic of the construction of outgroups *per se*, but rather, discursive constructions regarding the legitimate direction of institutionalised violence at civilian collectivities with the aim of obliteration. Given this, I begin my investigation of dehumanisation, not with the issue of the highly complex nature of the discursive relationship between the ingroup and the other, but with the question of the nature of collective violence.

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<sup>3</sup> E. Staub, *The roots of evil: The origins of genocide and other group violence*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p. 58; and see also E. Staub, 'Moral Exclusion, Personal Goal Theory, and Extreme Destructiveness', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 47-64, pp. 52-54. Ervin Staub elaborates on the concept of group categorisation and fear (*The roots of evil*, p 59):

Related sources of ingroup-outgroup differentiation are fear as a common human response to the unusual, unknown, and different and the tendency to like and prefer what is similar ... A further source of ethnocentrism is the fact that the human mind works by categorization ... We would be overwhelmed by uncertainty and anxiety if we approached each person (or event) without using past learning as a guide. Categorization, however, is a basis of stereotypes, exaggerated beliefs about groups that are often negative.

Introducing the topic through an exploration of this problematic will provide a reason as to *why* the dehumanising construction of the other can and must be considered not an accompaniment to, but a fundamental aspect of genocide; such a reason serves in turn as an introduction to the topic of the way in which dehumanisation actually functions when human agents participate in genocidal action. From this vantage point, that is, we will be able to reframe the 'big questions' about genocide and dehumanisation in order to shed some light on the problems of defining dehumanisation, asking why dehumanisation occurs in genocide and how it functions. In doing so we will pay particular attention to the differences between legitimisation and motivation in genocide, and to the role of language and metaphor in allowing these factors to inhere in genocidal discourse. Finally, having developed a structural and functional model, we will enumerate the different types of genocidal dehumanisation in practice and ask how this model can be applied to understand these types in terms of connection, similarity and distinctiveness.

### **I. Predispositions Against Perpetration?: Challenging the Paradigm**

This investigation commences, then, by considering the position of the individual participating in collective genocidal violence. Most people, if they think of it at all, like to imagine that the majority of humans must be somehow *induced* to participate in mass killing. That is, it is assumed that *not* to participate in mass killing would be the normative or the initial response, and therefore, in order to do so, this normative resistance must be somehow overcome. There is limited truth in this, inasmuch as the modern state is designed to enforce an ideology which removes legitimate violence from the hands, and choice, of the individual *as* an individual, and concentrates it in those of the representatives of the state (we must remember, however, that representatives of the state, and other individuals licensed by the state to employ violence personally or to order it employed, do

not make up an insignificant social body: police, security guards, soldiers, politicians, social workers, judges, immigration officials, creditors, and so on). Overall, however, the conception that people are normatively disinclined to harm others is too psychologically comforting not to be misleading. The pleasures of enacting one's will on others, the pleasures of the exercise of power and of violence, have been too well acknowledged. As we will see, it is rather the case that, in the enactment of the killing of civilians, various ideologies come into conflict, some of which predispose unquestioning or enthusiastic participation, and some of which do not. As Peter J. Haas puts it,

The agent may well know that murder *simpliciter* is wrong, but the agent also knows that there are contexts in which killing another person is (or might be) morally acceptable. The determination of what this concrete situation here and now calls for is one of prevailing ethical standards established through language and self evident conventions of thought.<sup>4</sup>

But before we deal with the moral self-conception of the genocidal agent in the moment of action, we must ask a prior question which will inform a developing picture of such an agent: what is the nature of an individual's relationship to the enactment of state violence, when they themselves are not directly implicated in that enactment? To draw with a broad brushstroke, we have two distinct groups. Firstly, there are the many people who support, or fantasise about, the employment of mass violence toward others (particularly if we take 'violence' in a broad sense, to include forcible action against the will of its human objects, such as deportation, etc); that is, people who do not have an ideological predisposition against institutionalised violence *per se*, but rather consider it legitimate depending on the nature of its object and the reason for its deployment. This group also includes, though it is not limited to, people whose personal ideology consists in unquestioning obedience to the state. If such people are involved in the actual employment of that violence, some will

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<sup>4</sup> P. J. Haas, 'The Morality of Auschwitz: Moral Language and the Nazi Ethic', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1988, p. 388.

continue to believe completely in the (moral) right(eous)ness of such action; some will feel it is an unpleasant necessity akin to other unpleasant but not morally troublesome tasks in the running of societies; some will be morally troubled, or even come to believe that the action is wrong, but continue the action (or merely take steps to make sure that, when possible, they personally need no longer be involved in its commission, as was notable among, for example, Nazi camp doctors); and a very few will change their minds about the rightness of such action, and refuse to participate any further. In other words, in a situation in which approval initially exists for genocidal action in the broadest sense ('we need to solve the Jewish Problem by the disappearance of Jews from German territory'), actual experience of such action (at whatever level of involvement) may engender (moral) approval, indifference, or disapproval, and this response may change over the duration of the period of action, and beyond; it is not temporally fixed.

On the other hand, we have a second group: people who believe that the use of violence in any case except self-defence (which may or may not include the 'defence of the State' or 'of Society' from a threat) is wrong (raising questions about conceptions of 'self-defence,' threat, and dehumanisation which are explored elsewhere in this chapter). In their day-to-day lives, such people believe that they would not hurt an 'innocent' person, or indeed they may believe that they would not be capable of violence toward anyone, particularly (and this is an important qualification) in a pre-planned or 'cold-blooded' situation. The range of responses to a situation in which such a person is asked or ordered to enact violence, whether directly or indirectly, is similar to that outlined above: that is, equally in the situation in which initial approval does not exist or is not a strongly held ideological belief, actual experience of action may engender approval (particularly in the context of mass movements), indifference or disapproval, in a way which is not temporally fixed.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Israel Charny and Daphna Fromer's study in which they examine responses of students who were asked whether they would participate in a program of involuntary mass euthanasia, and divide them into separate categories is relevant in this context (I. W. Charny & D. Fromer, 'A Study of the Readiness of Jewish/Israeli

Overall, then, we cannot begin from the assumption that *systems* are always necessary to enable violence and killing to which people are, by ‘nature,’ ‘inclination’ or socialisation, ‘inherently’ disinclined – that is to say, normatively disinclined. Such a theory can be simply summarised as the concept that everyone has a conscience which must be thwarted or obstructed in order to do ‘wrong,’ which the perpetrator must or should on some level realise is wrong. Haas puts this well in suggesting that ‘the traditional problem of why people do what they (should) know is evil’ is meaningless; rather, we need to ask ‘how people come to know at all what evil is.’<sup>6</sup>

Theories of ‘evil’ in genocide, such as that of James Waller, Philip Zimbardo, Ervin Staub, Roy F. Baumeister, and others, tend to make the assumption that people are basically ‘good’ (or that to be ‘ordinary’ is to be equivalent to ‘basically good’) and that in the process of engagement in harmful action the *intrusion* of ‘evil’ is somehow involved.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, most theories of motivation begin from such an assumption – that is, the assumption (thoroughly discussed by Waller) that there is a ‘true self’ or ‘initial self’ which has a (good) moral conscience and a disinclination to violent harm of others; and a separate, non-normative state in which this conscience does not apply.<sup>8</sup> Thus we have Stanley Milgram’s positing of

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Students in the Health Professions to Authorize and Execute Involuntary Mass Euthanasia of “Severely Handicapped” Patients’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 5, no. 3, 1990, pp. 313-335).

<sup>6</sup> Haas, p. 387.

<sup>7</sup> This occurs even when the terminology of ‘evil’ is not accepted as entirely unproblematic, usually in the context of an argument that there are evil acts rather than evil people; Roy Baumeister, for example, recognises that ‘evil’ is in the eye of the beholder, but nonetheless refers to ‘evil acts’ and asks such questions as why people would choose ‘evil means’ to accomplish their ends (R. F. Baumeister, *Evil: Inside Human Violence and Cruelty*, W. H. Freeman and Company, New York, 2000, pp. 6, 101-108).

<sup>8</sup> See J. Waller, ‘Perpetrators of the Holocaust: Divided and Unitary Self Conceptions of Evildoing’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 10, no. 1, 1996, pp. 11-33. The concepts presented in this paper, which focuses on models of a divided or a unitary self in ‘evildoing,’ are developed more fully in Waller’s later work *Becoming Evil* (J. Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (2<sup>nd</sup> revised edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007).

the 'agentic state' which occurs when an individual is integrated into a hierarchy;<sup>9</sup> Albert Bandura's positing of moral disengagement as a progressive, transformative process removing pre-existing moral disinclinations to harmful behaviour, or 'disinhibiting' 'transgression' (as he puts it, 'decent, ordinary people can be led to do extraordinarily cruel things');<sup>10</sup> Robert Jay Lifton's 'doubling,' the creation of an 'Auschwitz self' in an environment where moral norms do not apply;<sup>11</sup> Zygmunt Bauman's argument that 'modern civilisation has made us all (or most of us at least) to [sic] dislike and shun violence';<sup>12</sup> the (discredited) 'Goldhagen' argument that motivation is *entirely* based upon ideological racism (or, in terms outside Daniel Goldhagen's frame of reference, any other ideological essentialist prejudice);<sup>13</sup> the (again, discredited) theory of the insanity, abnormality or aberration of genocidal perpetrators, or genocidal societies; or the 'Browning' hypothesis which sees 'peer pressure,' appeals to masculinity, and appeals to the group as a community, as defining factors.<sup>14</sup> As Waller has demonstrated, each of these theories is in itself insufficient as an explanation of motivation for and legitimacy of genocidal action in the conception of perpetrators.

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<sup>9</sup> S. Milgram, *Obedience To Authority: An Experimental View*, Pinter & Martin, London, 2005 (first edn 1974), pp. 134-136. I do not deny Milgram's claim that in this context moral responsibility becomes owed to a system, to one's superior and to the organisation, rather than to one's inferiors in the hierarchy or to those outside it – indeed, as we will see, this is an important manifestation of dehumanisation

<sup>10</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 110; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, p. 372; A. Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1999, p. 200. It's important, however, to differentiate the concept of a 'good' initial self from the role of routinisation of harmful action, and of the way in which, as we will see, systems are structured to draw individuals progressively into greater identification with harmful systems and actions.

<sup>11</sup> R. J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (new edn), Basic Books, New York, 2000, pp. 418-465.

<sup>12</sup> Z. Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember, – But What?' in James Kaye and Bo Stråth (eds), *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Series philosophy & politics; No. 5), P.I.E. – Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000, p. 53.

<sup>13</sup> Goldhagen's argument is, of course, related to the *Shoah*, but as a type of explanation it is not limited to this episode. See D. J. Goldhagen, *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust*, Little, Brown and Company, London, 1996, pp. 416-454.

<sup>14</sup> C. R. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*, Penguin, London, 2001.



Given that all of these theories *assume* rather than *demonstrate* an initial 'goodness,' resistance to participation in genocidal action should not be understood as inherent, standard or 'normal.' Neither, however, is it non-existent. Humans operate within frameworks of morality which are created by a process of socialisation (and may be re-created through a process of resocialisation)<sup>15</sup>: human acts have human *reasons*. In any given genocidal episode, the motivation of different perpetrators and beneficiaries, from Nazi 'desk-murderers' shuffling 'units' on paper, to Rwandan killers who hacked friends and relatives apart with machetes, cannot be generalised:<sup>16</sup> it relates to the specific circumstance of each individual involved, and the specific nature of her or his involvement. Furthermore, in most if not all cases, even on the individual level, motivation and legitimisation is not pure (ideology, economic gain, obedience to authority, sadistic pleasure, etc) but is mixed, and changes over time.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, pre-existing frameworks of morality can be engaged and disengaged by the individual, depending on the nature of the situation.<sup>18</sup>

Conflicts with others who are considered equally human, in which there is action, sometimes violent, upon a desire to assert dominance or enforce action over an individual

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<sup>15</sup> Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, p. 364; Staub, 'Moral Exclusion', p. 59.

<sup>16</sup> D. Bloxham, 'Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participation, and Motivation in Comparative Perspective', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2008, pp. 204, 231. Bloxham's article provides an interesting synthesis and discussion of the questions of different types of motivation, suggesting that 'interest, circumstance, and convictions' form a 'virtual triangle' of interconnected, and permutating, reasons for the perpetration of genocide (p. 217). On the multifarious nature of motivation, see also J. Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary of massacre and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003, p. 204.

<sup>17</sup> M. Mann, 'Were the Perpetrators of Genocide "Ordinary Men" or "Real Nazis"? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2000, p. 333; M. K. Huggins, M. Haritos-Fatouros & P. G. Zimbardo, *Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 2002, p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement'; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, pp. 364-365; Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 193. I would suggest that Bandura's model, in which harmful conduct, or what he problematically terms 'inhumanities,' can be justified by moral justification, euphemistic labelling, advantageous comparison, displacement of responsibility, diffusion of responsibility, disregard or distortion of consequences, dehumanisation, attribution of blame, and/or gradualistic moral disengagement, as *separate* processes, fails to fully recognise the way in which these different strategies tend to be inextricably bound together in belief systems which relate to harmful action.

or a group, occur constantly in any society and between social groups; however, killing, while as we have seen not inherently forbidden, is not generally included within the compass of what may legitimately be done to a person conceived in essentialist fashion as an equally human other, except in certain situations – for example, during wartime, or in some theories approving capital punishment.<sup>19</sup> Motivations for involvement in genocide are many, but they may also be motivations for other types of non-genocidal action. That is, some motivations, related to ideology, could also view non-genocidal action, such as oppression, non-murderous relocation, or economic redistribution, as the means to achieve their ends. Other motivations for involvement, such as careerism, are not necessarily related in any way to an ideological view of the characteristics of the human objects of genocidal killing, but are nonetheless forced to encounter these objects, whether as ‘units’ on paper or as living beings to be shot down or hacked apart. In either case, legitimisation of the *specific* action which is taken, whether based on a ‘genocidal’ motivation or otherwise, is thus a necessity.

Putting all of this together, we may state that the following are the conditions under which genocide occurs in the modern age. There are many possibilities for actions against an outgroup perceived as problematic. However, genocide is only sometimes the action which is chosen. Whatever the motivation, whether ideological or non-ideological, killing, either of collectivities (particularly in war) or individuals (particularly in capital punishment) is by no

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<sup>19</sup> On this subject, Raul Hilberg gives an interesting quote which directly relates ‘criminality’ to ‘racial biology’ (a common subject in eugenicist utterances; the connection between biology and criminality, though without the racist element, was an innovation of the [in]famous Cesare Lombroso), and thus to legitimate killing of criminals, during the *Shoah*:

[T]he Jews were portrayed not only as a world conspiracy but also as a criminal people. This is the definition of Jews as furnished in instructions to the German press:

Stress: In the case of the Jews there are not merely a few criminals (as in every other people), but all of Jewry rose from criminal roots and in its very nature it is criminal. The Jews are no people like other people, but a pseudo-people welded together by hereditary criminality... The annihilation of Jewry is no loss to humanity, but just as useful as capital punishment or protective custody against other criminals.

(R. Hilberg, ‘The Nazi Holocaust: Using Bureaucracies, Overcoming Psychological Barriers to Genocide’, in M. D. Ermann & R. J. Lundman (eds), *Corporate and Governmental Deviance: Problems of Organizational Behavior in Contemporary Society* (5th edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, 1996, p. 175)

means universally considered a non-normative or illegitimate activity and resisted as such. However, the violent institutionalised destruction of civilian collectivities is generally thus considered – this can be demonstrated, for example, by the fact that such a solution to a problem is inadmissible on the world stage, and is generally either concealed or represented as a more legitimate action, such as warfare. Therefore, while the conception of a true or initial moral self, fundamentally disinclined to involvement, which must be overcome, is misleading, neither can we assume, given the existence of ideological and/or material motivations for action, that there is no psychological-ideological resistance whatsoever to the killing (or violent destruction) of civilians as a means of attaining such ends.<sup>20</sup> The *central* and the *only common* aspect of ideological motivation for genocide (as opposed to motivation for involvement in genocidal action), and, more importantly, for the legitimisation of genocide, is the construction of the other.<sup>21</sup> If we wish to understand how genocide can occur, we must therefore examine questions of legitimisation, which (as we will see) include the issue of ideological motivation. In doing so, the construction of a civilian collectivity as not-equally-human – that is, as a legitimate target of destruction – must therefore be our starting point and the focus of our labours. In taking this issue as a primary subject of inquiry, we must return initially to some introductory questions as to conceptions of the relationship between genocide and dehumanisation.

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<sup>20</sup> Kenneth Grundy & Michael Weinstein point out that all ideologies of violence, whether they propose that violence is normally blameworthy or normally praiseworthy, require a justification to demonstrate that 'there is something about certain acts of violence which makes them inherently praiseworthy' (K. W. Grundy & M. A. Weinstein, *The Ideologies of Violence*, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus [Ohio], 1974, p. 116).

<sup>21</sup> See Staub, 'Moral Exclusion', p. 55, on the way in which pre-existing cultural constructions regarding particular collectivities can predispose violence and/or genocide as a solution to a perceived problem.

In this and later chapters, I will make limited reference to the concept of 'the other' and 'othering.' Given the limitations of space, and the fact that this concept *in itself* is not key to the argument of the thesis, it need only be noted briefly here that the term is used, not according to the conceptualisations of Jacques Lacan or Emmanuel Levinas, but rather in the tradition concerning the negative or pejorative construction of the Other running from the work of G. W. F. Hegel, through that of Simone de Beauvoir and Edward Said, and now widely employed in the humanities. In order to avoid the problematics around the theoretical freight of particular usages of the term, I have chosen not to capitalise it, except when making direct reference to the work of scholars who have done so.

## II. Dehumanisation and Genocide

*[E]ach and every genocider ... defines precisely who are the undeserving, condemnable and disposable in their era ... Each victim group becomes the object of damning and unbelievable symbolizations by their killers as to their subhuman representations— lice, vermin, diseased, savages, heathens. What is needed is an understanding of the commonality of this process as underlining and enabling the development of genocidal policy and actions.*

– Israel W. Charny<sup>22</sup>

*LÉOPORD: We no longer considered the Tutsis as humans or even as creatures of God. We had stopped seeing the world as it is, I mean as an expression of God's will.*

*That is why it was easy for us to wipe them out.*<sup>23</sup>

In the introduction to this thesis I made reference to the fact that, while many works on genocide mention dehumanisation only a few scholars have thus far considered dehumanisation to be a concept deserving meaningful theoretical investigation as a primary subject.<sup>24</sup> Modern dehumanisation has been considered to be a manifestation, motivation, or effect of such diverse phenomena as racism, xenophobia, bureaucracy, colonialism, group structure and belief, authority, hierarchy, ancient hatreds, and so forth; but in each case

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<sup>22</sup> I. W. Charny, 'Value of Life', in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ABC-CLIO, California, 1999, pp. 404-405.

<sup>23</sup> J. Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers In Rwanda Speak* (trans. L. Coverdale), Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, New York, 2005, pp. 144-145.

<sup>24</sup> In the context of comparative genocide studies, lengthier discussion of dehumanisation and dehumanising discourse can be found in the work of (among others) Helen Fein, Israel Charny, Herbert Hirsch, Ervin Staub, and James Waller. Leo Kuper also gave brief consideration to the matter in his classic work *Genocide: Its Political use In The Twentieth Century* (Yale University Press, New Haven/Yale, 1981, pp. 54, 85-92). Other authors, such as Daniel Bar-Tal, Stanley Cohen, and Emanuele Castano, have made very important contributions to this subject from the perspectives of their various fields. All of the aforementioned works are discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

dehumanisation is considered as an effect or an aspect of the subject under examination.<sup>25</sup>

With some notable exceptions, there have been few who have questioned *why* dehumanisation manifests in cases of genocide and mass killing, and whether it is present in all such cases; neither has much serious investigation been undertaken of whether, in fact, it is justifiable to employ 'dehumanisation' as a concept. Rather, both in general, the mention of, and documentation of the existence of, dehumanisation has been considered to be the endpoint, not the beginning, of inquiry, while the *raison d'être* and the function of dehumanisation have been considered to be self-evident.

As I have already argued, then, the question as to whether 'dehumanisation' is a useful concept in scholarship on genocide remains open. Here it is appropriate to return to the model laid out in the introduction, in order to elucidate the way in which the argument of this chapter will proceed. This thesis attempts to answer the following questions. *Why* should genocidal dehumanisation be considered to be an existing phenomenon? *How* does it manifest? *What* can its presence in particular, differentiated forms tell us about a given situation? This is done through an examination of *why* dehumanisation has become a necessary accompaniment to genocide in the context of the modern age (that is, the *theory* of dehumanisation); and, given this, *how* it functions in genocide (the *practice*). Before answering these questions, I examine existing definitions of dehumanisation and formulate my own. I argue that to be employed as a useful tool of analysis, (genocidal) dehumanisation must be conceived as both a complex, and an internally differentiated mechanism, one which may serve the end either of motivation (sometimes) or of legitimisation (universally). Finally, I contend that discursive genocidal dehumanisation manifests in three 'types,' which have a stable associative relationship with these different functions.

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<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of this problem from the perspective of social psychology, see C. Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion: A critical discursive reframing of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanisation', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 46, 2007, p. 732.

The analysis outlined in this way may seem too theoretical, a dissection of genocide for the purposes of abstract knowledge rather than a concrete attempt to understand its features in a way which is useful both in historical analysis, and in strategies of prediction and intervention. In terms of the concrete, there are a number of 'big questions' or 'whys' which scholars ask when faced with genocide. At this point, we will reframe the questions asked above, and the issues raised in the introduction, in order to understand how inquiry into dehumanisation can give insight into answers to these 'big questions'.

- Firstly, given that violence is always one solution to a perceived problem, and that therefore the perception of a problem or conflict can be a motivation for violence, why is genocidal violence in some cases viewed by perpetrators as a legitimate solution to that problem and enacted as such, while in other cases it is not?
- Secondly, how, given the existence of the desire to enact such a solution, does it come to be acceptable not just to those who provide the original ideological impetus for such action, but to all the other actors (both collective and individual) involved in carrying it out?
- Thirdly, why, given a motivation to violence, are particular types of violence against particular collectivities generally considered to be legitimate (by those involved and/or by observers), whilst other types, enacted against other collectivities, are not thus considered, except (perhaps, to varying extents) by the perpetrators themselves?
- Finally, how, in the face of the cognitive dissonance produced by actions which are, in normal circumstances, considered illegitimate uses of violence, do individual and group

actors harmonise their self-conception and their conception of the group to which they belong, with the actions which are being undertaken?<sup>26</sup>

The answer to each of these questions lies in the emergence of a particular consensus regarding belief and action, in the construction of which dehumanisation has a crucial role to play. This thesis outlines this role, and suggests a conceptual model and typology of dehumanisation. The most important aspect of this conception, and one which has remained thus-far unremarked-upon in the literature, is a differentiation between legitimisation and motivation, which may be used to productively analyse the nature of genocidal or pre-genocidal dehumanisation in any given situation.

In pursuing this analysis, I begin by examining definitions of dehumanisation and clarifying my own use of the term. I then consider, firstly, what *purposes* genocidal dehumanisation serves on the individual and the collective level (*why* such a consensus must be constructed); secondly, *how* it serves these purposes, and to what effect, in different circumstances; and, thirdly, *what* are its major manifestations, what are their contents and functions, and what *connections* exists between them, which allow us to consider dehumanisation a phenomenon as such.

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<sup>26</sup> For the concept of 'cognitive dissonance,' see Leon Festinger's seminal work, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Tavistock Publications, London, 1962). While this concept has been critiqued and problematised (see for example E. Harmon-Jones & J. Mills [eds], *Cognitive dissonance : progress on a pivotal theory in social psychology*, American Psychological Association, Washington D.C., 1999) the essential contention made here, that engagement in the killing of civilians is not an 'everyday' activity automatically considered legitimate *in itself* and that, like other activities, it must be 'accounted for' in discursive terms, is not controversial; the question of legitimacy is explored further below.

### III. Dehumanisation: A Proposed Definition

The formulation of a definition of 'dehumanisation' as the term will be used in this work gives both an entrée to and an overview of the literature on dehumanisation, as well as indicating the position taken by the present work vis-à-vis previous scholarly analyses of the concept. Many definitions of dehumanisation, and of exclusion which is not considered dehumanisation, have been proposed by genocide scholars. In disciplinary terms, the topic itself (as opposed to the works in which it is considered) has generally been approached from a socio-cultural and/or a psychological perspective. Here, I give a brief overview of different definitions, including discussion of advantages and problematics, before proposing my own definition based on consideration of these.

As I have already noted, different terms have been used to describe related or similar discursive strategies: dehumanisation, devaluation, delegitimization, depersonalisation, moral exclusion, social death, and so forth.<sup>27</sup> More specific terms, such as demonisation, and

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<sup>27</sup> The discursivity of dehumanisation has been recognised not only within the humanities, but also by various scholars in the field of social psychology; see for example M. Billig, 'Henri Tajfel's "Cognitive aspects of prejudice" and psychology of bigotry', *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 41, 2002, pp. 185-186. For Bar-Tal's concept of 'delegitimization,' defined as 'beliefs that downgrade another group with extreme negative social categories for the purpose of excluding it from human groups that are considered as acting within the limits of acceptable norms and/or values,' see D. Bar-Tal *Group Beliefs: A Conception for Analyzing Group Structure, Processes, and Behaviour*, Springer-Verlag, New York, 1990, pp. 93-94; for a somewhat different wording see Bar-Tal, 'Causes and Consequences,' pp. 65-66. Bar-Tal considers dehumanisation a sub-category of delegitimization. For 'devaluation' see E. Staub, 'The Origins and Evolution of Hate, With Notes On Prevention' in R. J. Sternberg (ed.), *The Psychology of Hate*, American Psychological Association, Washington, 2005, pp. 51-66, pp. 52-54. 'Depersonalisation' is a concept emerging from the work of psychologist Henri Tajfel – see Billig; for a discussion of 'depersonalisation' and its relationship to 'dehumanisation' and extreme prejudice see Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion', p. 718.

'Moral exclusion,' a phrase proposed by Ervin Staub, is found in the work of Susan Opatow: 'moral exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in which moral values, rules and considerations of fairness apply' (S. Opatow, 'Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 1-20, p. 1). For a discussion of these terms in the context of language, social discrimination, and inter-group aggression, see C. F. Graumann, 'Verbal Discrimination: a Neglected Chapter in the Social Psychology of Aggression', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1998, p. 47.



infrahumanisation, have also been applied to such discourse.<sup>28</sup> Of all these terms, 'dehumanisation' seems the most common, the least wedded to a particular technical usage or disciplinary perspective, and also to cover not only the discursive removal, but also the 'lessening' of perceived humanity (that is, a realm of discourse wherein the object is considered either a lesser human or less than human); and for this reason I continue to employ this term to refer to the process I will go on to describe here.

How, then, is dehumanisation defined? The term is a broad one, often used in a general sense to describe universal modern social trends;<sup>29</sup> and this way of thinking sometimes slips into academic definitions of dehumanisation, lending it some resemblance to concepts such as Émile Durkheim's *anomie*.<sup>30</sup> Sometimes a distinction is also drawn between discursive dehumanisation, and physical dehumanisation, of an object. Here, in the specific context of

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For 'social death' (a concept proposed in regard to slavery rather than genocide) see O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London, 1982, pp. 38-45.

<sup>28</sup> For 'infrahumanisation' – to construct a target as less than human, if not wholly non-human – see E. Castano & R. Giner-Sorolla, 'Not Quite Human: Infrahumanization in Response to Collective Responsibility for Intergroup Killing', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 90, no. 5, 2006, pp. 805-806; A. Marcu, E. Lyons & P. Hegarty, 'Dilemmatic human-animal boundaries in Britain and Romania: Post-materialist and materialist dehumanisation', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 46, 2007, p. 876; Tileagă, 'Ideologies of Moral Exclusion', pp. 719-720.

In specific psychological terms, infra-humanisation refers to the fact that humans see secondary emotions (such as nostalgia, pride, etc) as unique to humans; the denial of, or denial of an equal capacity to feel, these emotions in an outgroup thus means that this group is seen as less than fully human, and is referred to as infrahumanisation (see N. Haslam, Y. Kashima, S. Loughnan, J. Shi & C. Suitner, 'Subhuman, Inhuman, and Superhuman: Contrasting Humans with Nonhumans in Three Cultures', *Social Cognition*, vol. 26, no. 2, 2008, pp. 248-258, p. 249).

Marcu, Lyons and Hegarty suggest an 'ontologisation' model in distinction to 'infrahumanisation' (p. 876):

The ontologization paradigm takes a historical approach and argues that the majority creates a different ontology for those minority groups which have resisted cultural assimilation for centuries in order to explain their resistance. Social groups which fail to be culturally assimilated, such as the Gypsies, are presumed to have a different human nature from that of the majority, which rationalizes their assumed inability to become civilized and thus fully human.

On 'ontologisation' see also Tileagă, 'Ideologies of Moral Exclusion', pp. 719-720.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 109.

<sup>30</sup> Durkheim borrowed the term from the work of philosopher Jean-Marie Guyau. For an example of this usage, see N. Sanford & C. Craig, 'Epilogue: Social Destructiveness as Disposition and as Act', in N. Sanford & C. Comstock et al (eds), *Sanctions for Evil: Sources of Social Destructiveness*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1971, p. 328.

genocide and mass killing, I consider physical practices of dehumanisation (identifying clothing, imprisonment, shaving and tattooing, degrading treatment, and so forth) to be part of a discursive repertoire, and to be the end point of a self-fulfilling prophecy of dehumanisation (a topic to which I will return); and I examine the definitions of those scholars working specifically in the context of genocide and mass killing, before suggesting my own.

Leo Kuper, a political scientist, was one of the earliest scholars to discuss this question in a framework of the comparative study of genocide in his classic work *Genocide: Its Political Uses in the Twentieth Century*. Dehumanisation 'might be conceived as the relegation of the victims to the level of animals or of objects or to a purely instrumental role.'<sup>31</sup> Israel W. Charny defines dehumanisation as 'a psychological-symbolic removal of the others from the province or group classification of human ... if one is enjoined from killing other human beings, the redefinition of others as not-human will constitute the removal of any symbolic barriers to killing them.'<sup>32</sup> Helen Fein distinguishes between 'dehumanisation' and defining a group 'outside the universe of [moral] obligation'; but the second, she writes, is a necessary, though not a sufficient, precondition for genocide.<sup>33</sup>

In the conception of Herbert C. Kelman, dehumanisation is the *denial of identity*. It is the denial of each victim as an individual both in terms of her/his rights as an individual and her/his culpability in any perceived or real wrongdoing; and the denial of community, that is, the denial of each individual as part of an interconnected network of others.<sup>34</sup> Denial as an overall phenomenon (including 'interpretive' and 'implicatory denial,' that is, denial involving

<sup>31</sup> Kuper, p. 86; see also H. Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*, SAGE Publications, London, 1993 (first published as *Current Sociology*, vol. 38, no. 1, 1990), p. 36.

<sup>32</sup> I. W. Charny, 'Dehumanization – "killing" the humanity of another', in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ABC-CLIO, California, 1999, p. 155.

<sup>33</sup> H. Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust*, The Free Press, New York, 1979, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> In Kuper, p. 86.

awareness of the facticity of that which is denied) includes, according to Stanley Cohen, denial on the planes of cognition, emotion, morality, and action.<sup>35</sup> That is, dehumanisation, as a denial of a common humanity, operates on each of these planes as regards the out-group. In a similar vein, in speaking of sanctioned massacre, Kelman and V. Lee Hamilton write that

[s]anctioned massacres become possible to the extent that the victims are deprived in the perpetrators' eyes of the two qualities essential to being perceived as fully humans and included in the moral compact that governs human relationships: identity – standing as independent, distinctive individuals, capable of making choices and entitled to live their own lives – and community – fellow membership in an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other and respect each other's individuality and rights (Kelman, 1973...).

Thus, when a group of people is defined entirely in terms of a category to which they belong, and when this category is excluded from the human family, moral restraints against killing them are more readily overcome.<sup>36</sup>

Regarding the issue of denial, we may return to Kuper's conception that the essential function of dehumanisation is the denial of the victim as an individual, and the exclusion of the victims from a common humanity with the perpetrators and bystanders.<sup>37</sup> Kuper writes that genocide by definition is a crime against a collectivity, a 'denial of individuality'.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> S. Cohen, *States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering*, Polity, Cambridge, 2001, p. 9. It has been suggested that one of the most humiliating aspects of dehumanisation may lie in the fact that both the subject and the object are aware that the subject knows (at least on some level) that the object is in fact human, and that this denial therefore increases the aspect of contemptuous negation of identity.

<sup>36</sup> H. C. Kelman & V. L. Hamilton, 'The My Lai Massacre: Crimes of Obedience and Sanctioned Massacres', in M. D. Ermann & R. J. Lundman (eds), *Corporate and Governmental Deviance: problems of Organizational behaviour in Contemporary Society* (5th edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford/New York, 1996, pp. 204-205.

<sup>37</sup> Kuper, p. 87.

<sup>38</sup> Kuper, p. 86.

This denial of individuality, taking place through the use of stereotypes to construct the perception of collective homogeneity, allows collective blame and collective punishment. The use by ingroups of such rhetoric, to employ Daniel Bar-Tal's concept, enacts a process of delegitimization upon the outgroup at which it is directed.<sup>39</sup> Delegitimization may follow genocidal acts, or it may lead to them, or both; in every case, it justifies genocidal action. Ervin Staub uses the concept of 'devaluation,' and argues that '[j]ust defining people as "them" results in devaluing them. Conversely, devaluation makes it more likely that a person is seen as belonging to an outgroup,' while group distinctions 'produce stable devaluations,' making mistreatment likely.<sup>40</sup> In an important evaluation and critique of social-psychological approaches, Christian Tileagă, in suggesting a discursive approach, argues that:

Although pointing to the process of moral boundary drawing, authors such as Bar-tal, Staub or Deutsch tend to point more to the psychological 'distance' between groups, the psychological mechanisms involved in this process, than to the moral 'distance' and the implications of the flexible use of a moral discourse. Although a moral dimension is present, there is no programmatic concern with charting the discursive accomplishment and management of moral exclusion in actual instances of occurrence.<sup>41</sup>

Clearly, each of the definitions and concepts mentioned thus far have something to add to understandings of dehumanisation. However, as well as the issues raised by Tileagă regarding the importance of morality – which is inevitably socially constructed – two further problems occur. Firstly, many constructions create a binary or polarised structure in which collectivities either fall within or without a 'moral community' or a 'scope of justice,'<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> For Bar-Tal's definition, see n26.

<sup>40</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>41</sup> Tileagă, 'Ideologies of Moral Exclusion', p. 721.

<sup>42</sup> See for example Opatow, 'Moral Exclusion and Injustice', p. 4; Opatow's conception of 'moral inclusion' would include 'willingness to allocate a share of community resources to another,' and 'willingness to make sacrifices to foster another's well-being.' Opatow clearly recognises, however, the problematics of a dichotomous construction of the 'scope of justice,' as well as its nature as a socio-cultural construct (pp. 4-6).

whereas moral obligation, or its lack, is more complex, and is thus more realistically understood as a question of *degree* (as will be evident in the chapter on moral constructions of animals). Secondly, while recognising the importance of the degree of *commonality* understood by the in-group to exist between that in-group and a given out-group, these definitions do not all point to the equal importance of the in-group's framing of *itself* (in terms of the moral legitimacy of action toward in-group members), as well as its framing of the out-group.<sup>43</sup> Given this, I propose below my own definition, which is based on consideration of these discussions and definitions.

The two crucial terms by which dehumanisation can be characterised are *exclusion*, and *denial*. In this thesis, however, dehumanisation is not considered to consist *solely* of the literal denial of the human-ness of the victim (the question of definitions of 'the human' is one to which we will return in the chapter regarding animalising characterisations). Furthermore, as Kuper has noted, the rights accorded to the 'human' may vary greatly between different groups.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, I define dehumanisation as a denial that a certain group is 'equally' human, no matter how that 'humanity' is defined (always in terms which favour the group doing the defining). That is, it is a discursive strategy that, because of the putative nature of the out-group, denies that, in terms of the morality of action, members of

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<sup>43</sup> The perceived nature of one's in-group constitutes identity in important ways (including the fact that the process of self-identification as a group-member may be understood to involve 'depersonalisation' or 'dehumanisation'), and indeed dehumanisation of out-groups is sometimes read not only as a factor in group cohesion and group delineation, which some argue have an evolutionary basis (see Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 55-60, 173-179, 198-201), but as an elaborate strategy to maintain one's positive view of one's in-group in the face of actions taken on its behalf or by ingroup members which run counter to previous normativities. See E. Castano, 'On the Perils of Glorifying the In-group: Intergroup Violence, In-group Glorification and Moral Disengagement', *Social And Personality Psychology Compass*, vol. 1, no. 2, 2008, pp. 154-170; and also D. Bar-Tal & Y. Teichman, *Stereotypes and Prejudice in Conflict: Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish Society*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 20-21. Herbert Hirsch also devotes some consideration to the relationship between construction of in-group and out-group identity: H. Hirsch, *Genocide and the Politics of Memory: Studying Death to Preserve Life*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill & London, 1995, pp. 99-100.

<sup>44</sup> Kuper, p. 86.

that group are worthy of the same treatment or consideration which would be afforded to members of the in-group. The definition of dehumanisation I adopt, then, is that *a collectivity as a collectivity is defined as unworthy of the moral consideration afforded to members of the ingroup*.<sup>45</sup> In itself, of course, this discursive strategy is not limited to genocide, and may be a human universal in at least some degree, as well as a possible necessity for the function of modern societies.<sup>46</sup> This points to the way in which genocidal dehumanisation can only be understood in terms of dehumanisation as a general and a social (as opposed to purely individual-psychological) phenomenon; genocidal dehumanisation is not an entirely separate phenomenon from non-genocidal institutional dehumanisation, or from 'everyday' dehumanisation. What I am concerned with is one extreme of a continuum of dehumanisation (a concept to which we will return): 'genocidal dehumanisation,' that is, dehumanisation in which the outgroup is afforded so little consideration that they have no inherent right to exist.

In terms of this definition, it's important to note that, in defining dehumanisation, I am concerned with discourse, and not with solely non-verbal practice (although non-verbal practice, of course, is intimately intertwined with, and can constitute, discourse), inasmuch as the social definition of a group as worthy or unworthy of particular treatment is separate from concrete practice. So, for example, a government may ban a particular expression of a

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<sup>45</sup> This definition is close, although not identical, to Opatow's 'moral exclusion': 'Those who are morally excluded are perceived as nonentities, expendable, or undeserving; consequently, harming them appears acceptable, appropriate, or just.' ('Moral Exclusion and Injustice', p. 1). Opatow, however, conceptualises dehumanisation as one among many manifestations of moral exclusion (pp. 10-11).

<sup>46</sup> For example, for anyone whose profession is intimately associated with trauma, such as physicians, emergency workers, and so forth. In more general terms, this definition is inclusive of many non-genocidal practices, such as pre-modern forms of 'interactive' exclusion such as that of minority subject peoples such as Jews or Armenians in pre-modern empires. Dehumanisation is in this sense seemingly a universal phenomenon (even in the modern-day welfare state, with its rhetoric of equality, we might think of discourse around certain classes of welfare recipient, 'illegal immigrants' and so forth, although in theory these categories are based on individual actions which are, in conceptual terms, chosen as and by an individual); however, the cases I examine are specifically those in which dehumanisation is extreme enough to justify not only the mistreatment of the outgroup, but the attempt to kill every member of the outgroup and/or destroy its existence as a collectivity as such.

religion without, in terms of *utterance*, defining adherents to that religion as less worthy of consideration than adherents to others. This may well be discrimination against members of that religion (which may in turn be based on a dehumanised view of members of that religion by those in positions of power), but it is not in itself dehumanisation.

The other quality which is important to note is that of essentialisation, which, according to Bauman, is 'a favourite modern strategy,' and indeed indispensable in modern systems of power, and modern genocidal processes.<sup>47</sup> For dehumanisation to occur, the identity of the members of the dehumanised group must be essentialised, that is, considered inherent to that group (even if the group itself is not understood to be biologically determined, or membership in it immutable, by the in-group or those in positions of power).<sup>48</sup> It is in this sense that dehumanisation is defined as concerning a collectivity *as a collectivity*. It is in the aspect of their (alleged) membership of an essentialised collectivity that human individuals may be treated as unworthy of the moral consideration afforded to another group.

Having established a working definition of dehumanisation, I next turn to the question of the necessity or otherwise of dehumanisation in genocide.

#### **IV. Why?: The Necessity for Dehumanisation in the Modern Era**

##### **IVa. A Psychological or a Socio-cultural Phenomenon – or Both?**

In this work dehumanisation is analysed as a *strategy*, not to imply universal purposiveness, but rather to point to the actual existence of dehumanisation in very many, and perhaps all, cases of genocide in the modern age. This fact is evidence for the argument that

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<sup>47</sup> Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', p. 37.

<sup>48</sup> On this issue, see Graumann, pp. 51-52.

dehumanisation is not just a *possible* accompaniment, a ‘window dressing’, to genocide, but a vital part of the process.<sup>49</sup> Dehumanisation, as we will see, can be understood as a mechanism or a strategy *which allows genocide to occur* (though it is, in itself, neither the sole motivating nor the sole enabling factor; it is necessary, but not sufficient). The question, then, is why there is a need for such a mechanism. Given a motivation to destroy a group of people, why should there be any need to dehumanise this group?

In order to answer this question, we need to do two things. Firstly, we must differentiate the three levels at which dehumanisation occurs: at the level of relationships between different collectivities (what Bar-Tal and Yona Teichman term the ‘societal phenomenon’ of ‘psychological intergroup repertoire’);<sup>50</sup> that of the relationship between collectivity and the individual within that collectivity; and that of the individual psyche. That is, we must draw a distinction between individualised and collectivised psychological aspects of identity, while recognising their interconnectedness. Analysis must take place both at the level of individual mental processes, and at the psycho-socio-cultural level of mass society, avoiding the trap of ascribing too much importance to either the one or the other of these strata of genocidal dehumanisation.<sup>51</sup> Frank Bajohr argues for the concept of ‘social practice,’ which would describe ‘rule as an amorphous force field — a complex network of relationships in which the actors are embedded,’ in which the interaction between those who seek to shape ‘public opinion’ and the ‘public’ is a bi-directional process, and which recognises the complex ways

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<sup>49</sup> Bandura calls dehumanisation ‘an essential ingredient in the perpetration of inhumanities’ (‘Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities’, p. 200).

<sup>50</sup> Bar-Tal & Teichman, pp. 22-3, 30-31, 53-54; this includes shared beliefs and images about another group (stereotypes), shared attitudes (prejudices), shared feelings and emotions toward that group, shared behavioural intentions, and shared collective memory.

<sup>51</sup> This could also be viewed as (particular) micro- and macro- level analyses; various scholars have formulated models of stereotypes and prejudice, or of motivation for genocide, attempting to include both these levels. See Bar-Tal & Teichman; Waller, *Becoming Evil*. On the necessity for these different levels of analysis, see also Bandura, ‘Selective Moral Disengagement’, pp. 115-116, Bandura, ‘Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities’, p. 207.



in which individuals and groups both resist and follow dictates 'from above.'<sup>52</sup> Furthermore, in terms of interaction between these strata of society, we must recognise that, as Bar-Tal notes, 'the socialized person is ... to some extent, a microcosm of society' inasmuch as the world is defined from the vantage point of shared group norms, values and goals.<sup>53</sup> I therefore argue that, while the needs which dehumanisation addresses are similar on each level, the processes which take place are different. These 'levels' of dehumanisation are clearly interconnected; however, one cannot be explored without an understanding of this distinction and the interplay between the two.

In terms of this distinction, then, we need to understand manifest dehumanisation as (in Norbert Finzsch's phrase) a *dispositive*: 'an apparatus of power relations that backs up types of knowledge and is in turn supported by them. This apparatus consists of a network of various and heterogeneous elements, such as discourses, laws, prescriptions, buildings and institutions.'<sup>54</sup> Dehumanisation must be analysed as a nexus of connected behaviours which exists at the meeting point of identity and ideology, of individual and collectivity. Given this, analysis of dehumanisation requires a psychosocial approach.

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<sup>52</sup> F. Bajohr, 'The "Folk Community" and the Persecution of the Jews: German Society under National Socialist Dictatorship, 1933–1945', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 20, no. 2, 2006, pp. 183-184.

On the importance of conceptual models including 'above' and 'below' as interactional spheres, see Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary', pp. 200-202.

<sup>53</sup> Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 2. See also Waller on 'worldviews' and, as a sub-category, 'cultural models' as constitutive of perception of, and action in, the social world (*Becoming Evil*, pp. 171-173).

<sup>54</sup> N. Finzsch, "'It is scarcely possible to conceive that human beings could be so hideous and loathsome": discourses of genocide in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America and Australia', in A. D. Moses & D. Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide*, Routledge, London & New York, 2007, p. 6.

## IVb. The Relevance of Truth-value and 'Belief' in Dehumanisation

*PANCRACE: Killings of that kind are hungry for death, not for life, as with wild animals. Such killings feed on everyone they see, they are never satisfied; as long as there is still someone left, they spur you on until the last of the last. That is why they do without words. Except for ridiculous words, obviously. On the radio we'd hear that the inkotanyi had tails or pointy ears; even if no-one believed it, it did us good to hear it.<sup>55</sup>*

In the previous chapter we have already touched on the questions of truth and objectivity in the analysis of perpetrator discourse. In the context of dehumanisation as an object of analysis, we return to this issue from a somewhat different angle. I must (re)state, then, that in speaking of the necessity of dehumanisation, and of the psychosocial approach, I do not intend to deal with the question of ascertaining whether those who create and maintain dehumanising discourse, and those for whom it is a justification and legitimisation, believe their own utterances or not; that is, the question concerning whether they are 'true believers' or whether they cynically attempt to manipulate the beliefs of others in order to achieve certain goals, or to exculpate themselves in the face of perceived disapproval. Individual perpetrators may differ on these points, and it may well be impossible to establish what any individual 'really' thinks or believes. Furthermore, on the one hand, testimony of this kind from the period of killing (as opposed to the aftermath) is very rare, and on the other, the nature of the narrative a person tells themselves and others about events in which they are involved is not stable, either during the course of these events, or afterwards.<sup>56</sup> More importantly, though, this question is, in fact, irrelevant to the investigation of the function and consequences of dehumanisation.<sup>57</sup> In order to act (as we will see), a motivatory *ideological* belief is not necessary, but rather, a legitimacy narrative or script, no

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<sup>55</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 227.

<sup>56</sup> See J. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (trans. C. Schoch), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 248-252.

<sup>57</sup> See Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 58, 63

matter whether it is 'really believed' (if this is indeed a valid distinction) or not.<sup>58</sup> In order to fulfil a psychological need such a 'script' does not necessarily *require* wholehearted or long-term 'belief.' It would be a mistake to think that the aim of successful propaganda and ideological rhetoric is to *convert* the target audience, that is, *only* to create deeply- (or 'really'-) held ideological beliefs. Rather, propaganda provides 'a new universe of meaning for all';<sup>59</sup> furthermore, as David Welch points out, it is about *edification*, about 'canal[ising] an existing stream'.<sup>60</sup> On this subject, Raul Hilberg writes:

The Germans had two kinds of propaganda. One was designed to produce action. It exhorted people to come to a mass meeting, to boycott Jewish goods, or to kill Jews. This type of propaganda does not concern us here since it was confined, on the whole, to the incitement of demonstrations and pogroms, the so-called *Einzelaktion*. But the Germans also engaged in a campaign that consisted of a series of statements implying that the Jew was evil. This propaganda had a very important place in the arsenal of psychological defense mechanisms.

Repeated propagandistic allegations may be stored and drawn upon according to need. The statement "The Jew is evil" is taken from the storehouse and is converted in the perpetrator's mind into a complete rationalization: "I kill the Jew because the Jew is evil." To understand the function of such formulations is to realize why they were being constructed until the very eve of the war. Propaganda was needed to combat doubts and guilt feelings wherever they arose, whether inside or outside the bureaucracy, and whenever they surfaced, before or after the perpetration of the acts.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> On this issue see Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 79-80.

<sup>59</sup> Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 72.

<sup>60</sup> D. Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933-1945* (revised edn), I.B. Tauris, London/New York, 2001, p. 254.

<sup>61</sup> Hilberg, 'The Nazi Holocaust', pp. 173-174.

Ultimately, then, it may not be useful to distinguish between dehumanising ideology and 'reality,' between the truth-values of theory and practice. As Finzsch notes in relation to British colonial genocide, dehumanisation was the reality, and therefore 'constituted the limits of [colonisers'] imaginative capacity to address those relations'.<sup>62</sup> In the words of Bar-Tal and Teichman, the 'psychological intergroup repertoire [in this case, the discursive strategy of dehumanisation] provides the basis on which explanations, expectations, justifications, and rationalizations for the nature of intergroup relations are drawn and future plans are designed.' That is, a dehumanised discursive system regarding an outgroup *constitutes the reality* within which members of the in-group act.<sup>63</sup> Herbert Hirsch calls this process a 'willing suspension of disbelief.'<sup>64</sup> Fein expands upon the issue of the purposive, strategic and/or goal-oriented nature of genocidal thinking:

Genocide ... differs from collective violence ... in that it is centrally planned and purposeful, and in that its intent is total. While collective violence often serves to put (or keep) a subjugated minority in its place, genocide eliminates the group ... Because the notion of a self-destroying society contradicts the classic rational notions of the ends for which society is constructed, it is hard to conceive of genocide as 'rational.' The term is used herein completely neutrally, as 'based on, or derived from reasoning,' ... without regard to how reasonable is the ideology that forms the ground [sic] of assumptions on which the murderer(s) draws to reason. To understand genocides as a class of calculated crimes, such crimes must be appreciated as goal-oriented acts from the point of view of their perpetrators: genocide is rationally instrumental to their ends, although psychopathic in terms of any universalistic ethic. This means that we must first concentrate on the goals of its perpetrators to understand why they define the problem as they do – the Jewish

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<sup>62</sup> Finzsch, p. 19.

<sup>63</sup> See Bar-Tal & Teichman, p. 29. As regards threat, in particular, Bar-Tal notes that '[w]hen threat is perceived, it is real for the perceivers' ('Causes...', p. 67). Indeed all social identity formations structure social reality for individuals who self-categorise as members of collectivities; see also Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, pp. 67, 106.

<sup>64</sup> Hirsch, *Genocide and the Politics of Memory*, p. 104.

problem, the Armenian problem – implying that the object of their concern is the source of the problem. What ends does their murder serve?<sup>65</sup>

For this reason as well, then, our inquiry must aim to comprehend the discursive strategy of dehumanisation as presented on its own terms, while understanding that questions of ‘individual belief’ and ‘truth value’ regarding the claims it makes are a diversion from the question of its *function* in genocide.<sup>66</sup>

I have argued thus far that the question of the ‘reality’ of ‘belief’ is not in itself relevant, and also that an analysis of the necessity for dehumanisation must take place in terms of individual and collective registers. These questions have concerned where to find dehumanisation, and how to approach it. We may henceforth concern ourselves with the central question of *why* dehumanisation exists in genocide – its *necessity* – and with its features. In order to explain the necessity for dehumanisation we must next turn to the examination of the nature of social structures with regard to the expression of violence.

#### IVc. The Social Legitimation of Genocidal Violence in the Modern Age

In analysing the question of legitimisation and the social, we may begin from Peter J. Haas’s premise that

our conceptions of right and wrong [are] ultimately a function largely of discourse, that is, of patterns of thought, language and action. That is, it claims that we judge matters as right or

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<sup>65</sup> Fein, *Accounting For Genocide*, pp 7-8

<sup>66</sup> In terms of ‘veridicity,’ some scholars have also attempted to include, in a definition of ‘dehumanisation,’ the fact that the out-group do not pose a veridical threat to the ingroup. However, for the same reasons, and because of the difficulty in objectively defining a ‘veridical’ as opposed to a ‘non-veridical’ ‘threat,’ this does not seem to me a useful qualification.

wrong (or good and evil) on the basis of how we look at the world and the words we use to analyze and describe its preconceived parts.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, societies and institutions legitimise certain types of exclusion, and their expression in certain types of violence. Social structures at the same time encourage and discourage the exclusion of particular others; and they control the expression of that exclusion by placing symbolic and physical restraint on such expression both by individuals and by group actors. There is no 'normal' or 'innate' human feeling toward violence (though a 'normal' repulsion from violence appears a 'commonsense' claim, a claim which many scholars perpetuate), whether positive or negative (though there does seem to be an extremely common repulsion from the *visceral physicality* of killing for those who practice it at close range, at least initially<sup>68</sup>). Rather, psychological responses by a perpetrator to his or her infliction, or involvement in the infliction, of violence upon another is conditioned by that individual's personal socio-historical context, by the normativities of the society to which the violent individual belongs, and by the context of any particular act of violence. Dehumanisation is a mechanism which operates on and modifies collective and individual constraints upon particular expressions of violence. It is a process which, however enacted, allows actors to overcome social sanctions and psychological aspects of resistance in order to commit certain actions, and to feel certain (more positive) ways about those actions.

The proposition that the dehumanisation of the victim group is a necessary precondition for genocide is one contended by many scholars.<sup>69</sup> There is widespread agreement that, as Finzsch puts it, 'discourse that endows ... agents with the knowledge/power, justification and

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<sup>67</sup> Haas, p. 385.

<sup>68</sup> Bandura credits this distress to 'vicariously aroused distress and self-censure' ('Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 199); I would agree with the aspect of vicarious arousal of distress, while the issue of 'vicariously aroused self-censure' would seem more problematic.

<sup>69</sup> See for example Bar-Tal & Teichman, p. 54, Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 96; Kelman & Hamilton in Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 89-90. I deal elsewhere in this chapter with the opposite contention, as put by Fein and by Kuper, that dehumanisation is not necessary for genocide.

rationale for their practices' is a necessary element in genocide.<sup>70</sup> Since genocide, as defined by the United Nations, requires intent, any form of genocide requires discursive preparation.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, dehumanisation, it is often argued, is necessary because it is a process of moral disengagement which legitimises killing which would otherwise be morally (or even physically) unacceptable.

One way in which this takes place is through the creation of systems of meaning which re-label both victims themselves, and actions taken towards them. According to Haas,

meaning in ethics, like any other meaning, is in the end a matter of relationships among established and significant entities. We come to understand what something is, or more to the point, what that something means, through the way we label or describe it, and then (or even thereby) set it in relationship to other things. This is because something can be evaluated and invested with significance only when it is placed somewhere in the comprehended universe; that is, when it is understood to be like one thing and not like another. In short, a thing or act or phenomenon makes sense once it is placed into an existing taxonomic grid through which the profusion and complexity of reality is organized and reduced to manageable terms.<sup>72</sup>

In regard to genocide, Haas continues, meaning is so constructed that elimination of an outgroup is seen to fulfil a larger good.<sup>73</sup> Murray Edelman uses the work of Konrad Lorenz on pseudo-speciation, the process by which humans perceive other human groups as different species: '[b]y virtue of pseudo-speciation,' Edelman argues, '*to kill enemies is not perceived as murder in advanced societies* and to degrade people defined as inferior is not

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<sup>70</sup> Finzsch, pp. 5-6.

<sup>71</sup> Finzsch, p. 6

<sup>72</sup> Haas, p. 387. On this issue, see also Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>73</sup> Haas, p. 387. I would add that the nature of that good varies from case to case and from individual to individual.

perceived as oppression.<sup>74</sup> According to Fein, '[o]ffenses against persons outside the universe of obligation will not be socially recognized and labelled as crime ... Collective violence is an offence against a class whose members are outside the universe of obligation.'<sup>75</sup> For Fein, as we have seen, it is a necessary (but not sufficient) precondition of genocide that 'the victims have previously been defined outside the universe of moral obligation of the dominant group.'<sup>76</sup> Exclusion of victims from this universe need not entail dehumanisation as such, but Fein still sees exclusion as prerequisite – and while Fein argues that one may be outside the circle of obligation without being dehumanised, extreme dehumanisation surely places victims outside this circle.

However, this in itself is not sufficient to explain the necessity for dehumanisation. We have established that we cannot glibly assume that societies or individuals hold killing in general to be illegitimate or morally unacceptable, particularly given the practices of warfare and capital punishment. At this point, it becomes necessary to turn to the context of the modern period to understand why dehumanisation has become necessary specifically in the modern age. In saying this, I should add that I do not intend here to divert the course of my exposition by entering into any of the protracted and complex arguments concerning the nature, the features, or the conceptual and practical domains of existence of 'modernity.' Rather, despite my employment of some theoretical work which is very concerned with these issues, my intent is to use the term 'epochally,' that is, to point to some concepts and practices, the existence of which is relatively uncontroversial, which have emerged in Western societies in the period since the late seventeenth century; and to explain how it is

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<sup>74</sup> Murray Edelman, *Politics as Symbolic Action: Mass Arousal and Quiescence*, Markham Publishing Company, Chicago, 1971, pp. 63; my italics. While Edelman mentions Lorenz, as a concept, 'pseudospeciation' is generally associated with the work of psychologist Erik Erikson.

<sup>75</sup> Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*, p. 36.

<sup>76</sup> Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, p. 9.



that these characteristics have shaped the discursive sphere with regard to the practice of genocidal violence.<sup>77</sup>

To paint with a broad brush, we may say in a general sense that, in the period before the Common Era, among cultures we may loosely term culturally 'proto-Western,' the destruction of a collective entity, including non-combatants, was a morally accepted possible outcome of war between collectivities which were tribal and/or relatively small (at least in comparison to the modern age of the nation-state existing on the global scale).<sup>78</sup> In the period between the ascendance of Christianity and the modern age, however, the *concept* that we would now term 'genocide' (as opposed to the *practice* of the destruction or attempted destruction of particular groups, which was by no means uncommon) was not conceivable in modern terms, given the construction of a more permeable ingroup based on religious belief (in theory, a non-essentialised characteristic), the normative model of governance through hierarchical but non-homogenous empires, and the Christian prohibition on killing (however ambiguous and little observed). The rise of, on the one hand, the nation state, and, on the other, biological science, would change these conceptions, making 'genocide' conceivable and possible, and at the same time necessitating dehumanisation as an aspect of such genocide.<sup>79</sup> The relationship between genocide and the

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<sup>77</sup> See A. J. Vetlesen, 'Yugoslavia, Genocide and Modernity', in J. Kaye & B. Stråth (eds), *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Series philosophy & politics; No. 5), P.I.E. – Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000, p. 152.

<sup>78</sup> The historical record is not entirely clear, but we can ascertain that these did not necessarily constitute what we now call 'genocide,' and in particular, they did not involve biological characterisation of the victim group; but they can be considered 'genocidal killing,' the intended destruction of a 'people' as such. See M. Freeman, 'Genocide, Civilization, and Modernity,' *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1995, pp. 218-222. Given the presence of collective killing, religious and tribal characterisation and other forms of identity-based practice, I by no means intend to argue for the absence of dehumanisation per se in this period; however, my concern is with changes to the nature of dehumanisation in the context of modern genocidal practice. See also Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', pp. 32-33.

<sup>79</sup> On the novel possibility of genocide, see Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', pp. 40-41. While Bauman's implicit thesis that it is only the Holocaust which has created this possibility is problematic, his argument regarding the conceivability of genocide in the modern age is insightful: that is, as he puts it, we now inhabit an

discursive strands of biological science, biopolitics, and centralised bureaucratic techniques of population has been dealt with extensively elsewhere, and I will return to the question of these specific aspects of modern discourse in examination of the typologies of genocidal dehumanisation;<sup>80</sup> here, I will focus on changes in conceptions of violence and legitimacy.

In the age of the nation-state, and of total war, two important changes occurred in terms of the legitimacy of violence, in alignment with the characteristically contradictory focus of the discourses of modernity upon inclusiveness and exclusivity.

On the one hand, a particular distinction developed between combatants and non-combatants, and between those who controlled the actions of the nation-state and those who were subject to that control; and, in theory, mass killing came to be considered legitimate only when directed against combatants, or in pursuit of military aims. The simple existence of the power to enact such killing was not, in itself, a sufficient justification.<sup>81</sup> That is, in discursive terms, as shown by Max Weber, a monopoly on legitimate violence (and therefore control) was now exercised by the nation-state: this allowed a certain legitimacy to inhere in participation in given actions simply because they were directed by 'the nation-state.'<sup>82</sup> However, the mere existence of a ('denationalised') collectivity (within a nation-

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age where 'vexing problems' may have their 'final solutions.' The new conception of the boundaries of identity did not, of course, only have repercussions in terms of genocide; Orlando Patterson suggests, for example, that in North America, while initially black and white 'slaves' and 'servants' were more or less synonymous, from the late seventeenth century onwards a view emerged in which black slaves 'did not belong to the same community of Christian, civilized Europeans' (p. 7).

<sup>80</sup> Most notably in Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust*; see also R. Savage, 'Disease Incarnate: Biopolitical Discourse and Genocidal Dehumanisation in the Age of Modernity', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2007, pp. 404-440; and J. Kaye and . Str ath (eds), *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Series philosophy & politics; No. 5), P.I.E. – Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000.

<sup>81</sup> See Grundy and Weinstein on expansionist justifications for violence (p. 47).

<sup>82</sup> M. Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, p. 54; this theme was also important for Norbert Elias' work on the 'civilising process.' For discussion of Elias in the context of genocide and modernity, see Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 52-53. See also Bloxham, p. 203. On the nation-state and the legitimacy of genocide in the context of biopolitics, see also D.

state) was no longer considered a threat which would legitimise organised killing directed against that collectivity.

On the other hand, however, the (limited) protection the empire model had afforded to outgroups was swept away, particularly with the ascendancy of the related discourses and practices of social Darwinism, scientific-biological essentialism, modern forms of colonialism, and ethnic models of nationalism. At the same time, the technological advances, centralisation, and mass-bureaucratic organisational system of modern nations made the project of the elimination of a particular collectivity from a particular geographical territory a conceivable and practically possible solution to a problem or threat which the very presence of that collectivity was now understood to pose.

The implementation of such a solution, however, was not *in itself* considered a legitimate or acceptable use of violence. The ideology of the nation-state (often as opposed to its practice) sanctioned the killing of combatants in war, and of individuals in capital punishment. The experience of total war also created the new logical, conceptual and technological possibility (and therefore, possible desirability) of short-term mass killing on an industrial scale; and it devalued human life by a new scale of magnitude.<sup>83</sup> However, it did not sanction in a clear-cut way the mass killing of civilian collectivities as such (and this remains the case in the present day: the purposive mass killing of civilians is not an event in which every member of a society participates on an everyday, ongoing basis, nor is it, speaking in terms of public national and international values, generally considered to be a standard and acceptable solution to the fact that an outgroup or another nation-state is seen to pose a problem). Therefore, the newly conceivable desire to carry out genocidal actions as a

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Stone, 'Biopower and Modern Genocide', in A. D. Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, Berghahn Books, New York & Oxford, 2008, p. 165.

<sup>83</sup> P. Bartrop, 'The relationship between war and genocide in the twentieth century: a consideration', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4 no. 4, 2002, pp. 523-524, 529; M. Shaw, 'The general hybridity of war and genocide,' *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2007, September, pp. 467-468.

solution to a perceived problem was frustrated by the fact that violent action of this kind was now defined as illegitimate. This problem, however, could be resolved by finding a justification for the use of such violence.<sup>84</sup>

Illegitimate violence can be justified in two ways. It can be justified ideologically – that is, the redefinition of violence as legitimate through the ideological rejection of previous normativities which would define it as illegitimate (as, for example, in a Nietzschean rejection of the ideal of protecting the weak and vulnerable). More commonly, however, violence is justified through harmonising the perception of the meaning of such violence by ‘reading’ or reframing it in terms of violence which is considered to be legitimate (as, for example, in the use of a military narrative regarding the killing of non-combatants). As Cohen notes, ‘deviance’, whether individual or collective, is much more commonly justified not through the out-of-hand rejection of the moral standards it violates, but through acceptance of those norms accompanied by a justification as to why it does not in fact violate them, or why it is a less severe violation than would appear to be the case.<sup>85</sup> Social and moral normativities, however, are deeply ingrained, and are not manipulated and/or jettisoned with psychological ease.<sup>86</sup> In either case, therefore, there is a need for a mechanism which allows a process of integrative legitimisation to take place; that is, a mechanism which allows the denial of the act as such, through (to employ Cohen’s categories) interpretive denial (‘what happened is really something else’) and/or implicatory denial (‘what happened is justified’).<sup>87</sup> Such a mechanism can be supplied through the practice of a particular discursive strategy regarding the victim group.

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<sup>84</sup> See H. Zukier, ‘The “Mindless Years”? A reconsideration of the Psychological Dimensions of the Holocaust, 1938-1945’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, 1997, pp. 197-198; Bauman, ‘The Duty To Remember’, pp. 52-53.

<sup>85</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 60, 77. Cohen recognises the fact that this theory developed regarding the individual within society, but argues that it can be generalised to include groups in the context of intergroup relationships.

<sup>86</sup> On this point, see Cohen, *States of Denial* p. 60.

<sup>87</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 103.

#### IVd. Dehumanisation: A Strategic Mechanism of Deproblematisation

In the idealistic and ideological age of modernity, then, an era in which limitless violence in pursuit of naked self-interest is not moral justification in itself, dehumanisation becomes a necessary accompaniment to killing and destruction which would otherwise be considered immoral, non-normative, or indicative of national pathology: the mass killing and destruction of civilians. Modern dehumanisation can thus be considered a *strategy* which legitimises certain actions (whether past, present or future) which would otherwise be considered immoral.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, given such a desire on the part of national leaders, it is a strategy which manufactures a consensus of acquiescence within the populace, ensuring that, from the pool of individuals not originally ideologically intent upon the desired genocidal action, there will be enough support or indifference to provide the required number of willing perpetrators and acquiescent bystanders for action to take place without the threat of major protest or social upheaval.<sup>89</sup>

In other words, the dehumanisation of victims does not take place solely in the eyes of those who are directly involved in the perpetration of genocide. Cohen suggests that intervention is less likely 'when people are unable to identify with the victim ... we help our family, friends, community, "people like us", not those excluded from our moral universe.'<sup>90</sup> An habituating process of dehumanisation is necessary for these conditions to be fulfilled: '[b]ystanders, like perpetrators, are gradually drawn into accepting as normal actions which are initially repugnant,' and these bystanders must feel neither sympathy nor empathy with

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<sup>88</sup> Dehumanisation, as a functionality, can also be read as a functional belief; for an overview of conceptions of the different functions of belief systems, see Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, pp. 18-21.

<sup>89</sup> Cohen notes that denial must be simultaneous, designed to address a number of different audiences (perpetrator in-group as a group and as individuals, bystanders and beneficiaries as groups and as individuals, and so forth) at different points in time regarding the act (before, during, and after) (*States of Denial*, p. 82).

<sup>90</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 16.

victims, nor identify with them.<sup>91</sup> For this reason, as well as those already examined in the introduction, it is necessary to examine dehumanising utterances not only in the discourse of perpetrators themselves, but also within the genocidal society, in newspapers, films, journals, courts and other fora which give insight into public opinion which is considered acceptable to voice. As George Steiner writes, 'men are accomplices to that which leaves them indifferent.'<sup>92</sup>

Dehumanisation, then, is a strategy and a mechanism which addresses the problems raised by the decision to enact genocide (and this decision may in itself involve dehumanisation as a motivation<sup>93</sup>), by collective responses to such a decision, and by individual participation in such action. This mechanism functions through the construction of a consensus regarding the necessity for and/or the legitimate use of particular types of violence against particular collectivities, which at the same time assuages the psychosocial dissonance which the existence of, and action upon, such a consensus create, both for collectivities and for individuals. As we have seen above, the questions of the credibility of the *basis* for such a discursive construction, and of its credibility in the mind of the individual, are not of primary importance. According to Bandura, '[m]oral functioning is ... governed by self-reactive selfhood rather than by dispassionate abstract reasoning';<sup>94</sup> and, as Cohen points out, the human psyche seems to have a capacity to know and not-know at the same time – paradoxically, in order to make sure we do not know something, we must know what it is that we must not know.<sup>95</sup> What is necessary, rather than firm ideological belief in

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<sup>91</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 16, 72.

<sup>92</sup> George Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1969, p. 131.

<sup>93</sup> See Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 94.

<sup>94</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 101.

<sup>95</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 21-50. This concept has been related, by Cohen and others, to Sartre's concept of 'bad faith.'

the truth-value of dehumanising claims, is a coherent narrative – a ‘script’ or an ‘account’<sup>96</sup> – which allows one to justify one’s actions both to oneself as an individual, to all individuals within the perpetrator group, and (in many and perhaps all cases) to individual and collective bystanders and observers, whether internal or external, both before, during, and after acts of genocidal violence. Dehumanisation is this account.

## V. How?: The Functions of Dehumanisation

### Va. The Creation of Distance

*PIO: ... In truth, it came to me only afterward: I had taken the life of a neighbour. I mean, at the fatal instant I did not see in him what he had been before; I struck someone who was no longer either close or strange to me, who wasn't exactly ordinary anymore, I'm saying like the people you meet every day. His features were indeed similar to those of the person I knew, but nothing firmly reminded me that I had lived beside him for a long time.*

*I am not sure you can truly understand me. I knew him by sight, without knowing him. He was the first victim I killed; my vision and thinking had grown clouded.*<sup>97</sup>

It has been established that dehumanisation is necessary in modern genocide inasmuch as it addresses certain psychosocial problems caused by the enactment of genocide related to its perceived legitimacy, on both the group and the individual level. It remains, then, to explain

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<sup>96</sup> For the ‘account,’ see Cohen, *States of Denial*, p. 58-64. Cohen notes that, in contrast to a Freudian ‘rationalization,’ an account must be present *before* an act (p. 58). Cohen’s concept of the ‘account’ could be seen as existing within Haas’s ‘ethical system’ (p. 384), which

establish[es] standards and procedures for defining what is right and wrong in a culture ... It includes a pattern of discourse that provided a systematic definition of good and evil, it was able to shape and judge conduct as good or bad in terms of these standards, it drew on a wide range of outside ‘scientific’ warrants to lend its view credibility, and it allowed for discussion and divergence of interpretation within certain boundaries.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Pio’ quoted in Hatzfeld, pp. 23-24.

how dehumanisation functions in addressing these problems. This question can be answered by an examination of the different ways in which it manifests, what ends are served in each case, and how these cases are interconnected (that is, how they can be considered subtypes of a single, but differentiated, phenomenon). We must ask how dehumanisation actually 'works' in terms of the construction of victim by perpetrator, both at the collective and the individual level. In doing so, I will make references to numerous illustrative examples of dehumanisation in action.

Dehumanisation shapes intergroup relationships: a set of utterances characterise the victim group in a way which places psychological, and therefore moral, *distance* between perpetrator and victim and excludes them from the 'moral community' of the perpetrator (or what Fein called 'circles of ...' or a 'universe of moral obligation'<sup>98</sup>). Bandura refers to 'moral disengagement' (both individual and collective): people purposively engage and disengage their moral standards.<sup>99</sup> The experiments of Stanley Milgram have conclusively demonstrated that it is easier to harm distant individuals; and, as Waller notes, distance 'is not simply a physical construct; it is a moral and psychological construct as well.'<sup>100</sup> This is demonstrated in the fact that the lack of physical distance in itself is not enough to ensure that others are humanised, as we see in cases such as the dehumanising rhetoric of American and English slave-owners, or in many physically 'close' genocidal episodes, as in Rwanda, or in occupied Eastern Europe during the Holocaust. While 'bureaucratic' killing inherently entails physical, moral, and social distance, face-to-face killing is also enabled by

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<sup>98</sup> Fein, *Genocide: A Sociological Perspective*, p. 36.

<sup>99</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 102; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, p. 372.

<sup>100</sup> Milgram, pp. 33-41; Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 196-197. Robert Sternberg also suggests that one of three factors in hate, and an ideology of hate, is the negation of intimacy, the seeking of distance from a target. See also Waller, p. 89. This should not be read as an argument that 'closeness' as such necessarily inhibits killing or violence, though even the commission of 'close' killing and maltreatment, directed at an individual, may nonetheless be motivated, justified or legitimised by a categorical understanding of victim/s as 'distant' (for example, as women, homosexuals, bureaucrats, rivals, etc) (in Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 87).



the victims having already 'died a "social death" in the eyes of the perpetrator.'<sup>101</sup> The Khmer Rouge, for example, spoke of 'cutting off one's feelings/heart' toward a victim.<sup>102</sup> In these situations, discursive, and therefore psychological and moral, distance has been created which changes the meaning of killing in the psyche of the perpetrator.<sup>103</sup>

## Vb. A Necessary Precondition for Genocide

In the modern age, dehumanised outgroups become excluded, abjected 'life unworthy of life' outside the bounds of humanity and of human moral obligation; but while this means that they *may* be destroyed, and that the psychosocial dissonance caused by destruction may be more easily countered, it does not provide a motivation for destruction. We have seen that dehumanisation enables genocide, but it by no means always *causes* (in the sense of solely motivating) massacre, or always has massacre as a result.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, some level of dehumanisation may be obligatory for the functioning of modern societies. So we cannot take for granted the concept of dehumanisation as necessary for genocide.

A number of critiques have been made of dehumanisation viewed as a necessary precondition for genocide. Kuper writes that, as well as dehumanisation without massacre,

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<sup>101</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 197.

<sup>102</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 203.

<sup>103</sup> For a discussion of separation and distance in discrimination and aggression from a social psychology perspective, see Graumann, pp. 49-50.

<sup>104</sup> Given the complexity of genocide, monocausal explanations are universally insufficient. As Daniel Bar-Tal and Yona Teichman write, 'the various theories of stereotypes and prejudice formation and change should be seen as complementary' in terms of 'putting together the pieces of the puzzle' of genocide (Bar-Tal & Teichman, p. 55). See also Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 96; Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 138-139. Bar-Tal quotes Seliktar (in the context of foreign policy) as writing that 'we cannot infer directly from a collective belief system to a particular decision. Nevertheless, the belief system can serve as a collective "cognitive map" of the ... environment' (Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 108). Group beliefs, such as dehumanising beliefs, provide a cognitive basis and a prescriptive formula for action, and they provide explanations for this action; that is, while not a total explanation, they are at the least an important determinant in group action (*Group Beliefs*, p. 109).

there may be massacre without dehumanisation.<sup>105</sup> I would respond that, while massacre without literal dehumanisation (the denial that the victim is 'human') certainly occurs, massacre by its nature takes place because the victim is viewed not as an individual but as a member of a collectivity, as Kuper elsewhere notes.<sup>106</sup> In this sense we cannot say that there is massacre without dehumanisation: Bauman calls this process of abstraction 'categorical murder.'<sup>107</sup> Fein has taken issue with the concept of dehumanisation as a factor in genocide in that it 'presumes a universalistic norm barring violence';<sup>108</sup> Kuper also argues, justly, that the rights accorded to those considered 'human' vary immensely.<sup>109</sup>

We have already answered one of these objections, in arguing that, though, with Fein, we cannot presume norms barring violence or an initial repugnance to violence, in most, perhaps all, modern societies – which inescapably exist within the globalised system of the nation-state as a normative model of governance, in the context of international scrutiny (or at least with the possibility of such scrutiny omnipresent) – certain types of violence create dissonance which requires techniques of management. Fein's objection does, however, point to the fact that there is not an inevitable link between the presence of this type of utterance (at any register, individual or collective, public or private) and the occurrence of genocide or massacre.<sup>110</sup> We must take into consideration the historical, cultural and temporal dimensions of particular utterances when considering causation and the presence and role of dehumanisation either as a motivation, or as an enabling factor. In Germany, for example, Jews were being referred to by some as disease organisms for many decades during which they were not killed by the state. It is only when other conditions obtain that such rhetoric comes to have a role to play in the subjugation and/or elimination of the outgroup whom it

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<sup>105</sup> Kuper, p. 92.

<sup>106</sup> Kuper, pp. 86, 104. On the connection in the modern era between genocide, categorisation and the human as an abstraction, see also Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', pp. 35-38.

<sup>107</sup> Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', pp. 36-38

<sup>108</sup> Fein, *Genocide*, p. 36.

<sup>109</sup> Kuper, p. 86.

<sup>110</sup> See Bar-Tal, 'Causes....', pp. 74, 76.

stigmatises. However, in these cases, its pre-existence is indispensable; as Kelman and Hamilton write, '[t]he traditions, the habits, the images, and the vocabularies for dehumanizing such groups are already well established and can be drawn upon when the groups are selected for massacre'; or, in the words of Andreas Musolff, 'once [a] scenario was established as a common and even dominant "frame of reference" in public discourse, it was available for reinterpretation.'<sup>111</sup>

The conditions under which this process occurs are partially determined by the interconnections of specific discursive tropes and connections in the context of their historical evolution: in terms of Nazi metaphors concerning the nation as a body threatened by disease and parasites (to which we will turn in Chapter Five), Musolff notes that '[t]he apparent "conclusiveness" of this model for genocide derives not so much from the individual "content" aspects of Hitler's metaphorization of Jews as *parasites* (which were long-established conventional clichés of antisemitic discourse) but from their integration in scenarios that have their own internal logic.'<sup>112</sup> However, these conditions also exist in relation to other events outside the context of verbal discursivity. George Mosse, for example, argues that, although in Germany violent or eliminatory racial antisemitism rose and fell in presence and respectability over a period of time between its inception and the *Shoah* itself, 'it was not completely unproductive ... It helped to prepare the nation for the events that followed ... it contributed to shaping a state of mind that either apathetically acquiesced in or actively supported the final verdict.'<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Kelman & Hamilton, 'The My Lai Massacre', pp. 204-205; A. Musolff, 'What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice? The function of antisemitic imagery in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, pp. 42-43.

<sup>112</sup> Musolff, p. 41.

<sup>113</sup> G. L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1981 (first edn 1964), pp. 139-140.

Prejudice, then – and particularly discursively vicious forms of prejudice – do not lead automatically to genocide, but they have an important role to play in preparing the discursive ground, both in terms of the exclusion of a group, and in terms of the acceptability of violent action toward that group: as Jacques Semelin writes, ‘the public declarations provide those who shall be involved in the massacres, in advance, with frameworks of interpretation and legitimization of their actions.’<sup>114</sup> This argument is borne out empirically. Ervin Staub notes, in relation to the *Shoah*, that ‘[i]n general, Nazis were able to kill more Jews in those countries where anti-Semitism and discrimination against Jews were already strong’;<sup>115</sup> according to Fein, ‘[o]pportunities, costs, and sanctions are weighed by the perpetrators. But leaders could not have chosen annihilation (rejecting assimilation) had not the victims been previously defined as basically of a different species, outside of the common conscience, and beyond the universe of obligation: this was the precondition.’<sup>116</sup> Again, in the former Yugoslavia, Cathie Carmichael explains that ‘[a]ccording to Norman Cigar, Serbian scholars specialising in Oriental Studies... “contributed considerably to making hostility towards the Muslim community intellectually respectable among the broad strata of the Serbian population”... The link between the propaganda of the 1980s and the fighting of the 1990s has been well documented.’<sup>117</sup>

This connection is not only theorised by scholars, but has, on occasion, been accepted by perpetrators themselves: Cigar gives the example of Vuk Drašković’s novel *Nož* (Knife) (1982) which

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<sup>114</sup> Semelin, ‘Toward a vocabulary’, p. 199.

<sup>115</sup> Staub, *The roots of evil*, pp. 60-61. See also Fein, *Accounting For Genocide*, p. 6.

<sup>116</sup> Fein, *Accounting for Genocide*, p. 8.

<sup>117</sup> C. Carmichael, *Ethnic cleansing in the Balkans: nationalism and the destruction of tradition*, Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 32-33. See N. Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of ‘Ethnic Cleansing’*, Texas A & M University Press, Texas, 1995, pp. 27-28, 70.

contains an explicit denial of the Muslims' existence as a legitimate community. According to Drašković's central story line, Muslims are supposedly really only descendants of Serbs who had converted centuries earlier, thereby betraying their own nation ... Drašković ... lashed out vehemently at the 'fury of offensive and intolerant Islam in Bosnia, Kosovo, the Sandžak, and Herzegovina ... [at] the vampire-like resurgence of the tradition of *Shariah* [religious law], and...the strategy of jihad [holy war] with the goal of creating an Islamic state in the Balkans.'

That the written word during this phase already had a concrete negative influence can be gauged from the effect it had on the future commander of the militia – the Serbian Guard – that Drašković established later. As the future commander admitted in the late 1980s, 'I beat up many Muslims and Croats on vacation in Cavtat because of his [Drašković's] *Nož*. Reading that book, I would see red, I would get up, select the biggest fellow in the beach, and smash his teeth.'<sup>118</sup>

However, in other instances, without the existence of other causal factors, and without its adoption in certain strata of society (i.e., public and institutional), such rhetoric may simply 'fizzle out' over time, may disappear from use without having ever become a factor in institutionalised subjugation or destruction.

It is a mistake, that is to say, to understand the relationship between prejudice and organised subjugation or destruction as teleological, to read genocidal episodes as the inevitable endpoint of a linear and historically increasing prejudice.<sup>119</sup> Distinct types of utterances exist over periods in which the treatment of their object changes dramatically. But it must also be recalled that such utterances emerge at particular historical moments from situated events, and their usage in specific situations has consequences. What is unthinkable at one time or in one milieu, with the right discursive context, becomes

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<sup>118</sup> Cigar, p. 25.

<sup>119</sup> On this issue in the context of genocide and massacre, see Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 62-63.

thinkable and acceptable in another; what was once 'empty' rhetoric becomes a specific blueprint for action.

In order to understand how such discourse functions in any given situation one must ask who is using it, how it is used, what reception it receives, what action is being taken at the time of its use, and (if possible) its development over time in regard to the aforementioned factors. While, as mentioned in the examination of methodological concerns, this thesis will not embark upon an in-depth textual analysis of every individual utterance presented, a detailed socio-historical analysis of *types* of utterances in their context will be dealt with in the typological chapters. Here, however, we must return to the more general question of the functional roles played by dehumanisation in genocide and mass killing. As we have already intimated, in modern genocide, dehumanisation can play not one, but two, important and crucially distinct roles: legitimisation *and* motivation.

#### Vc. Legitimation, Motivation and the Continuum of Dehumanisation: A Question of Threat

*Either they are bad, or they do not count.*

– Nevitt Sanford and Craig Comstock.<sup>120</sup>

Firstly, how can we define the difference between these terms? Motivation, it should be clear enough, is the reason 'why we had to do it'; while legitimisation explains 'why it was acceptable to do it,' through the discursive strategy which defines victims outside the category of those to whom human moral obligation is owed.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Sanford & Comstock, p. 326

<sup>121</sup> These may be related to the distinction drawn by Eagleton between ideology which serves social interests, and ideology which legitimates social interests. T. Eagleton, *Ideology: An Introduction* (revised and expanded edn), Verso, London & New York, 2007, p. 55.

There has been a great deal of historical research into motivation in terms of constructions of victim groups in particular genocidal episodes. In the context of the aims of this thesis, I concur with Kelman and Hamilton when they write, of the sanctioned massacre, '[i]t is more instructive to look not at motives for violence but at the conditions under which the usual moral inhibitions against violence become weakened ... Through dehumanization, the actors' attitudes toward the target and toward themselves become so structured that it is neither necessary nor possible for them to view the relationship in moral terms' (unless, we might add, those terms in fact construct killing itself as moral).<sup>122</sup> Hermann Pfannmüller, for example, a Nazi physician who was an enthusiastic killer of both children and adults 'unworthy of life', described patients as exhibiting 'only the semblance of a human existence.'<sup>123</sup> The psychiatrist and eugenicist Alfred Hoche invoked a concept of 'mental death' in which people became *Ballastexistenzen* ('human ballast'); to put such people to death 'is not to be equated with other types of killing ... but [is] an allowable, useful act.'<sup>124</sup> Khmer Rouge interrogators and torturers referred to the 'enemy' (*khmang*) by the derogatory third-person pronoun *vea*, specifically used to refer to people younger than the speaker, of subordinate or lowly status, animals and objects, a linguistic register which John Marston describes as 'objectifying self-orientation.'<sup>125</sup> In each case, the construction of the object makes destruction legitimate.

I have already outlined in the Introduction the way in which the legitimatory function of dehumanisation is a mechanism or strategy which, unlike motivatory dehumanisation, is universally present in genocidal killing, inasmuch as destruction as a choice must be justified; and victims are destroyed not as individuals but because they belong to a collectivity, and

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<sup>122</sup> Kelman & Hamilton, 'The My Lai Massacre', p. 200.

<sup>123</sup> Lifton, p. 120.

<sup>124</sup> Lifton, p. 47; original italics.

<sup>125</sup> These terms were largely dropped from common usage in the 'class-free' DK society, but were often used in Khmer Rouge publications, speeches and documents in reference to the 'enemy' (A. L. Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?: Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide*, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2005, pp. 182-183, 191).

thus are understood not as individuals but as members or representatives of that collectivity, one to which collective characteristics can be ascribed. This legitimacy function of dehumanisation is therefore a *definitional* aspect of genocide which has been accorded far less attention than the question of motivational constructions, particularly from a comparative perspective. However, as we will see, legitimacy dehumanisation can only be understood in terms of its connection with motivational dehumanisation, as a manifestation of an overarching phenomenon.

What is the connection, then, between these two functions of dehumanisation?

Legitimation may be considered a less extreme or complete manifestation of motivational dehumanisation, in that dehumanisation may be legitimacy without being motivational, but when it is motivational it is *always* legitimacy. That is, the element of threat allegedly posed by an out-group motivates destruction, and also legitimises it as self-defence: when dehumanisation is motivational, it is, in the words of Hirsch, *both* 'a legitimating mechanism and a call for action.'<sup>126</sup> This categorisation of the functions of genocidal dehumanisation demonstrates the way in which dehumanisation is a *continuum*. It is a complex and differentiated strategy which *enables* genocide (as well as other forms of mass violence and oppression, though that is beyond the terms of this thesis), and which manifests itself through mechanisms which can be placed within a spectrum or a range of extremity. The present work explores a particular range found at one end of that continuum, within which the self-fulfilling nature of this process is taken to the extreme, and the humanity of the outgroup is literally and entirely removed through physical destruction.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Hirsch, *Genocide and the Politics of Memory*, p. 104; my italics. See also Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 94, on the way in which deligitimising discourse not only creates meaning in the realm of the psychosocial, but flags behavioural intentions toward the outgroup.

<sup>127</sup> Paul Chilton describes the self-fulfilling nature of this process as one in which a metaphorical or blending textual process creates a coherent cognitive system which, under certain social conditions, is elaborated to the point of enactment (P. Chilton, 'Manipulation, memes and metaphors: The case of *Mein Kampf*' in L. de Saussure & P. Schulz [eds], *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, language, mind*, John Benjamins



Certain scholars, notably Charny, as well as the psychiatrists Viola W. Bernard, Perry Ottenberg and Fritz Redl, have argued that dehumanisation should be understood in this way: as a continuum or a spectrum.<sup>128</sup> Susan Opotow suggests that ‘moral exclusion’ exists in mild and severe forms, which share the following vital underlying characteristics: ‘perpetrators perceive others as psychologically distant, lack constructive moral obligations toward others, view others as expendable and undeserving, and deny others’ rights, dignity, and autonomy.’<sup>129</sup> What has not been undertaken, however, is an analysis of what such a continuum might actually consist of, nor of the relationship between its constituent elements across a range of manifestation. For example, Bernard, Perry and Redl suggest that there are two different types of dehumanisation: partial dehumanisation, in which out-groups are perceived as sub-humans, bad humans, or super-humans; and complete dehumanisation, in which out-groups are seen as statistics or commodities. The first type of dehumanisation engenders feelings of hostility and fear, while the predominant emotional tone of the second is apathy.<sup>130</sup> In Jean Hatzfeld’s interviews with perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide, for example, both these attitudes are present:

PIO: We no longer saw a human being when we turned up a Tutsi in the swamps. I mean a person like us, sharing similar thoughts and feelings.<sup>131</sup>

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Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2005, p. 39). On the issue of construction of the enemy other as a self-fulfilling prophecy, see also Semelin, ‘Toward a vocabulary’, p. 198.

<sup>128</sup> In the field of social psychology, a model which suggests a continuum between dehumanisation or depersonalisation, and prejudice or bigotry, has also been suggested; see Tileagă, ‘Ideologies of moral exclusion’ p. 718; see also Billig, p. 181. Staub suggests a distinction between ‘devaluation’ and ‘hate’; see Staub, ‘The Origins and Evolution of Hate’, pp. 59-60. Opotow also argues for a ‘spectrum of hate’ in a context of moral judgement and exclusion (S. Opotow, ‘Hate, Conflict, and Moral Exclusion’, in Sternberg, pp. 121-122, 130, 138-139). In the same volume, however, David Moshman suggests that ‘dehumanization is more important than hatred as a basis for genocide’ (D. Moshman, ‘Genocidal Hatred: Now You See It, Now You Don’t’, in Sternberg, pp. 206-207).

<sup>129</sup> Opotow, ‘Moral Exclusion and Injustice’, p. 2.

<sup>130</sup> Viola W. Bernard, Perry Ottenberg & Fritz Redl ‘Dehumanization’, in Nevitt Sanford & Craig Comstock (eds) et al, *Sanctions for Evil: Sources of Social Destructiveness*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 1971, pp. 105–106.

<sup>131</sup> Hatzfeld, pp. 47-48.

ALPHONSE: ...I do not believe our hearts detested the Tutsis. But it was inevitable to think so, since the decision was made by the organizers to kill them all.

To kill so many human beings without wavering, we had to hate with no second thoughts.

Hatred was the only emotion allowed for the Tutsis. The killings were too well managed to leave us room for any other feelings<sup>132</sup>

At first, such a distinction may appear as a possible contradiction: an outgroup is seen as categorically inferior, but also as able to pose a dangerous threat to an ingroup. A more nuanced reading resolves this problem, by associating anger and fear with a perceived element of threat constructed through 'demonising' characterisation of an outgroup<sup>133</sup> – that is, in cases where such construction is motivational; while a view of the outgroup as subhuman or completely non-human, that is, in which dehumanisation is legitimatory, creates disgust, apathy, and/or pity (genocide committed, ideologically, 'more in sorrow than in anger', an ideology which does not impede destruction).<sup>134</sup> The outgroup becomes a 'universal culprit',<sup>135</sup> and, as Waller puts it, a move takes place from legitimate harming ('it is right to harm these people') to imperative harming ('it would be wrong not to harm these people').<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 221.

<sup>133</sup> Regarding anger, Kelman and Hamilton ('The My Lai Massacre', p. 199) make the interesting suggestion that in 'sanctioned massacres,'

the expressions of anger in the situation itself can more properly be viewed as outcomes rather than causes of the violence. They serve to provide the perpetrators with an explanation and rationalization for their violent actions and appropriate labels for their emotional state. They also help reinforce, maintain, and intensify the violence, but the anger is not the primary source of violence. Hostility toward the target, historically rooted or situationally induced, contributes heavily toward the violence, but it does so largely by dehumanizing the victims rather than by motivating violence against them in the first place.

<sup>134</sup> This monolithic construction of stereotyped or prejudiced attitudes also seems to appear in other fields: Bar-Tal & Teichman note, for example, that '[t]he characteristics of a stereotype's intensity and extensiveness are of great importance but have been almost completely disregarded by sociological research' (Bar-Tal & Teichman, p. 52).

<sup>135</sup> Kečmanović quoted in D. B. MacDonald, *Balkan holocausts?: Serbian and Croatian victim-centred propaganda and the war in Yugoslavia*, Manchester University Press, Manchester (New York), 2002, p. 30.

<sup>136</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 202. On killing as imperative, see also Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 255.

[I]n a perverse way, the ideology that generates a genocide demonstrates at the same time that the people committing it believe that they are following their conscience. The self-defensive 'kill so that you may not be killed' is usually not sufficient to mobilize the masses; the victim must be seen as a demon and his killing as a universally beneficial act. Even at his worst, man likes to think that he is doing good.<sup>137</sup>

What distinguishes motivatory from legitimacy dehumanisation, then, is the presence or absence of the element of threat (and the element of threat is what is often being obliquely referred to when the term 'demonisation' is used).<sup>138</sup> The perception of threat, like legitimacy dehumanisation, allows moral disengagement, but unlike legitimacy dehumanisation, it also calls for action, as in this example from Rwanda:

LÉOPORD: Our Tutsi neighbours, we knew they were guilty of no misdoing, but we thought all Tutsis at fault for our constant troubles. We no longer looked at them one by one; we no longer stopped to recognize them as they had been, not even as colleagues. They had become a threat greater than all we had experienced together, more important than our way of seeing things in the community. That's how we reasoned and how we killed at the time.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> Anzulović quoted in Carmichael, p. 81.

<sup>138</sup> See, for example, Hirsch, *Genocide and the Politics of Memory*, pp. 99-100; S. J. Kaufman, 'Symbolic Politics or Rational Choice?: Testing Theories of Extreme Ethnic Violence', *International Security*, vol. 30, no. 4, 2006, p. 53; Bar-Tal, 'Causes,' pp. 67-73; Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 47-48. An analysis of the different types of threat which an in-group understands to be posed against it by an out-group can be found in the intergroup threat theory presented by W. G. Stephan & C. W. Stephan, 'An integrated threat theory of prejudice' in S. Oskamp (ed.), *Reducing prejudice and discrimination*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale (New Jersey), 2000, pp. 23-46; for a revision and a general discussion of this theory (respectively) see W. G. Stephan & C. L. Renfro, 'The role of threats in intergroup relations' in D. Mackie & E. R. Smith (eds), *From Prejudice to Intergroup Emotions*, Psychology Press, New York, 2002, pp. 191-208; W. G. Stephen, O. Ybarra & K. R. Morrison, 'Intergroup Threat Theory' in Todd D. Nelson (ed.), *Handbook of Prejudice, Stereotyping and Discrimination*, Psychology Press, New York, 2009, pp. 43-59. For threat and (concomitant) necessity for 'self-defence' as a justification, see Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 91-92, 110. For the relationship between the content of beliefs (in this case, the element of threat) and action taken upon them, see Bar-Tal, *Group Beliefs*, p. 96.

<sup>139</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 121.

Likewise, in the former Yugoslavia:

Justifying the measures taken against the Muslims proved less of a dilemma than one might have expected, thanks in no small part to the conditioning of views by the government's intensive information campaign. This rationalization has often been used to counter the threat to the very basis of Serb values and survival. Almost any action, however, would appear reasonable in response to a threat of this magnitude, particularly given the concept of innate Serbian superiority. In such an atmosphere, and with the Muslims portrayed in such negative and dehumanizing terms, it is perhaps not surprising that there were so many Serbs ready to carry out atrocities without qualms. The use of stereotypes not only served to mobilize the Serbs but helped lump the Muslims into a common category as dangerous, alien and implacable enemies against whom it was legally and morally acceptable, and even mandatory, to use any means available ... The official Serbian interpretation was that their own people were defending and liberating only what was historically and legally theirs, while the Muslims were interlopers who had usurped Serbian lands ... Serb leaders also emphasised that their actions were only legitimate self-defense and assumed that anyone else in their place would do the same.<sup>140</sup>

As these examples demonstrate, perpetrators 'view themselves as faultless operators driven to injurious conduct by forcible provocation. Their destructive conduct thus becomes a justifiable reaction to belligerent provocations,' an act of self-defence.<sup>141</sup> Viewed this way, not only are cruel deeds excusable, 'but one can even feel self-righteous in the process.'<sup>142</sup> Peter Schrijvers gives the following account, taking place during the Second World War:

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<sup>140</sup> Cigar, p. 81.

<sup>141</sup> Albert Bandura 'Moral Disengagement' in Israel W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ABC-CLIO, California, 1999, p. 417; see also Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 110; Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 203; Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary', p. 197; Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 48.

<sup>142</sup> Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement', p. 417; see also Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement', pp. 29-30; Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 198.

On 4 february [sic] 1945, 69 bombers dropped nearly 160 tons of incendiaries on Kobe and destroyed 2.5 million square feet of the city. A sergeant from the 23rd Field Hospital, enraged by evidence of Japanese atrocities committed against helpless Filipinos, wrote to his mother on 22nd February: 'I hope to HELL that Tokio [sic] and all of Japan and EVERY Jap is completely destroyed in return for the destruction and sufferings they have caused. There can be no pity on the Japs and that goes for women and children...' <sup>143</sup>

Marlow, Joseph Conrad's famous narrator, wrote of the Africans he encountered that it was not their *dissimilarity* to 'humans' which caused them to be fear-inspiring, but their *similarity*. Semelin suggests that dehumanisation may, in a psychological sense, *necessitate* cruelty, in particular disfigurement and death, inasmuch as it becomes necessary to literally disprove the humanity of the other.<sup>144</sup> The motivatory fear of a threat represented by the other might thus be read as related to the threat of recognising oneself in the other, and of imagining that the other wishes to do to one, what one plans to do to him/her.<sup>145</sup> Mark Cocker writes of the European killing of American peoples that

[t]he image of the bestial and pitiless savage which licensed this onslaught was never more a portrait of the Mexica, or the Inca, or the Nama, the Herero, the Tasmanians, or even the tigers of humankind, the Apache, than it was an image of Europe's own destructive capacity. It is a prevailing irony of this story that as the tide of European conquest engulfed tribal peoples, so the colonists' civilisation succumbed to a savage whom they had so violently condemned. But the savage was within themselves.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> P. Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan: American Soldiers in Asia and the Pacific during World War II*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, p. 259.

<sup>144</sup> Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary', pp. 207-208.

<sup>145</sup> On this issue, see Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary', p. 206. For extremely numerous examples from Nazi propaganda, see J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London, 2006.

<sup>146</sup> M. Cocker, *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold: Europe's Conflict with Tribal Peoples*, Pimlico, London, 1999, pp 369-370.

Conversely, it has often been suggested that the creation of a collective self is premised on the creation of an other, on a process of negative definition which creates coherence and binds the ingroup together; the characteristics and values ascribed to the outgroup are seen as a negative reflection of those ascribed to the ingroup, a process which has been termed 'counteridentification.'<sup>147</sup> The perception of an external threat may be an important part of this process. In the context of genocide, David Bruce MacDonald has suggested that in the Balkans,

negative myths have proved most useful in rallying people together under a common cause, namely – the defence of the nation from external attack. Such myths convince members of a nation that they are in danger, should they choose not to adhere to the national traditions and prescriptions laid forth by their leaders... Proving the guilt of the other in trying to destroy the self became a central preoccupation of Serbian and Croatian nationalists seeking to legitimate many of their often violent activities...<sup>148</sup>

[a]s Marc Howard Ross has further explained the phenomenon, the isolation of enemies who 'contain unwanted parts of ourselves' can allow the nation to purge itself of many negative attributes, leaving only the good characteristics... 'Outsiders can then serve as objects for externalisation, displacement and projection of intense negative feelings like dissenting perspectives, which are present inside the group but denied.'<sup>149</sup>

In summary, then, an other whose presence is considered undesirable may be constructed in various different ways, considered so for various reasons. These reasons form a narrative of dehumanisation which may, or may not, contain the element of threat. When it contains this element, dehumanisation is a motivational factor and a legitimatory factor in genocide;

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<sup>147</sup> Kečmanović quoted in MacDonald, p. 27. MacDonald also uses the work of Peter Alter to explain the value for ingroups of the conceptual creation and ascription of negative characteristics to other collectivities. See also Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary', on the 'identitarian process,' pp, 196-197; Mosse, 2000, p. 65.

<sup>148</sup> MacDonald, p. 35

<sup>149</sup> MacDonald, p. 28

this form of dehumanisation is sometimes present in genocide. When it does not contain this element, it is legitimacy but not motivation; in this aspect, it is a universal element of genocidal killing.

#### Vd. Legitimation, Motivation and Temporality

Not only content, but also context must be taken into consideration. It is a distorted view to see motivations for genocide as 'frozen' for any given individual; rather, motivation may change over time.<sup>150</sup> Bar-Tal notes, for example, that delegitimation and the perception of threat become a vicious cycle in which each feeds into the other.<sup>151</sup> The presence of the element of threat is defined not only in an atemporal way, but by the changing circumstances of the relationship between perpetrator group and outgroup. For example, a people who are seen as inferior but non-threatening may come to be seen as a threat if they resist the efforts of the perpetrator group to treat them in the way understood to befit an inferior group.<sup>152</sup> This is another aspect of the explanation, given above, for the fact that narratives of dehumanisation can exist for a long period of time which is not characterised by genocide, nor organised or extreme subjugation; yet this does not mean that such narratives do not have a strategic role to play in the fact that the outgroup is ultimately treated in such a way. As I have already mentioned, we should be wary of a teleological reading of genocide or genocidal killing, in which discrimination and dehumanisation grows until it reaches its zenith in such actions; rather, there are specific circumstances under which the decision to

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<sup>150</sup> Mann, 'Were the Perpetrators of Genocide', p. 333.

<sup>151</sup> Bar-Tal, 'Causes', p. 68; Opatow, 'Deterring...', p. 174.

<sup>152</sup> See for example Dan Stone on changing anthropological depictions of the Herero in relation to their growing resistance to German power, and the subsequent genocide, in the colonial period: D. Stone, 'White men with low moral standards? German anthropology and the Herero Genocide,' *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 39-42.

undertake these actions can be, and are, carried out.<sup>153</sup> Pre-existing dehumanisation of the outgroup, in its motivational as well as its legitimacy aspect, can play a role both in the taking of such a decision, and, once taken, in its implementation.

While some might suggest that the existence of dehumanising rhetoric may be used as a post-hoc moral justification when it was not in fact present before or during the period of action, this does not seem to be borne out by the facts. The Rwandan perpetrators interviewed by Hatzfeld after the fact did not use anti-Tutsi sentiment as exculpatory. They did not insist that they were brainwashed, or that anti-Tutsi sentiment affected them in their killing in the marshes. They found it harder to talk about anti-Tutsi sentiment than about their first murder.<sup>154</sup> Neither did the killers examined by Christopher Browning describe a role for antisemitism in their actions (although admittedly this case was conditioned by the fact that the German legal system to which they were subject looked with much greater disfavour on killings motivated by prejudice than those committed for other reasons).<sup>155</sup>

To complicate the picture, however, on the individual level dehumanisation seems to be a self-reinforcing cycle. On the one hand, in the period before and during violence, dehumanisation legitimises violence which is desired for other reasons (and can also motivate violence in itself); but when dehumanisation is not present, at least overtly, in the stages preceding violence, it seems during and after violence to be a common psychological 'defence mechanism' which is used by perpetrators to justify their actions to themselves and others.<sup>156</sup> Dehumanisation, in whatever form it is instituted, by its nature becomes

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<sup>153</sup> Two randomly-chosen examples might be the rise of technologies of mass media and propaganda, or the ascent to power of a particular group.

<sup>154</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 213.

<sup>155</sup> Browning, pp. 73-75.

<sup>156</sup> Milgram, p. 11; see also Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 252-253. On dehumanisation of an out-group as a corollary of past mistreatment by an in-group, see also Castano & Giner-Sorolla, p. 816.



motivatory; it is both a pre- and a post-hoc justificatory strategy. Therefore, its tendency, at least at the level of the individual, is to become more extreme; that is, to move toward the motivatory end of the continuum.<sup>157</sup>

Given all of this, we must accept, within our model of a continuum of dehumanisation, that the admixture of each of these roles is not only different in different genocidal episodes, but that it changes, both over time, and over cultural 'space' (that is, it will manifest differently in the diverse individual and collective psychologies of the groups and persons involved in perpetration) within any single given genocidal episode. Despite this, however, the argument

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My use of Milgram's work may seem problematic, in that Milgram understands ingrained obedience as the mechanism which removes objections to the mistreatment of a victim, whereas I am concerned with the way in which dehumanisation fulfils that function. These two positions, however, need not be contradictory.

In the first place, I do not argue that it is exclusively dehumanisation which legitimises violence; and my concern is not only with legitimisation, but also with motivation, a subject which is touched upon by Milgram only as regards the self-perpetuating nature of acts of violence inasmuch as the previous action itself becomes a motivation and justification.

Furthermore, Milgram's work demonstrates the way in which the authority situation dehumanises the victim, by placing her/him outside the realm of normal moral obligation; by stripping the 'closeness' that the subject feels with the victim; by placing the victim, symbolically and physically, at the bottom of the apex of the hierarchical systems of value by which all subjects interpret and understand their place and their role in the social world; and by the activism of a psychological mechanism within the subject which means that action against the victim is self-perpetuating and becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy (since, once the situation is initiated, to fail to take action is to damage one's own self-image as a moral being).

A more detailed discussion of the inherent presence of dehumanisation in the practices of rational-bureaucratic modernity will be presented in Chapter Seven. Finally, obedience and dehumanisation can be intimately connected, inasmuch as the response to perception of a threat may be obedience to a saviour-figure (in the form of a leader or organisation) (Hirsch, *Genocide and the Politics of Memory*, p. 100).

<sup>157</sup> Kelman and Hamilton ('The My Lai Massacre', pp. 204-205) comment appositely:

The dynamics of the massacre process itself further increase the participants' tendency to dehumanize their victims. Those who participate as part of the bureaucratic apparatus increasingly come to see their victims as bodies to be counted and entered into their reports, as faceless figures that will determine their productivity rates and promotions. Those who participate in the massacre directly – in the field, as it were – are reinforced in their perception of the victim as less than human by observing their very victimization. The only way they can justify what is being done to these people – both by others and by themselves – and the only way they can extract some degree of meaning out of the absurd events in which they find themselves participating (see Lifton, 1971, 1973) is by coming to believe that the victims are subhuman and deserve to be rooted out. And thus the process of dehumanization feeds on itself.

above should demonstrate that there is a vital analytical distinction to be drawn between these two functions of dehumanisation.

## §

In this chapter thus far, I have delineated the two major functions of dehumanisation in a theoretical sense; in order to understand the phenomenon in practice, we must turn to the question of how, *in practice*, these functions are fulfilled. The answer to this question lies in an examination of the nature and usage of language and metaphor.

## VI. Language and Metaphor in Genocidal Dehumanisation

*The responsibility for language is, in essence, human responsibility. . . .*

–Thomas Mann<sup>158</sup>

### Vla. Language, Naming, and Reality

According to Colin Tatz,

There are clear-cut steps in race politics, including ... the Holocaust ... there had to be, and there were, six, possibly seven, sequential steps in Nazi race policy and practice: (1) formulation of an idea, followed by (2) exposition, (3) justification, (4) adoption, (5) legitimisation, (6) implementation and, subsequent to the events, (7) rationalisation (as explanation, justification or exculpation) ... Apart from implementation, all other steps, or

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<sup>158</sup> This quotation is taken from an open letter to the dean of Bonn University, written by Mann when, after having exiled himself from the Reich, he was deprived of his honorary doctorate (in Steiner, p. 144).

factors in the equation, are 'mere words'. If one follows the steps above, it is plain that words can be, and have been, fatal.<sup>159</sup>

How are words fatal in genocide? In a general sense, as Haas puts it, 'an ethic [is] a field of meaning created through and within the structure of language.'<sup>160</sup> If dehumanisation, a practice of ethical legitimisation and motivation, is a necessary precondition for genocide, language is a necessary, and usually central, component of dehumanisation. In the previous chapter, I explored the way in which 'reality,' and, more specifically, meaning, is socially constructed through discursive processes. I can now turn to the more specific issue of the *linguistic* construction of reality in analysis of genocidal utterances in order to understand how dehumanisation functions in practice. How, in genocide, does language shape understandings of reality, and how does it therefore shape action?

Language, according to Herbert Hirsch and Roger W. Smith, 'both shapes and reflects experience':

Perceptions of reality are linguistically created and meaning derives from the cultural, social and political context. In the social construction of reality, language not only represents perceptions of reality, but begins to constitute it. Victims are born out of fear and hate, but also through language that abstracts and fixes the identity of the other: the Jew, the infidel, the enemy of the revolution.<sup>161</sup>

Language constructs reality: and the reality thus constructed is neither random nor accidental. Given this, language is the primary tool which is used to accomplish the re-labelling which is a mechanism of the dehumanisation process (although visual imagery

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<sup>159</sup> C. Tatz, *With Intent To Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide*, Verso, London, 2003, p. 25.

<sup>160</sup> Haas, p. 385.

<sup>161</sup> H. Hirsch & R. W. Smith, 'The Language of Extermination in Genocide', in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, vol. 2, Mansell, London, 1991, p. 387.

sometimes has a role to play). Edelman argues that '[l]anguage forms perform a crucial function by creating shared meanings, perceptions, and reassurances among mass publics';<sup>162</sup> that is, in the creation, in this case, of potential perpetrators and acquiescent (rather than 'indifferent') bystanders.<sup>163</sup> According to Bandura,

[l]anguage shapes thought patterns on which actions are based. Activities can take on very different appearances depending on what they are called. Not surprisingly, euphemistic language is widely used to make destructive conduct respectable and to reduce personal responsibility for it ... Cognitive restructuring of harmful conduct through moral justifications, sanitizing language, and exonerating comparisons is the most effective set of psychological mechanisms for disengaging moral control.<sup>164</sup>

Language is thus a powerful cultural weapon. The power to control language, to name, is the power to shape (perceptions of) reality, and action which is taken based on that understanding. Louis Althusser has given us the concept of interpellation, of naming, as a way in which the subject is not just characterised, but *produced*.<sup>165</sup> In discussing dehumanisation, Tileagă suggests that it is not the case that dehumanising language is simply a reflection of what people 'carry inside their heads'; rather, 'people are shown to flexibly work up, formulate the nature of actions, events, their and other people's accountability through ways of talking that depersonalize, delegitimize and dehumanize a particular group ... within the cultural and discursive practices of [a] society.'<sup>166</sup> Language thus *creates* the

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<sup>162</sup> Edelman, p. 65.

<sup>163</sup> Bajohr notes that the term 'indifference' does not accurately capture the active nature of the attitude taken by those in a population who did not resist genocidal action (p. 184); we will see this element also in Stanley Cohen's explication of the paradoxical need to know what we do not want to know, in order to know it (Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 21-50).

<sup>164</sup> Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement', pp. 415-416; see also Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', pp. 104-106.

<sup>165</sup> M. Freeden, *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2003, p. 30. On the subject of naming, we might think of the literal use of this in the Nazi practice of forcing Jews to take the middle names 'Israel and 'Sarah' (respectively).

<sup>166</sup> Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion', pp. 721-722.

out-group as such and defines the way in which that group may be treated. Language which names victims as sub-human or non-human, therefore, is not incidental to genocide. It is not merely decorative. It is an essential part of the process.

The naming function of language occurs both through literal naming, and through metaphorical naming. Language literally dehumanises victims when it is 'demonstrated' that they are not 'true humans,' that they are biologically or culturally inferior, that they are disease-carrying or prone to disease, that they 'overbreed' and so on; in other words, when victims are named *literally* as inferior and/or threatening. But it is more common for dehumanising language to be metaphorical. Utterances which name victims as specific animals or as disease organisms are explicitly metaphorical – and we should note that the form taken is usually metaphor ('Jews are a disease') rather than simile ('Jews are like a disease'), with the resulting implication that, even though the discourse is understood to be metaphorical, it refers to an inherent, essentialised 'nature' of the victim group, rather than indicating a similarity with a thing or a quality. Euphemistic and bureaucratic language is implicitly metaphorical, inasmuch as we are aware that human beings are not 'units,' 'pieces,' and so forth, that is, they are not inanimate objects.<sup>167</sup> Also, as we will see, literal and metaphorical claims are often used in concert, where the literal claim precedes or justifies the metaphor and the metaphor in turn refers to the allegations made in the claim.

The intimate connection between literal and metaphorical dehumanising language should be clear, inasmuch as their *content* – that is, the claims they make, their *function* – are very similar or identical. The subject of metaphor is therefore one to which I will pay particular attention in the following discussion.

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<sup>167</sup> As we will see later, however, this language is a near-universal practice, both when dealing with non-human animals, in which case we may also suspect that there is a desire to justify action and erase the biological nature of action, and in the case of genuinely inanimate objects, where such a desire is not present.

## Vlb. Language, Ethics, and Genocidal Metaphors

How does particular language function to legitimise and justify the ‘unthinkable’? Given that our understanding of reality is socially constructed, the language that we use to describe action shapes our understanding of the meaning of that action. Metaphor thus constructs social reality.<sup>168</sup> Metaphor is sometimes seen as ‘mere rhetorical ornament,’ but it is much more (important) than this.<sup>169</sup> Indeed, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that ‘metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action.’<sup>170</sup> According to Lakoff and Johnson, our conceptual system is fundamentally metaphorical in nature, and, since this conceptual system defines our everyday realities, reality itself is defined by metaphor.<sup>171</sup> These metaphors are discussed in terms of ‘discourse forms’ (for example, the form ‘argument is war’) which appear and reappear in utterance – in the typological chapters we will see the way in which different types of genocidal dehumanisation consistently deploy such specific metaphorical forms.<sup>172</sup> However, the relationship between metaphor and conceptual reality is bi-directional; metaphors also work to satisfy a purpose, that is, when they allow successfully ‘allow us to get a handle on one aspect of the concept.’<sup>173</sup> Therefore, the use of particular metaphors is not random as such, but is culturally and historically constructed, and inherently purposive.

As we have seen, it is misleading to think that ‘evil’ somehow ‘intrudes’ to cause genocide. Killing (or other genocidal violence such as child removal) is almost never perceived as absolutely and universally illegitimate. Rather, this violence *enacted toward certain groups* is illegitimate; for example, as well as the near-universal practice of killing animals (which we

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<sup>168</sup> J. M. Balkin, *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1998, p. 247.

<sup>169</sup> Musolf, pp. 24-25.

<sup>170</sup> G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1980, p. 1.

<sup>171</sup> Lakoff & Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 1.

<sup>172</sup> Lakoff & Johnson *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 5.

<sup>173</sup> Lakoff & Johnson *Metaphors We Live By*, p. 97.

will explore in Chapter Six), decades before the genocide of Jews, 'Germany' had previously committed genocide upon the Herero and other peoples in their African colonies. That is to say, it was not simply the fact that Germans came to think of killing as legitimate, whereas before it had been illegitimate, which allowed the genocide of Jews. The socio-political context of particular situations (warfare is a very common precipitator) is often implicated in such shifts; however, they are reliant on pre-existing discursive categorisations and their ethical implications. In genocidal episodes, discursive thinking is shifted such that certain collectivities are discursively moved into different ethical categories. As Haas puts it, 'diverse evaluative discourses interact with each other, and at times even can be made to intermesh such that they become mutually supportive.'<sup>174</sup> Thus, for Haas, the Nazi ethic was persuasive because 'it drew implicitly (if not explicitly) upon values and assumptions that were already a part of people's descriptions of reality ... It proved powerful and potent because it drew upon and organized, in a certain way, insights and perceptions already regarded (or very capable of being regarded) as self-evidently, intuitively, correct.'<sup>175</sup> But how, in practice, are these purposive connections drawn together into a discursive strategy? Metaphor is one of the primary way in which this process occurs.

Metaphor is a powerful form of re-labelling: after all, there is a world of difference between the murder of a human being and the excision of a cancerous growth, between massacre and cleansing. As that example demonstrates, metaphors (in the words of Paul Chilton) are 'dynamic and productive': one domain has its own rich inherent logic, which is then mapped onto another which is in material substance entirely different.<sup>176</sup> The employment of metaphors defines, and can redefine reality, and, specifically, the categories through which

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<sup>174</sup> Haas, p. 391.

<sup>175</sup> Haas, pp. 391-392.

<sup>176</sup> Chilton, p. 24. Chilton distinguishes between 'metaphor' and 'blending,' the second being the site more involved in cognitive processing, but for our purposes it is not germane to enlarge upon this distinction.

we comprehend the world and bestow meaning upon experience.<sup>177</sup> The process of categorisation is essential for all animals.<sup>178</sup> In humans, the categories which thus obtain, which are constructed through metaphor and which represent themselves as truth, are related not to inherent properties, but to interactional properties thus constructed as existing between the speaking subject and the object.<sup>179</sup> Furthermore, in regard to 'truth,' the use of metaphor turns arbitrary assertions into objectified 'truths' which 'anyone can see';<sup>180</sup> and this apparent obvious truth, the quality of 'going without saying,' applies to all the entailments that a particular metaphor encompasses.<sup>181</sup> In other words, metaphorical models not only *describe*, but *structure* understanding.<sup>182</sup> Furthermore, metaphors inherently produce ideological effects, due to their nature as *partial* and *selective* accounts of experience.<sup>183</sup>

When translated into action, metaphor 'defines the pattern of perception to which people respond':

Each metaphor intensifies selected perceptions and ignores others, thereby helping one to concentrate upon desired consequences of favored public policies and helping one to ignore their unwanted, unthinkable, or irrelevant premises and aftermaths. Each metaphor can be a subtle way of highlighting what one wants to believe and avoiding what one does not wish to face ...<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Lakoff & Johnson *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 122-124, 139-146, 157-158.

<sup>178</sup> Lakoff & Johnson, 1999, pp. 17-19.

<sup>179</sup> Lakoff & Johnson *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 163-164.

<sup>180</sup> Chilton, p. 29.

<sup>181</sup> Balkin, p. 247.

<sup>182</sup> Balkin, p. 244.

<sup>183</sup> Balkin, p. 245-246.

<sup>184</sup> Edelman, pp. 67-68.



The employment of a given metaphor hides aspects of a concept which are inconsistent with that metaphor; and this concealment is itself concealed from consciousness.<sup>185</sup>

In terms of genocide, it is the destruction of civilian human equals which must be concealed. Victims of the National Socialists were not ‘killed,’ but ‘cleaned up,’ ‘disinfected,’ or ‘exterminated.’ Such language prevented perpetrators from ‘equating [their actions] with their old, “normal” knowledge of murder and lies.’<sup>186</sup> Metaphorical language thus renders murder non-murderous; Lifton, for example, contends that, through the use of medicalised rhetoric which concealed killing, Nazi doctors created an ‘Auschwitz self’ in which the doctor knew he selected, but did not interpret selections as murder; in which the meaning of action was completely disavowed.<sup>187</sup> While they did not believe euphemisms such as *Rampendienst* (‘ramp duty’) or *Selektion* (‘selection’), ‘the language used gave Nazi doctors a discourse in which killing was no longer killing; and need not be experienced, or even perceived, as killing. As they lived increasingly within that language – and they used it with each other – Nazi doctors became imaginatively bound to a psychic realm of derealization, disavowal, and nonfeeling.’<sup>188</sup> As one former Nazi doctor said to Lifton in reference to ‘euthanasia,’ ‘there was a certain ... sensibility that this couldn’t be, ... [that] one cannot simply murder a mentally ill or ... old person or an imbecile.’<sup>189</sup> As these examples show, there was a ‘cognitive link between the presuppositions embodied in the source concepts of

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<sup>185</sup> Lakoff & Johnson *Metaphors We Live By*, pp. 10-11, 152.

<sup>186</sup> H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (revised and enlarged edn), Penguin, New York, 1983, p. 86. This is not to argue that perpetrators are normatively disinclined to involvement in genocide, but that they are disinclined to involvement in activities which they conceive as ‘murder’ or ‘lies.’

<sup>187</sup> Lifton, p. 422. While earlier in this chapter I have argued against Lifton’s model in moral normative terms, his analysis of the way in which action can be reinterpreted by perpetrators does not depend on this aspect of his argument.

<sup>188</sup> Lifton, p. 445.

<sup>189</sup> Lifton, p. 460.

Nazi antisemitic imagery and the conclusions at the target level of genocidal ideology and practice.<sup>190</sup>

As well as this legitimisation, however, metaphor also has another function to perform. In looking at the way metaphor is used, one begins to see how 'metaphorising' victims may fulfil the two possible functions of dehumanisation, not only making their killing a legitimate possibility, but also representing them as a threat, thus making it a necessity. In Edelman's words, '[p]olitical metaphors can vividly, potently, and pervasively evoke changed worlds in which the remedies for anxieties are clearly perceived and self-serving courses of action are sanctified.'<sup>191</sup> Hirsch and Smith demonstrate the way in which fear-inspiring images justify killing and call for action. Out-groups will 'be called vermin, infidels, traitors, heretics, enemies of the people ...'

[T]he use of such terms by those with political authority is a clear sign that the society is moving in a genocidal direction. Language becomes an indicator of a shift in the normative order and serves notice that inhibitions against mass killing have begun to erode ... [s]uch terms prepare the victims for destruction by dehumanizing members of the group and providing a warrant for genocide.<sup>192</sup>

Metaphor, in other words, can also *motivate*, in that metaphors which name victim peoples as a threat, at the same time refer, implicitly or explicitly, to a necessary solution to that threat – its destruction.<sup>193</sup> According to Charny, '[t]he process that makes genocide possible does not stop at dehumanization ... what needs to be added to justify taking people's lives is the proof that the others are also a terrible threat to our lives and that it is

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<sup>190</sup> Musolff, p. 25.

<sup>191</sup> Edelman, p. 71.

<sup>192</sup> Hirsch & Smith, p. 388.

<sup>193</sup> See Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion,' pp. 731-732.

their intent to take our lives away from us unless we stop them first.<sup>194</sup> For example, when a collective is named in medical rhetoric, the frame that applies is that of disease epidemics, in which '[t]he survival of the nation, of civilized society, of the world itself is said to be at stake – claims that are a familiar part of building a case for repression (an emergency requires “drastic measures,” et cetera.).'<sup>195</sup> These 'drastic measures' trump the moral codes which apply outside of an 'emergency' situation. In the case of National Socialist Germany, '[t]he language used to portray the Jew as a parasite, as vermin, functioned effectively to dehumanize the potential victims and justify their extermination. After all, it is legitimate to kill vermin, and it is viewed as self-defense.'<sup>196</sup> Language which names people as a threat not only justifies their destruction, but the perpetrator may even feel self-righteous.<sup>197</sup> In the context of the 'therapeutic' aspect of genocide, Lifton describes this as 'principled mass killing.'<sup>198</sup> As we have already seen, when discourse is motivational it is also inherently legitimatory. Hence, through the use of specific metaphors, genocide itself may come to be seen not only as a possibility, not only as a necessity, but as morally praiseworthy in itself.

Dehumanising metaphorical language can therefore play the dual role of motivation and legitimisation, of 'a legitimating mechanism and a call for action.' Ultimately, what such utterances achieve is the strategic recreation of an understanding of the meaning of action, through a discursive reinterpretation of the characterisation of the subject of such action.

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<sup>194</sup> Charny, 'Dehumanization – 'killing' the humanity of another', p. 156; original italics.

<sup>195</sup> S. Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors*, reprint, Penguin, London, 2002, p. 171.

<sup>196</sup> Hirsch & Smith, p. 389.

<sup>197</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 103; this may apply more widely to any set of utterances which imply that harmful action is a moral imperative.

<sup>198</sup> Lifton, p. 498.

In the preceding section, we have examined how dehumanisation functions as motivation and/or legitimisation, and how this is played out in language. To fit the final piece of the puzzle, we must now turn to the different types of actual manifestations of dehumanising discourse and see whether these functions appear, and if so, in what specific form, in different types of dehumanising discourse. This discussion will serve as an introduction to the tripartite typology laid out in the following chapters.

## VII. Dehumanisation: A Typology

I have now distinguished between *functions* of dehumanisation as motivation, and as legitimisation, while acknowledging that, given the nature of dehumanisation as a continuum, there is overlap and interchange between these functions. This insight can then be applied to the *types* of manifest dehumanisation. An examination of these types demonstrates the relationship *between* type and function in genocidal dehumanisation. Furthermore, it points to the reasons why, in any given time period and society, dehumanisation manifests in particular forms; that is, why particular socio-cultural and temporal locations give particular forms of dehumanisation the necessary purchase to fulfil their functions.

Very few scholars have noted or paid detailed attention to internal differentiation of discourses of dehumanisation. One exception is the important distinction, referred to in the work of Haslam et al, between animalistic and mechanistic constructions.<sup>199</sup> However, this model does not take into account the aspect of threat which, as we have seen, is inherent in certain types of dehumanisation. In the course of my own research I have identified a third

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<sup>199</sup> Haslam et al, pp. 249-251. Haslam et al note the difference between the naming of the object as an animal or to a 'lesser human' as opposed to naming the object as an inanimate automaton. An issue with this work in regard to my own argument is that in empirical terms it deals with collectivities, such as 'artists' or 'business people,' which cannot necessarily be considered outgroups as such.

category – that of the outgroup as a medicalised biological threat – to add to this dual schemata of animalisation and ‘less-than-human’-isation, and bureaucratic-euphemistic reification. Here, and in the following chapters, I deal with these in order from the most to the least extreme position on a continuum of dehumanisation.

### Type I: ‘Biopolitics’ – Medical and Military Metaphorical Utterance

This type consists of a set of utterances which use medical and military metaphors to identify outgroups as threatening disease organisms and vermin which (therefore) can only be dealt with through the use of violence. The connection, which at first may not be apparent, between military and medical metaphorical language occurs in the context of the discourses of modernity, and is explained in the chapter on this ‘type.’ While there is a longstanding connection between illness and otherness, this type has developed in its most extreme form in the period since the advent of germ theory in the nineteenth century; it is still very much in currency in contemporary episodes. Given the fatal menace which the metaphor evokes, the element of threat is always present in this type, and it can therefore be considered the most extreme form of motivational dehumanising discourse.

### Type II: Animalising and ‘De-humanising’ Utterance

This type is made up of utterances which animalise the victim group, by naming the victims as non-human animals, either metaphorically or literally; and of language which does not literally define victims as non-human, but which ‘de-humanises’ them by constructing them as inferior to, ‘behind’ or ‘below’ the superior or ‘truer’ humanity or civilisation of the perpetrator group. Animalising rhetoric, though far from gone, has less purchase in the

contemporary context than it has had in historical episodes; it has appeared particularly often, though by no means exclusively, in the colonial context. This language may either be motivational, when outgroups are named as threatening wild animals, or as posing an essentialist cultural or biological threat to the ingroup; or it may be legitimatory, when victims are named as 'lower in the hierarchy' than the ingroup, or as domesticated, tamed or non-dangerous animals. As such, it can be considered an 'intermediate' form of dehumanisation, situated between medical, and euphemistic, forms.

### Type III: Bureaucratic-Euphemistic Reification

This type consists of language which essentially 'de-biologises' victim groups, and thus does away with both the meaning, and any moral consideration, of action taken toward them (in analysing this form of dehumanisation I will also consider what Cohen terms 'reverse euphemism,' that is, the relabelling of harmful events as less harmful or pejorative ones<sup>200</sup>). Throughout the modern period its function as dehumanisation becomes both less obvious and more widespread, as populaces of nation-states have become accustomed to the bureaucratic management of human beings as standard practice. It is in these utterances that we see in its purest form the separation of the human object from any aspect of consideration as a living being to whom obligation of any kind is owed. It should also be noted that bureaucratic (as opposed to euphemistic) dehumanisation takes place *in situ* and is generally intended for an audience of direct and indirect perpetrators, rather than external bystanders and observers. This type, given that it makes no reference to threat as such, is legitimatory, rather than motivational.

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<sup>200</sup> Cohen, *States of Denial*, pp. 106-107.

In describing these categories, it becomes clear that there is a stable relationship between the functions and the types of genocidal dehumanisation. As well as this link, in the following chapters I will mention a related argument about the ways in which legitimisation as a function (and its manifestation in particular types) might occur in non-genocidal situations. While much scholarship has overlooked connections of this kind, in the context of the question of what cultural discourse can explain Stuart Kaufman posits an empirical link between the nature of discursive constructions, and the nature of violence directed at outgroups, on the basis of his analysis of mass violence in Sudan and Rwanda:

The evidence shows that discourses do vary, and they covary with the nature of violence in the two cases examined here. Northern Sudanese discourse justifies discrimination and repression against southerners, but there is no evidence of the sort of rhetoric that became common in Rwanda: southern Sudanese may be seen as “slaves,” but not as “cockroaches” that should be exterminated. The point about Rwanda is not that the mythology ‘merely made mass violence thinkable’; rather, it made open, rapid, and explicitly intended genocide a politically viable option. Sudanese mythology is less extreme, so although war is sanctioned, genocide is not: southern refugees were sheltered in the northern capital of Khartoum; they were not massacred.<sup>201</sup>

This is one concrete example of the way in which forms of dehumanisation are related to the context and the type of practice which may be enacted upon their object.

Demonstrating that such a connection exists allows in turn an understanding of the reasons for the form taken by dehumanisation in any given genocidal episode – and it is the specific features of each of these forms which will be pursued in the following chapters.

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<sup>201</sup> Kaufman, p. 82.

## VIII. Conclusion

The intent of this chapter has been to recognise that genocidal dehumanisation is worthy of investigation as a *prima facie* subject; and, in the process of undertaking such investigation, to reveal the connections between the *raison d'être*, functions, and types of genocidal dehumanisation. When employed as a theoretical concept or an explanatory tool, any manifestation of dehumanisation should be analysed with regard to its place on a continuum of dehumanisation, its role as legitimatory and/or motivatory, and the specific type of dehumanising utterances used, as well as the socio-historical reasons why this type has 'purchase' in a particular context. In this way, analysis of genocidal dehumanisation can give insight into the origins, motivations, conceivability, 'human possibility' and future likelihood of genocidal action, as well as providing a framework with which to analyse and understand the meaning of discourses of dehumanisation in non-genocidal situations.

If we are to employ the concept of 'dehumanisation' as a meaningful tool of analysis, one which can aid in the related tasks of understanding past episodes of genocide, and predicting and preventing genocide in the future, this concept must not be considered either self-evident, monolithic, or as no more than a 'window-dressing' to genocide. Firstly, dehumanisation must be acknowledged as a vital enabling component of genocide in the modern age. Secondly, recognition must be made that the nature and function of dehumanisation varies according to society, geography, temporality and aggregation. This variability, however, does not mean that manifestations of dehumanisation are too complex to be subject to productive analysis, or that generalisable theories, based on a comparative approach, cannot be formulated. This thesis represents a first attempt at the formulation of such a theory; and this chapter gives a basic outline of an applicable model of genocidal dehumanisation. Having established this outline, we may employ it to give closer



examination of each of the three types mentioned above, beginning with the most extreme:  
biopolitical dehumanisation.

## Chapter 5.

### 'Disease Incarnate': The Medical Model

*Nothing is more punitive than to give disease a meaning – that meaning being invariably a moralistic one.*

- Susan Sontag<sup>1</sup>

*Life is a window of vulnerability, and the perfection of the fully defended, 'victorious' self is a chilling fantasy*

- Donna Haraway<sup>2</sup>

*The source cluster of body/illness/cure concepts is not an arbitrary constellation of notional elements but a complex, narrative/scenic schema or 'scenario', one that tells a mini-story, complete with apparent causal explanations and conclusions about its outcome (here, the story of a body suffering illness because of poisoning and therefore needing a radical cure). This narrative scenario is mapped as a whole on to the target domain, leading the hearer or reader towards the expectation that a healer will appear who will cure the national illness.*

- Andreas Musolff<sup>3</sup>

Rudolf Hess's famous statement that 'National Socialism is nothing but applied biology' is a commonplace quotation in commentary on Nazi ideology and rhetoric. But the complex webs of meaning behind this and similar statements, and the context in which they were

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<sup>1</sup> S. Sontag, *Illness as Metaphor and AIDS and its Metaphors*, reprint, Penguin, London, 2002, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in L. Otis, *Membranes: Metaphors of Invasion in Nineteenth-Century Literature, Science, and Politics*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 1999, p. 174.

<sup>3</sup> A. Musolff, 'What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice? The function of antisemitic imagery in Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, p. 28; original italics.

utterable, are often overlooked or dismissed as self-evident. This chapter traces the development of the narrative of the outgroup as a biological threat, with particular reference to the modern self-representation of a perpetrator group as a 'body politic' threatened by alien others depicted and dehumanised as viruses, bacilli, microbes, cancerous growths, and other images drawn from the medical vocabulary. In doing so, it examines the intimate connection between medical and military language, and the functionality of this connection in medicalising dehumanisation.

The new biopolitics arising in the West in the nineteenth century provided not only discourse which gave a literal, 'scientific' reason as to why outgroups were both inferior and other-than-human (thus ideologically legitimising their destruction), as well as threatening (necessitating it); but also a metaphorical representation, revolving around concepts of hygiene and purity, which fulfilled identical psychological necessities on a symbolic and a populist level. At the same time, the emergence of the nation-state gave rise, for perpetrator groups, to an account representing the group as a unitary body within defined geographical limits whose ideal state was one of 'racial' homogeneity. The indelible 'wrongness' of an outgroup necessitated, in the eyes of perpetrators, the complete removal of that group from a geographically bounded territory; a particularly vicious medicalised representation of outgroups as a biological threat not only legitimised their disappearance, but directly motivated it. This discursive formation, that is, provided both a motive and a justification for what was also a new concept, the necessary and possible destruction of a biologically-defined group, which would come to be known as 'genocide.'<sup>4</sup>

As I have acknowledged elsewhere, much writing has been done on the topic of the connection between genocide and modernity – most notably, that of Zygmunt Bauman, to which this chapter is particularly indebted. Such writing has for the most part focused on

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<sup>4</sup> See Z. Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember, – But What?' in J. Kaye & B. Stråth (eds), *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Series philosophy & politics; No. 5), P.I.E. – Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000, pp. 40-41.

the authoritarian-bureaucratic-rational aspect of modernity, particularly in the context of perpetrator psychology – and these will be examined more closely in Chapter Seven. Here, I explore a different genocidal mechanism, one equally contingent upon the discourses and practices of modernity. This chapter is an examination of a new, distinctively modern type of dehumanising narrative, one which was made possible by various converging discourses of modernity; at the same time (as will occur also in the following chapters) it investigates the function of this type of dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing in terms of legitimisation and motivation.

In this chapter, illustrative examples are drawn from genocidal killing in the twentieth century, both in Western and non-Western contexts. In tracing the history of the biopolitical discursive type, I concentrate on developments in Western and European history; however, in the modern era, and particularly in the period since the advent of the twentieth century – that in which the cases I examine here take place – Western narratives have come to be extremely influential on the global stage. The non-Western episodes on which I focus – the genocide of Armenians and other non-Turkic peoples in Asia Minor in the 1910s and 1920s (heavily influenced by Western nationalism), and the so-called ‘auto-genocide’ committed by Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge in Cambodia in the 1970s – both took place under the aegis of the implementation of ideologies developed in the West (namely, state-based nationalism, and state-based Marxism). While other episodes are mentioned in passing, I also pay detailed attention to two Western European episodes: firstly, genocide and mass killing committed by the National Socialists, with victims including Jews, Gypsies, Poles, and Russians, as well as biologically-defined ‘life unworthy of life’; and secondly, ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the former Yugoslavia during the 1990s. I will return to the question of the applicability of Western historical developments to non-Western episodes in the following chapter; for the present, it is enough to note the actual influence of Western ideals in the documentary texts which are presented, and, conversely, to note that the fact that these

discursive formations exist in non-Western societies is also an indication that they are generalisable (within a particular historical context) rather than restricted to episodes taking place in Western Europe and its direct sphere of influence.

I begin with an examination of the origins of the concept of racial purity and the discursive association between race, nationality and disease. I then trace the emergence of this biomedical discourse to its roots in the birth of the nation-state; and to developments in the study of the natural sciences and in medicine, particularly in Germany (where this discourse was most influential), which allowed the creation of literal and metaphorical biopolitical categorisation. I go on to examine how these conceptual changes translated into a particular metaphorical discursive formation, one which was both an influence on, and influenced by, public policy; specific examination is made of the evolution of a militarised metaphorical understanding of medicine, both at the level of the individual doctor and patient, and at the level of state enactment of public health. Throughout, the reader will see how these strategies have played themselves out in the enactment of genocidal policies.

In regard to the set of utterances I examine in this chapter, I argue that modernity provided a particular, dehumanising discourse and rhetoric which provided a motivation and a legitimisation for genocidal killing, hence allowing it to appear as conceivable, justified and necessary. This chapter endeavours, firstly, to identify a nexus between various different discourses contingent upon modernity, and to examine the ongoing consequences in action of their coincidence at a certain historical moment; and secondly, to demonstrate that this discourse and these consequences are common to many otherwise widely different episodes of genocide. In doing so, I aim to sketch a brief outline of the historical development and the major features of genocidal biopolitical dehumanisation in the modern era.

## I. Racial Purity and Raced Disease: Precursors

In the pre-modern period, institutionalised Christianity had instigated and licensed numerous episodes of mass killing and subjugation.<sup>5</sup> Despite this, however, Christianity's emphasis on what might be termed the 'salvageability' of all 'mankind' had, in the pre-modern era, exercised some restraint on the actions of Europeans.<sup>6</sup> While the possibility of conversion existed, and before the rise of scientific race theory, the theoretical concept of a group of people as unalterably (that is to say, biologically) threatening was unthinkable.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding this, the ideology of racial purity had deep origins in medieval Christianity. After the Christian *Reconquista* of Spain from Muslim rule, and the expulsion of Jews in 1492, the concept of *limpieza de sangre* (purity or cleanliness of blood) became one of major importance, necessarily accompanied by extensive hereditary investigation.<sup>8</sup>

The medieval period also saw the obverse of ethnic purity: ethnic 'dirtiness.' In particular, there is a long-standing historical connection apparent between antisemitism and disease. In

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<sup>5</sup> For example, the massacres of the Crusades, or the Spaniards' murderous system of 'Indian grants' in 16<sup>th</sup> century colonial South America. See D. E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 221; M. Cocker, *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold: Europe's Conflict with Tribal Peoples*, Pimlico, London, 1999, pp. 106-110.

<sup>6</sup> George Mosse notes that it was after the rise of racial antisemitism that the question began to be asked 'whether, if the Jew lacked a *proper* soul, he could be classed as human.' (*The Crisis of German Ideology*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1981 [1st edn 1964], p. 140, original italics).

<sup>7</sup> While, for example, Biblically-based arguments defined blacks as Hamitic 'natural slaves'; but this perceived inferiority did not equate to *danger*.

<sup>8</sup> In this period 'pure' Christian ancestry was legally required for membership in guilds and military orders, while crypto-Jews were mercilessly persecuted by the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions. In another forerunner of modern race purity, blood was tied to honour, such that even a commoner could assert a right to such on the basis of his purity of blood. 'Purity of blood' would also be a crucial anxiety for genocidal child removal in Australia, part of a broader project for a 'white Australia'; see P. R. Bartrop, 'The Holocaust, the Aborigines, and the bureaucracy of destruction: an Australian dimension of genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2001, 2001, pp. 77, 83.

the Middle Ages it was alleged that Jews spread the plague, and as a result they were massacred during epidemics.<sup>9</sup> Due to the Jewish relation to Christianity and to territoriality,

[t]he conceptual Jew was a semantically overloaded entity, comprising and blending meanings which ought to be kept apart, and for this reason a natural adversary of any force concerned with drawing borderlines and keeping them watertight. The conceptual Jew was *visqueux* (in Sartrean terms), slimy (in Mary Douglas's terms) – an image constructed as compromising and defying the order of things...<sup>10</sup>

In Western culture, the linked metaphorical series, 'purity/contamination' ('clean/dirty'), 'light/dark,' and 'good/evil' have a long history and association with race.<sup>11</sup> Andrew Goatly posits that the 'disease as invasion' metaphor is in fact an aspect of the 'purity' metaphor, and this will be borne out in the material presented in this chapter.<sup>12</sup> In other words, the association between race or ethnicity and disease is not novel. Epidemic disease, that is, disease which threatens a society, invariably comes from 'somewhere else';<sup>13</sup> plagues are 'visitations.'<sup>14</sup> Susan Sontag takes the example of syphilis, which, when it began to sweep through Europe in the late fifteenth century

was the 'French pox' to the English, morbus Germanicus to the Parisians, the Naples sickness to the Florentines, the Chinese disease to the Japanese ... there is a link between

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<sup>9</sup> A. Nikiforuk, *The Fourth Horseman: A Short History of Epidemics, Plagues and Other Scourges*, Phoenix, London, 1993, pp. 47-48. Well-poisoning (often thought to cause plagues), along with host-desecrating and child-murdering (the 'blood libel') together made up the major medieval accusatory discourse against Jews, which could motivate and/or be used to justify persecution and massacre. The language of 'poisoning' continued in Nazi discourse; see for example J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London, 2006 p. 262.

<sup>10</sup> Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (New York), 1989, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> A. Goatly, *Washing the Brain: Metaphor and Hidden Ideology*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 45-49.

<sup>12</sup> Goatly, p. 49.

<sup>13</sup> Sontag, p. 133.

<sup>14</sup> Sontag, p. 136.

imagining disease and imagining foreignness. It lies perhaps in the very concept of wrong, which is archaically identical with the non-us, the alien. A polluting person is always wrong, as Mary Douglas has observed. The inverse is also true: a person judged to be wrong is regarded as, at least potentially, a source of pollution.<sup>15</sup>

The advent of modernity, however, allowed the transformation of this pre-existing conceptual association between ancestry and purity, and between disease and otherness, into a murderous discursive strategy which motivated not only the mistreatment, forced conversion, or expulsion of the other, but their complete destruction.

## II. The Modern Era

### Ila. The Nation-State

The 'empire' model, under which most of Europe had been governed in the period preceding the modern era, was premised on a central power under which any number of subject peoples were ruled. Subject peoples would have differing degrees of privilege vis-à-vis the centre, and subordinate peoples would be subject to various degrees of exploitation, repression and even periodic massacre. However, each people had a particular role to play in the overall functioning of the empire, conceived neither as unitary nor as homogenous. Pre-modern European society was segmentarily structured, divided into castes or estates, so that the fact of being set apart did not make minorities unique. Separation was not only an antagonistic measure, but also a vehicle of social integration.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sontag, pp. 133-134.

<sup>16</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 35-36.



The advent of the modern nation-state, however, caused a quantum shift in normative perceptions of ideal relationships between culturally distinct peoples and between peoples and the territory they inhabited; a conceptual conflict arose between *demos* and *ethnos*. The nation was, to use Benedict Anderson's concept, an 'imagined community' – but who were the co-nationals imagined by national subjects? Two possible models existed: a more inclusive civic model, consistent with the original ideals of the French Revolution;<sup>17</sup> and an ethnic or 'organic' model, in which inclusion as a true national citizen was conditional upon membership of the majority group making up the nation, as defined by that group.<sup>18</sup> In a paradox of the type characteristic of the modern era, the development of the nation-state would focus both upon inclusion, bringing previously subjugated groups into the fold as citizens, and also exclusion, the boundary-drawing exercise – partially as a response to this inclusivity – determining who could be afforded the rights and privileges of being thus included, and what solution might be found for the existence of those who would not be afforded this status.

The ideology of the 'scientific state,' as Anthony Smith terms it, was premised on 'assimilation of the population, discrimination against some subgroups, a levelling

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<sup>17</sup> Indeed, under the liberal conception, the nation was *ideally* made up of the integration of different 'ethnic' groups and cultural communities. E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1992, p. 33.

This concept has, however, been challenged; Robert Wokler, for example, suggests that in the French model 'a people partakes of human rights only by virtue of their shared nationality,' and that this is a causal factor in the Holocaust (R. Wokler, 'The Enlightenment Project on the Eve of the Holocaust', in J. Kaye and B. Stráth [eds], *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* [Series philosophy & politics; No. 5], P.I.E. – Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000, p. 60).

<sup>18</sup> Hobsbawm, pp. 63-64; See also M. Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 55-69. Hobsbawm argues that the connection between ethnicity and nationalism is not a *cause* but a *consequence* of the nation-state; that is, national movements often 'invent national ethnicity' once a nation has been established. Given the slipperiness of the concept of 'race', inclusion in this model is premised on an 'imagined', that is, culturally determined, rather than a truly genetic or biological, ethnicity. Moreover, a genocidal ethnocentric model of the nation need not be 'undemocratic' per se; for example, see D. Li, 'Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, pp. 14-15.

interventionism and centralisation, and ... the attempt to apply the latest scientific methods and techniques to the problems of government.'<sup>19</sup> But this new type of state must nonetheless somehow create among its subjects loyalty and a willingness to act on its behalf, since it could no longer simply demand and expect these things, as had been the case under old orders of rule by divine right, dynastic legitimacy or similar guarantors;<sup>20</sup> it must assimilate old traditions of ethnocultural allegiance and deal with the question of the continuation of the power of previously hegemonic groups, as well as the questions of meaning and value which were previously the preserve of religion. One way in which to resolve this conflict was for *the ethnic group itself* to emerge as the discursive bearer of meaning and value, for the ethnically-defined 'people' to become the ideal order to which the subject owed ultimate loyalty.<sup>21</sup> Ethnic nationalism is thus a seemingly paradoxical blend of traditionalism and modernism, with strong moral normative implications; and, as we will see, in genocide these tendencies are taken to the extreme, with the direst consequences.

The redrawing of European national boundaries after the First World War, in which state frontiers were intended to coincide with the frontiers of nationality and language, exacerbated the national problematic. As Eric Hobsbawm writes, '[t]he logical implication of trying to create a continent neatly divided into coherent territorial states each inhabited by a separate ethnically and linguistically homogeneous population, was the mass expulsion or extermination of minorities.'<sup>22</sup> At the same time, the rise of mass media and the resulting homogenisation of popular ideologies allowed national symbols to become part of individual life and the narrative-discursive psyche, breaking down the barriers between private (local)

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<sup>19</sup> A. D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Holmes & Meier, New York, 1983, p. 234.

<sup>20</sup> Hobsbawm, p. 84.

<sup>21</sup> The concepts discussed here are adapted, in a somewhat altered form and with different emphasis, from Smith, *Theories of Nationalism*, pp. 230-254.

<sup>22</sup> Hobsbawm, pp. 132-133. For a detailed historical treatment of the connection between Western nationalistic ideals and the commission of genocide, see M. Levene, 'Creating a Modern "Zone of Genocide": The Impact of Nation- and State-Formation on Eastern Anatolia, 1878-1923', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 12, no. 3, 1998, pp. 393-433.

and public (national) spheres.<sup>23</sup> On the macro level, power now lay in the hands of those groups making up a majority in a geographically defined nation-state governed by members of, and according to the cultural or political mores of, that same group.

Modernity meant, among other things, a new role for ideas – because of the state relying for its functional efficiency on ideological mobilization, because of its pronounced tendency to uniformity ... because of its ‘civilizing’ mission and sharp proselytising edge, and because of an attempt to bring previously peripheral classes and localities into an intimate spiritual contact with the idea-generating centre of the body politic... [The Jews’] previously unnoted incompatibility had now become a problem and a challenge.<sup>24</sup>

That is to say, a problem lay in the incompatibility of civic and ethnic models. While, from the second half of the nineteenth century, ideological representations increasingly imagined nations along ethnic lines, and the terms ‘race’ and ‘nation’ were used more and more commonly as synonyms, civic ideals led to legislation and practice allowing previously subjugated minorities a new freedom to integrate and prosper, incurring possible backlashes of resentment among groups who understood this as a challenge to their previous hegemonic position.<sup>25</sup> Jews and other minorities, previously distinct, distinguishable, and subordinate, now moved into the broader community, into positions of influence and prestige. The levelling of difference brought about by the enactment of the ideals of modernity, and the refusal of the secularised modern state to legislate different social practices, created a new sense of a threat posed by minority groups no longer satisfied with their allotted place; and the anxieties created by modernisation (particularly among the new petty bourgeoisie and lower middle classes which emerged under the nation-state’s aegis) could be projected onto such groups, whose enthusiastic embrace of the new order (unsurprising given the new opportunities it offered) seemed to place them close to its

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<sup>23</sup> Hobsbawm, pp. 141-142.

<sup>24</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> On the increasing synonymy of ‘race’ and ‘nation,’ see Hobsbawm, p. 108.

centre.<sup>26</sup> In other words, the ideology of the levelling of difference meant that members of minority groups moved into positions of influence and prestige, and simultaneously the perceived incompatibility of minorities became a problem in need of solution.<sup>27</sup> In order to distinguish such groups as alien to the body politic, a new boundary was necessary, located at the level of natural law: 'Jews had been able to escape from Judaism into conversion; from Jewishness there was no escape.'<sup>28</sup> In the age of empires, repression had been a tool used to keep peoples in their place; but the birth of the nation-state proper created new regimes of discourse and practice under which there was no longer any place whatsoever for these peoples, and nor could they change their outgroup status.

Scholars in the field of cognitive science and linguistics have suggested that 'our most basic cognitive models derive from our experiences as individuals living within a body.'<sup>29</sup> Apropos of this, at the historical juncture described above, the ancient metaphor of the 'body politic', of society as a human body, could be put to use in a new way, with sinister consequences. In Western culture, this metaphor, which was associated with the concept of the 'great chain of being' (a concept that, as we will see in the following chapter, is deeply implicated in essentialist hierarchies of value), had been used discursively, in support of various different positions, from at least the classical Greek period onwards.<sup>30</sup> The concept fell out of favour in the seventeenth century, when it was challenged by that of the social contract; but the

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<sup>26</sup> Hobsbawm, pp. 121-122; Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 57-59; Barta, 2001, p. 38.

<sup>27</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 42.

<sup>28</sup> Arendt in Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 59; T. Barta, 'Discourses of Genocide in Germany and Australia: a linked history', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 25, 2001, p. 40. On the 'racialising of anti-semitism' see P. Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 57-59.

<sup>29</sup> Lakoff and Johnson paraphrased in J. M. Balkin, *Cultural Software: A Theory of Ideology*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1998, p. 242. Balkin also notes Pierre Bourdieu's argument that 'conceptual development of the habitus often involves analogies to bodily experiences and bodily movements' (p. 243). See also Goatly, p. 15.

<sup>30</sup> On the 'Great Chain of Being' in this context see Musolff, pp. 25-26; F. Rash, 'Metaphor in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', *metaforik.de*, September 2005, retrieved 10 September 2008, <http://www.metaphorik.de/09/rash.pdf>, pp. 89-90.

rise of biological science and the emergence of the nation-state gave the metaphor renewed currency, and though different positions could be and were argued using this metaphor as justification, the exclusionist position was a powerful rhetorical device.<sup>31</sup> Modern science conceptualised the body as a strictly bounded self whose identity could be defended only by strict policing of its borders, drawing on what Paul Chilton, in his discussion of *Mein Kampf*, terms ‘the fundamental cognitive CONTAINER schema ... [which] tells you that the contents are protected by the boundary,’ hence giving rise to inherent conceptualisations of purity and contamination.<sup>32</sup> This model could then be neatly applied to the new ideal of the nation-state as a bounded and racially homogenous entity: ‘securing national boundaries ... could simultaneously be experienced symbolically as a hygienically necessary reinforcement of the body’s own boundaries.’<sup>33</sup> This model could hence become fundamental to individual and collective identity: Robert Jay Lifton argues that, in our century, any vision of a ‘total cure’ must be bound up with a sense of ‘nation’ which combines ‘spiritual and biological connectedness’, and which leads to the conception of a ‘national organism’ whose needs are pre-eminent ‘supreme values.’<sup>34</sup>

As a part of this developing narrative, questions arose pertaining not only to the internal structure of ‘national’ collectives, but to their inter-relationships. The Darwinian account –

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<sup>31</sup> David G. Hale, ‘Analogy of the Body Politic’ in *The Dictionary of the History of Ideas* (online version), <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/cgi-local/DHI/dhi.cgi?id=dv1-11> (accessed 31<sup>st</sup> December 2008). See also Musolff, pp. 25-26; Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 94-96, 163.

<sup>32</sup> P. Chilton, ‘Manipulation, memes and metaphors: The case of *Mein Kampf*’, in Louis de Saussure & Peter Schulz (eds), *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, language, mind*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2005, p. 30; on disease organisms, parasites, and essentialism in *Mein Kampf* see also pp. 36-38; Musolff; Rash, ‘Metaphor in Adolf Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*’, pp. 78-80. For a more extensive discussion of the ‘container’ schema, see G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1980, pp. 29-32.

<sup>33</sup> U. Gerhard, ‘The Discursive Construction of National Stereotypes: Collective Imagination and Racist Concepts in Germany Before World War I’, in N. Finsch & D. Schirmer (eds), *Identity and Intolerance: Nationalism, Racism, and Xenophobia in Germany and the United States*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1998, p. 95.

<sup>34</sup> R. J. Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and the Psychology of Genocide* (new edn), Basic Books, New York, 2000, p. 470.

which constructed nation-states (as well as 'nations' in the sense of ethnic groups) as existing, vis-à-vis each other, in a 'natural' state of competition which was governed not by principles of morality but by a life and death struggle for survival and for pre-eminence taking place between internally homogeneous groups – seemed to have been decisively proven by the First World War.<sup>35</sup> Given this, the emergence of the nation-state allowed an ideological use of the metaphor of the 'body politic' to re-emerge not in relation to the internal organisation or structure of a given society, but in relation to a bounded and ideally unitary self existing in a world of oppositional others.

Genocidal fantasies concerning the complete extirpation of the alien other were inherent in this metaphor. Furthermore, as it relates to the nation-state, the metaphor can be seen as a literal macro-level enactment of psychological 'splitting.' In this defensive process, unwanted thoughts and feelings which are understood as the negative pole of binary discrimination are symbolically projected onto an 'other', who can then be disavowed and expelled, preserving the sense of a unitary and positively-identified self.<sup>36</sup> Scott Straus, for example, suggests that a primary comparison between the genocidal regimes in Rwanda and Cambodia is their ideology of 'organic purity': '[t]he regimes killed to meet their ideals ... eliminating "contamination" would achieve organic purity, which would be the key to their

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<sup>35</sup> Mary E. Clark suggests that the very notion of competitive aggression as human evolutionary 'nature' logically constructs societies which are aggressive, competitive, power-centred, hierarchical, self-interested, and misogynistic, and in which these traits are valued above others (M. E. Clark, 'Human Nature: What We Need To Know About Ourselves In The Twenty-First Century', *Zygon*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1998, pp. 647-648). On the effects of topics of discourse depicting the relationship between nations as a life or death struggle, see also B. Kiernan, 'Myth, nationalism and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2001, p. 200.

<sup>36</sup> A. L. Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?: Cambodia in the Shadow of Genocide*, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 2005, pp. 246-247; interesting examination might be made of this process in light of the fact that a common perpetrator strategy is to accuse the victim group of what they, in fact, are doing or intend to do; and, in the specific context of the need to preserve bodily integrity, in the mutilations (beheading, liver removal etc.) which often accompanied the murder of Armenian, Muslim and Cambodian victims. See for example Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 291-296.

success.<sup>37</sup> Robert Proctor calls the Nazi worldview a homeopathic paranoia: 'a fear of tiny but powerful agents corroding the German body,' a view which, enacted, was 'a vast hygienic experiment designed to bring about an exclusionist sanitary utopia' purified of all 'disease,' from cancer to mental illness to 'alien racial elements.'<sup>38</sup>

Greater purchase is often given to such explanatory narratives by the experience of social and economic hardship and instability, that is, the sense of being under threat; for example, Paul Julian Weindling has documented the way in which adverse circumstances after loss in the First World War caused German biopolitical thinking to become a viable popular explanatory narrative, and a program for action.<sup>39</sup> Wilhelm Frick, Nazi minister of the interior, introduced early sterilisation law with the declaration that Germany was in danger of *Volkstod*, the death of the *Volk* (people/nation/race), making the measure imperative. Medicalised biological control of unwanted groups was carried out through special 'hereditary health courts,' while among the categories of those to be 'euthanased' were the 'alien to the community' (*gemeinschaftsfremd*).<sup>40</sup> Indeed, the draft law was temporarily titled 'Law on Euthanasia for those Incapable of Living and Alien to the Community.'<sup>41</sup> Lifton, in attempting to answer the question of whether Nazi doctors agreed or disagreed about the necessity to kill all Jews, after extensive interviews comes to this conclusion: 'it is probably accurate to say that most Nazi doctors in Auschwitz believed that something they perceived

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<sup>37</sup> S. Straus, 'Organic purity and the role of anthropology in Cambodia and Rwanda', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 48-49. Straus notes that this similarity is surprising, given the divide between the nationalist-democratic ideological discourse of the Rwandan *génocidaires*, and the Maoist Communist model in Cambodia.

<sup>38</sup> R. N. Proctor, *The Nazi War on Cancer*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> See Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*. For specific examples, see pp. 393-397, 462-474.

<sup>40</sup> For 'hereditary health courts,' see Lifton, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> G. Aly, 'Medicine against the Useless' in G. Aly, P. Chroust, & C. Pross (eds), *Cleansing the Fatherland: Nazi Medicine and Racial Hygiene* (trans. B. Cooper), Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore/London, pp. 52-56; Carl 'Hans Heinze' Sennhenn, a T4 expert who defined the grounds for elimination, wrote of the 'euthanasia' program as 'the fight against or extermination of subhumanity.' An argument was also made in eugenic discourse for a Jewish propensity to 'mental illness' (see for example E. Ehrenreich, 'Otmar von Verschuer and the "Scientific" Legitimization of Nazi Anti-Jewish Policy', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2007, p. 63).

as “Jewishness” had to be eliminated, whether that meant sending all Jews to Madagascar, forcing most Jews to leave Germany while permitting a small well-established minority to remain and undergo complete assimilation, or murdering every last one of them.’<sup>42</sup>

Opposition to the ‘organically indivisible’ national German community was considered ‘the symptom of an illness which threatens the healthy unity of the...national organism.’<sup>43</sup>

This model is apparent elsewhere. Philip Verwimp argues that in the pre-genocidal period Rwanda’s dictator President Juvénal Habyarimana, following the model of the eighteenth-century French Physiocrats, constructed an ideological narrative of a ‘living,’ ‘organic’ economy which was likened to ‘a human body where all organs should function together for the well-being of the whole’; ‘those who refuse to work’ (that is, by implication, Tutsi, viewed as would-be feudal rulers rather than peasants), were therefore ‘harmful to society.’<sup>44</sup> In the Khmer Rouge’s Democratic Kampuchea (DK), Pol Pot warned that ‘traitors’ and ‘counterrevolutionary elements’ were not considered ‘to be part of the people’; while people having ‘Khmer bodies with Vietnamese minds’ (*khluon khmaer khuor kbal yuon*) were considered ‘impure’, and executed en masse.<sup>45</sup> Ben Kiernan suggests that all those who did not accept Khmer Rouge rule were viewed as ‘surrogate foreigners.’<sup>46</sup> The Serb general Radovan Karadžić stated that the Serbian fight in the former Yugoslavia was against ‘Asiatic darkness’ and argued that the ‘Serb state has no need to incorporate its

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<sup>42</sup> Lifton, pp. 205-206.

<sup>43</sup> Lifton, p. 438.

<sup>44</sup> P. Verwimp, ‘Development ideology, the peasantry and genocide: Rwanda represented in Habyarimana’s speeches’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2000, pp. 335-338, 351. As noted elsewhere, Habyarimana’s assassination was the first event of the genocidal period, and thus his involvement in genocide is more complex than is the case in other episodes; however, the conditions of his period of his rule (1973-1994) can without doubt be viewed as contributory to the genocide, both in terms of the development of discursive understandings and inasmuch as it saw civil war in which ethnic identity was implicated, as well as the enactment of mass violence against and mass killing of Rwandan Tutsi.

<sup>45</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 167, 229.

<sup>46</sup> Kiernan, ‘Myth, nationalism and genocide’, p. 192.



enemies into its own state. The Serb state should be the home of the Serb nation.<sup>47</sup> As Hobsbawm puts it, 'there is no more effective way of bonding together the disparate sections of restless peoples than to unite them against outsiders.'<sup>48</sup> In the instability of wars and revolutions in particular, an ideology which calls for the defensive extirpation of internal enemies from the body politic seems imperative.

### IIb. Scientific Racism, Darwinism, and Eugenics

'Modernity,' writes Bauman, 'made racism possible. It also created a demand for racism: an era that declared achievement to be the only measure of human worth needed a theory of ascription to redeem boundary-drawing and boundary-guarding concerns under new conditions which made boundary-crossing easier than ever before.'<sup>49</sup> According to this ideology, the cohesion of the nation-state – its very existence as such – was threatened by the internal presence of the extraneous; and it could, as an entity in its entirety, be damaged by the internal presence of those whose presence did not contribute to, or was detrimental to the strength of, the body politic. But this argument said nothing about the intrinsic worth or otherwise of the groups concerned. While a *realpolitik* approach was necessary – inasmuch as the struggle between peoples was a struggle for survival – in itself such an argument did not provide any justification for the destruction of such peoples. Rather, it would argue for their 'incorporation', that is, integration, through force if necessary. But

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<sup>47</sup> Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of 'Ethnic Cleansing'*, Texas A & M University Press, Texas, 1995, p. 65.

<sup>48</sup> Hobsbawm, p. 91.

<sup>49</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 61-62. Although there is no space here to explore this issue, it should be noted that Bauman's stance on the relationship between genocide and the Enlightenment has been critiqued; see J. Docker, 'The enlightenment, genocide, postmodernity', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2003, pp. 339-360.

what if certain groups were incapable of being incorporated or of making a contribution?<sup>50</sup> Developments in science meant that just such an understanding arose.<sup>51</sup> Particular groups, defined biologically, were categorised as inferior and as threatening; and, due to the essentialising and determinist nature of biological-scientific discourse, their status as such was considered immutable.

Biological racism proceeded from previous racial prejudice.<sup>52</sup> Carl Linnaeus, the eighteenth-century botanist, physician and zoologist, was the first to formally define human races in modern taxonomical terms, separating *Homo sapiens europaeus* ('ruled by customs') from *Homo sapiens afer* (the African 'black,' 'ruled by caprice').<sup>53</sup> In 1770 the philosopher David Hume could write that 'I am apt to suspect the Negroes ... to be naturally inferior to the whites ... In Jamaica, indeed, they talk of one negro as a man of parts and learning; but it is likely he is admired for slender accomplishments, like a parrot, who speaks a few words plainly.'<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> As Saul Friedländer writes, in early twentieth century Europe '[t]he integrity of the Self was both threatened by outside penetration and, at the same time, unable to benefit from the contribution of the Other.' S. Friedländer, "Europe's Inner Demons": The "Other" as Threat in Early Twentieth-Century European Culture', in R. S. Wistrich (ed.), *Demonizing the Other: Antisemitism, Racism, and Xenophobia*, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1999, p. 212. See also Barta, p. 50: 'their vice was in being as they were; their being was their vice.'

<sup>51</sup> On this subject, Aristotle E. Kallis puts forward an interesting conception of the reason for Nazi hierarchical systems of value within outgroups, and the way in which such boundaries were in certain cases open to reinterpretation for practical purposes. Kallis argues that from a Nazi perspective some outgroups were 'usable,' though this did not mean 'worthy of life' per se. Depending on discursive perceptions of these outgroups, they might be subject to three types of treatment: 'conscriptio[n] to work or fight, slave labour and exhaustive work primarily conceived as a means of indirect extermination' (A. E. Kallis, 'Race, "value" and the hierarchy of human life: ideological and structural determinants of National Socialist policy-making', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2005, p. 23).

<sup>52</sup> See, for example, Barta, pp. 44-46.

<sup>53</sup> S. J. Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (revised and expanded edn), W. W. Norton & Co., New York and London, 1981, p. 66.

<sup>54</sup> In C. Tatz, 'The "Doctorhood" of Genocide', in C. Tatz, P. Arnold & S. Tatz (eds), *Genocide Perspectives III: Essays on the Holocaust and Other Genocides*, Brandl & Schlesinger, Blackheath, 2006, p. 82.

But while the concept of 'race' had been written about for some time, it gained discursive purchase only in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> Arthur, Comte de Gobineau's pioneering *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races* (1853-55) was significant not only for its analysis of race, but for the contention that racial history was a *science*.<sup>56</sup> In this period, an ideology of 'science' was becoming increasingly important, leading ultimately to a political transformation of its function: 'science becomes increasingly a metaphor for the explanation of why things are as they are; people look to science to explain the origin of human character and institutions; science becomes an important part of ideological argumentation and a means of social control.'<sup>57</sup> Colin Tatz writes that

[i]deas of racial superiority are as old as human history. Always morally dubious, racism – whether against clans, tribes, classes, colours, neighbours, minorities or those who spoke differently – was usually explained away by religious doctrine or political expediency. Plato, Aristotle, Herodotus, Thucydides, Augustine, Aquinas, Machiavelli, Montesquieu, Locke, Rousseau, Kant and Hegel all expressed views on racial national differences. What this rich history of ideas lacked, prior to the eighteenth century, was a scientific legitimacy that could establish with finality the 'natural' hierarchy of the races and which could correlate 'race' with history, culture, language, psychology, nationalism and imperialism.<sup>58</sup>

The new biological science, which alleged a hierarchical taxonomy of races and degrees of biological 'worth', provided such legitimisation. The consequences were different for different groups, but, for the most part, race science and eugenics justified the contemporary power dynamics of European-ruled society.<sup>59</sup> The distribution of privilege as reflected in the

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<sup>55</sup> R. N. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine under the Nazis*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.), 1988, p. 12.

<sup>56</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 12. On de Gobineau, see also G. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1978, pp. 51-58.

<sup>57</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>58</sup> Tatz, 'The "Doctorhood" of Genocide', p. 82.

<sup>59</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 13.

domination of educated white males over women and over the 'lower classes' reflected the natural order; African peoples were 'natural slaves'; and indigenous people of all varieties were doomed to extinction (the only question, in regard to such groups, was whether it was more merciful to hasten the process of their disappearance, or to 'soothe the pillow').<sup>60</sup> Indeed, these latter two were closer to monkeys than to the white males standing at the apex of the pyramid.<sup>61</sup> Samuel George Morton (1799-1851), a distinguished American scientist and physician, instituted the 'science' of craniometry, 'set[ting] out to rank races by the average sizes of their brains.'<sup>62</sup> Paul Broca (1824-1880), a French physician and anthropologist, continued this work, amassing huge amounts of anthropometrical data 'demonstrating' natural racial hierarchy.<sup>63</sup> At the dawn of the twentieth century the term *minderwertig* ('of lesser value') as applied to human life came to be introduced into German discourse around hygiene, bacteriology, welfare and race.<sup>64</sup>

These conceptions justified and legitimised subjugation, exploitation and oppression. At times, they also justified and legitimised extermination, as in the case of colonised peoples

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<sup>60</sup> On the topic of the inequalities created by the construction of a 'natural' hierarchy premised on evolutionary discourse, see Clark, p. 648. On genocide, biopower and social Darwinism, see D. Stone, 'Biopower and Modern Genocide', in A. D. Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, Berghahn Books, New York & Oxford, 2008, pp. 164-167.

<sup>61</sup> Gould, pp. 66-69. The three greatest naturalists of the nineteenth century, Georges Cuvier, Charles Lyell, and Charles Darwin, all 'established' a connection between 'blacks' and monkeys.

<sup>62</sup> Gould, p. 85. On phrenology, physiognomy and racism, see G. L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1981 (1st edn 1964), p. 89; Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 24-31. See also W. E. Seidelman, 'Medical Selection: Auschwitz Antecedents and Effluent', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1989, pp. 439-440, on the specific connection between scientific racism and physicians.

<sup>63</sup> Broca had an ambivalent attitude toward 'race,' and many anthropologists believed that 'race mixing' was fruitful; see Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 88-92. It should be noted that that this type of dehumanisation – naming the other as primitive – is not endemic to Western cultures; Hinton (*Why Did They Kill?*, p. 216) notes that the Vietnamese (those who lived in Cambodia were targeted for extermination under the Khmer Rouge) were often referred to in DK literature and by ordinary Cambodians as *Yvon* (savages), although the linguistic correctness of this interpretation of the term 'Yvon' has been challenged (see Kiernan, 'Myth, nationalism and genocide', pp. 188-189).

<sup>64</sup> Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 186-187.

who stood in the way of 'civilisation.' But they did not motivate it. Inferior groups had their place in the proper order of things. Some groups, however, had no useful role to play in the great march of human progress. Their presence, indeed, represented a direct threat to the competitiveness of the nation-state within which they were found, as well as a more generalised threat to the entire human race as such. The dangers of miscegenation (a term coined in 1863) were heralded by the leading scientists of the day, such as the naturalist Louis Agassiz, who argued that, for the nation, race mixing meant 'emasculat[i]on.'<sup>65</sup>

Charles Darwin presented his revolutionary theory of evolution in 1859. Proponents of evolutionary ethics agreed that, in light of evolutionary theory, contemporary moral norms had to be re-examined. Willibald Hentschel voiced a common opinion when he wrote to a fellow eugenics enthusiast: '[t]hat which preserves health is moral. Everything that makes one sick or ugly is sin.'<sup>66</sup> Darwin's theory summoned up a Nietzschean *Weltanschauung* of perpetual struggle for existence, in which, moreover, the victor was advancing the cause of humanity through 'the unsparing destruction of all degenerates and parasites':<sup>67</sup> this concept could be summed up in the phrase 'evolutionary progress as highest good.' While England and America read Darwinism optimistically, as a justification for their laissez-faire free-market policies, by the late 1800s discourse in Germany – which had come up short in the struggle for overseas colonies and which was torn by political struggle – had come to stress the need for state intervention to stop 'degeneration' in the face of democracy and social welfare policies.<sup>68</sup> In Germany, Darwinism came to mean the survival of the fittest race,

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Gould, p. 81. This was also an important theme in the work of racialists such as de Gobineau and in the eliminationist rhetoric of Comte Georges Vacher de Lapouge (1854-1936) (Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 51-62).

<sup>66</sup> R. Weikart, *From Darwin to Hitler: Evolutionary Ethics, Eugenics, and Racism in Germany*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2004, pp. 43-44. For an analysis of Hentschel in the context of Germanic racial utopianism, see Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, pp. 112-116.

<sup>67</sup> Nietzsche quoted in Weikart, p. 49.

<sup>68</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 14.

rather than the survival of the fittest individual.<sup>69</sup> According to this ideology, one way to promote evolutionary progress was to engage in artificial selection: humans should make reproductive choices to further evolutionary progress. This perspective came to be known as eugenics.

Eugenics was enthusiastically adopted, particularly in the United States and in Germany: '[u]nder the influence of Darwinian biology and eugenics, the idea that health should become one of the highest moral principles became prominent in the medical profession in the early twentieth century.'<sup>70</sup> Both the racially and the genetically unfit had to be eliminated to ensure survival: Theodor Fritsch (1852-1933), a highly influential antisemitic publicist, wrote that 'Morality and ethics arise from the law of the preservation of the species, of the race. Whatever ensures the future of the species, whatever is suited to raise the species to an ever higher level of physical and mental perfection, that is moral.' To 'seek to preserve the degenerate and depraved' is 'false humanity.'<sup>71</sup> Otto Ammon (1842-1916), a German anthropologist and social Darwinist, 'agreed ... that "there exists continuity of the germ-plasm, the hereditary substance, from one generation to the next", noted that purity of type was favourable, and claimed that the progeny of race-mixing should be "abandoned to annihilation [*Vernichtung*] in the struggle for existence [*Kampf ums Dasein*].'"<sup>72</sup> According to this narrative, the physically and mentally disabled were 'parasites,' an image which was also an extremely common antisemitic trope.<sup>73</sup> In *Mein Kampf*, for example, evoking the image of a struggle between racial groups, Adolf Hitler describes 'the Jew' as

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<sup>69</sup> Arnd Krüger 'A Horse Breeder's Perspective: Scientific Racism in Germany, 1970-1933', in Finzsch & Schirmer, p. 393.

<sup>70</sup> Weikart, p. 54.

<sup>71</sup> In Weikart, p. 55.

<sup>72</sup> D. Stone, 'White men with low moral standards? German anthropology and the Herero Genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, p. 38.

<sup>73</sup> Weikart, p. 100.

only and always a parasite in the body of other peoples ... [h]e is and remains a typical parasite, a sponger who like a noxious bacillus keeps spreading as soon as a favourable medium invites him. And the effect of his existence is also like that of spongers: wherever he appears, the host people dies out after a shorter or longer period.<sup>74</sup>

Darwin himself believed that a wide gap separated the races of 'man,' and that biological differences extended not only to physical but to mental and moral traits.<sup>75</sup> Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919), who has been described as 'Germany's major prophet of political biology', consistently stressed racial inequality, arguing that different human races are distinct species.<sup>76</sup> Since the 'lower races' are 'psychologically nearer to the mammals (apes and dogs) than to civilized Europeans, we must, therefore, assign a totally different value to their lives.'<sup>77</sup> Toward the end of the nineteenth century, race in particular moved to centre stage, and in Germany increasing stress was placed on the superiority of the 'Aryan' race and on denigration of the Jews.<sup>78</sup> Alfred Ploetz (1860-1940) introduced the concept of *Rassenhygiene* (race hygiene) in 1895, calling for consideration not only of the good of the individual, but the good of the race (that is, rejection of 'counterselective' programs such as welfare for the poor and medical care for 'the weak').<sup>79</sup> The theme of Aryan superiority was taken up by such figures as the physician Ludwig Woltmann (1871-1907), Eugen Fischer (1874-1967), and Fritz Lenz (1887-1976), who argued that race 'is the ultimate principle of

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<sup>74</sup> A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (trans. R. Manheim), Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1992 (original date of publication 1943), p. 277. On the 'Jewish bacillus' a telling quote from the genocidal period is found in Goebbels' diary in 1942, while detailing the extermination taking place at that time: 'It is a battle of life and death between the Aryan race and the Jewish bacillus.' See Herf, pp. 149-150.

<sup>75</sup> For example, bravery, cowardice, diligence and laziness. Weikart, p. 105.

<sup>76</sup> Weikart, pp. 105-108. For evidence of the connection drawn by Haeckel between medicinal metaphors and authoritarian political forms, see Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 44-47.

<sup>77</sup> Lifton, pp. 441-442. Haeckel, who proposed state-enacted eliminationist action, can be seen as a direct ancestor of murderous Nazi 'race hygiene'; see Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 86-89.

<sup>78</sup> Weikart, pp. 116-117.

<sup>79</sup> For discussion of Ploetz in the context of racial hygiene, nationalism, and antisemitism, see Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 64-80, 123-125, 153-154.

value.’<sup>80</sup> At first ‘racial hygiene,’ though based on the superiority of the ‘white,’ was concerned with improving the ‘human race’ (or at least the Western ‘cultured races’) as a whole; but by the end of the First World War in Germany, conservative nationalist forces controlled most of the important institutional racial hygiene centres, and the focus turned to the question of different races, and, specifically, the ‘Jewish question.’<sup>81</sup>

Eugenicists, antisemites and racialists proffered a narrative in which morality, dictated by science, necessitated the disappearance, *so oder so* (one way or another), of those who posed a threat to the Aryan race and to humanity itself: the ‘unfit,’ the ‘lower races’ who stood in the way of advanced culture and civilisation, and the ‘subhuman’ Jews.<sup>82</sup> At this stage, the discourse of killing and extermination was aimed chiefly at the first two groups;<sup>83</sup> but under the Nazis, the concept of racial struggle to the death, and of immutable biological ‘wrongness,’ would reach its most extreme consequences.

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<sup>80</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 48. While claiming that his science was not about hierarchy, and denying antisemitism, Lenz wrote, for example, that Jews were selected not for the control and exploitation of nature, but for the control and exploitation of other men (p. 54); on Lenz and the distinction between antisemitism and ‘racial hygiene,’ see also Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 81-82.

In his infamous 1913 study on the ‘Rehoboth bastards,’ Fischer wrote that ‘[w]ithout exception, every European nation that has accepted the blood of inferior races ... has paid for its acceptance of inferior elements with spiritual and cultural degeneration.’ Given this, the only value for inferiors was inasmuch as they were of use to the superior races; ultimately, the aim of policy should be the ‘decline and destruction’ of ‘inferior races’ (Barta, p. 47).

<sup>81</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 18-26; for the role of racial hygienists in the demand for a ‘final solution’ to the ‘Jewish question,’ see p. 211; for Lenz’s role in the drafting of the ‘euthanasia’ law see Aly, ‘Medicine Against the Useless,’ pp. 23-24.

<sup>82</sup> Weikart, p. 183. German colonialists would attempt to exterminate the Herero and Nama peoples of German Southwest Africa in 1905.

In the history of eugenics, the American eugenicist tradition is also particularly important; however, there is no space to consider it within the terms of this thesis. For a brief treatment, see G. E. Allen, ‘The Ideology of Elimination: American and German Eugenics, 1900-1945’, in F. R. Nicosia & J. Huener (eds), *Medicine and Medical Ethics in Nazi Germany: Origins, Practices, Legacies*, Berghahn Books, New York & Oxford, 2002 (reprint 2004), pp. 13-39. On the subject of American eugenicist physicians’ knowledge of Nazi practice, see Seidelman, p. 441.

<sup>83</sup> Weikart, p. 204.



### IIc. Disease Discourse in the Modern Age

Susan Sontag, who credits Christianity with the advent of a moralised concept of disease which saw it as punishment, describes the following process in relation to disease:

First, the subjects of deepest dread (corruption, decay, pollution, anomie, weakness) are identified with the disease. The disease itself becomes a metaphor. Then, in the name of the disease (that is, using it as a metaphor), that horror is imposed on other things ... Epidemic diseases were a common figure for social disorder. From pestilence (bubonic plague) came 'pestilent,' whose figurative meaning, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is 'injurious to religion, morals, or public peace – 1513'; and 'pestilential,' meaning 'morally baneful or pernicious – 1531.' Feelings about evil are projected onto a disease. And the disease (so enriched with meanings) is projected onto the world.<sup>84</sup>

In the nineteenth century, however, two discursive changes took place. Firstly, diseases used as metaphors for evil changed from epidemic, collective diseases, to diseases like syphilis, tuberculosis and cancer, understood to be diseases of the individual.<sup>85</sup> Secondly, 'the notion that disease fits the patient's character, as the punishment fits the sinner, was replaced by the notion that it expresses character. Disease can be challenged by the will.'<sup>86</sup> Recovery from disease, according to the German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer,

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<sup>84</sup> Sontag, p. 60. Sontag refers specifically to diseases 'whose causality is murky, and for which treatment is ineffectual', but her model can also be applied, as in this case, to situations where in terms of the understanding of the situation this is far from the case.

<sup>85</sup> Sontag, p. 60.

<sup>86</sup> Sontag, p. 44. According to Mosse, the rise of Social Darwinist and Romantic racism gave rise to 'the concept that the very physical characteristics of people rested on the nature of their inner selves' (*The Crisis of German Ideology*, p. 88).

depended on the will assuming 'dictatorial power in order to subsume the rebellious forces' of the body.<sup>87</sup>

The coincidence of the idea of disease as punishment with the idea that it is related to the will created a punitive and moralistic conceptual framework which allowed disease to be seen as a product of weakness, an expression of the inner self which could be reversed by a conscious effort of strength.<sup>88</sup> On the national scale, defeat and debility particularly contributed to perceptions of national 'illness': the Ottoman Empire, in a period of disintegration and of disastrous, humiliating military defeat, was commonly known as 'the sick man of Europe.' Hitler described the period following Germany's defeat in the First World War as 'inwardly sick and rotten'; his actions, suggests Lifton, can be understood as an effort to recreate the pre-War period and, as Hitler put it, to 'cleanse it of all impurities, and preserve it, so that this time the goal of 1914 would be reached...'<sup>89</sup>

While moral judgement could only be passed on a diseased individual as an individual, in terms of the metaphor of society as a diseased body, society became a secondary and redeemable object of moral opprobrium, while the alien bodies of the other could bear the full brunt of condemnation. 'Throughout the nineteenth century,' writes Sontag, 'disease metaphors become more virulent, preposterous, demagogic. And there is an increasing tendency to call any situation one disapproves of a disease. Disease, which could be considered as much a part of nature as is health, became the synonym of whatever was "unnatural."<sup>90</sup> Invasive diseases 'constitute the ultimate insult to the natural order';<sup>91</sup> but with the exercise of brute force in the service of strength of will, order could be restored.

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<sup>87</sup> Sontag, p. 45. This idea was explored in nineteenth century works such as Samuel Butler's satire *Erewhon* (1872), which describes a society in which bodily illness is treated as a criminal offence, while immoral behaviour is not seen as chosen, but as a misfortune to be tended to in hospitals.

<sup>88</sup> Sontag, p. 47.

<sup>89</sup> Lifton, p. 470.

<sup>90</sup> Sontag, p. 75.

## IId. Disease and Germ Theory as Metaphor

Eugenics and race theory had provided a literalist, scientific-intellectual narrative as to why biologically-defined groups posed a threat to society. At the same time, medicine provided a metaphorical rhetoric which, given the established scientific ‘proof,’ could be employed to call for the destruction of outgroups. These literal and metaphorical utterances were connected through the discourse of modern science. The concept of social disease in the body politic was not novel; but the discovery of germ theory allowed a particularly vicious conceptualisation of disease and illness as an alien, threatening other invading the body. As Chilton puts it (in regard to *Mein Kampf*),

[t]he body frame, together with the generic-space CONTAINER schema, creates the possibility of evoking a mapping onto Volk or nation or state, all of which come with a cultural frame, the ‘body politic’ ... [I]t further follows from the disease and medicine frame, that the fatal disease caused in the host can be cured by removing it or destroying the parasite.<sup>92</sup>

The terminology might differ, sometimes invoking connections between verminous or disease-spreading animals or insects and smaller organisms, but in every case the purpose was the same: ‘[w]hether ... depicted as a *viper*, a *bacillus*, a *leech*, a *fungus* or a *rat*, he [‘the Jew’] is in every case the *parasitical* driving force of *poisoning*, *physical decay* and *decomposition*.’<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Sontag, p. 69.

<sup>92</sup> Chilton, pp. 38-39. For a detailed treatment of the metaphor of the bodily metaphor in Nazism, see Musolff; a detailed analysis of the metaphor of Jews as disease organisms can be found on p. 37.

<sup>93</sup> Musolff, p. 37; original italics. For the demonisation of lice and other insect parasites in European medical discourse from the 1890s onward, due to the discovery of their association with the spread of infection, see P. J. Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe 1890-1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, pp. 6-7.

The concept that living organisms had a role in causing disease, the ‘animacular hypothesis,’ was a theory which dated back to classical times; however, from the 1860s onwards, breakthroughs by scientists, most notably Louis Pasteur and Robert Koch, presented increasingly convincing proof of the relationship between microbes and illnesses. By 1900, ‘the general principle that microorganisms [sic] played a central role in causing communicable diseases ... had achieved widespread acceptance in both Europe and America.’<sup>94</sup> The new ‘germ theory’ travelled rapidly into popular consciousness, through public health campaigns, lectures and publications in popular science and household issues, and advertising.<sup>95</sup> In the 1930s, growing recognition of the importance of viruses added a new spur to disease rhetoric.<sup>96</sup> Illness in general had always been used as societal metaphor.<sup>97</sup> But the advent of germ theory, and its dissemination into the popular realm, allowed more specific and particular kinds of understandings of illness, which then became available for strategic discursive use. Previous political metaphors which saw societal illnesses as treatable by reason, foresight or tolerance were replaced by a view in which disease equals death, in which the emphasis is on diseases that are loathsome and fatal, diseases which are not to be managed or treated, but attacked.<sup>98</sup>

In contrast to previous theories which had seen miasma and vapours as spreading illness, germ theory created active agents of illness which sought out their victims, agents which could be visualised, confined and destroyed.<sup>99</sup> There was a change from a defensive, to an

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<sup>94</sup> N. Tomes, *The Gospel of Germs: Men, Women, and the Microbe in American Life*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass./London, 1998, p. 6.

<sup>95</sup> J. Brown, ‘Crime, Commerce, and Contagion: The Political Languages of Public Health and the Popularization of Germ Theory in the United States, 1870-1950’, in R. G. Walters (ed.), *Scientific Authority and Twentieth-Century America*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore & London, 1997, pp. 56-60.

<sup>96</sup> Tomes, p. 245. ‘Virus’ terminology was available, for example, in Hitler’s rhetoric during the Second World War; see Herf, p. 187.

<sup>97</sup> Sontag, for example, pointed out Shakespeare’s metaphor of an infection in the ‘body politic’ in which no distinction is drawn between a contagion, an infection, a sore, an abscess, an ulcer and a tumour (p. 73).

<sup>98</sup> Sontag, p. 81; see also Musolff, p. 36.

<sup>99</sup> Otis, pp. 26-27.

offensive attitude.<sup>100</sup> Disease itself changed from a punishment, to something to be punished:<sup>101</sup> hygiene, which was becoming more and more important to modern conceptions of 'civilisation,' took on value-laden moral and religious overtones. According to American pioneer home economist Ellen Richards, for example, even small hygienic chores had become 'a step in the conquering of evil, for dirt is sin.'<sup>102</sup> Disease-causing bacteria were described as 'invisible enemies,' 'baneful,' 'lying in wait,' 'foreign,' 'base,' 'murderous' and 'cunning'; and they 'were often described in martial terms as attacking, invading, and conquering their human hosts' (a theme to which I return below).<sup>103</sup> A purposeful use of Darwinist rhetoric and analogy also emerged. Many of the leading figures in debate were committed Darwinists, who saw and described the relationship between microbe and host not only as a war, but specifically as a manifestation of the 'survival of the fittest.'<sup>104</sup>

While germ theory made disease more comprehensible, it also became more frightening, for people, not places, were now responsible for disease – and a closer association was now possible between particular groups of people and disease.<sup>105</sup> As a bacteriologist wrote in the *American Popular Science Monthly* in 1914, 'it is people, primarily, and not things

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<sup>100</sup> Otis, p. 34.

<sup>101</sup> Sontag, p. 81.

<sup>102</sup> Tomes, p. 10.

<sup>103</sup> Tomes, pp. 41-44.

<sup>104</sup> Tomes, pp. 43-44. In Germany, in particular, the disciplinary spheres of bacteriology and racial hygiene became ever more entwined; see Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 186-187.

<sup>105</sup> Otis, p. 27; see also p. 153. This conception, and its association with discrimination, was, of course, not confined to 'germ-borne' diseases, nor to the historical period after their discovery; for example, Klaus Hödl notes the way in which the supposed nature of 'African' biological health justified such practices as slavery and specifically flogging (which supposedly maintained health in a non-tropical climate, and was therefore humane), and the call for the enforcement of sexual segregation (due to the dangers of 'black' sickle-cell anaemia) (K. Hödl 'The Black body and the Jewish body: a comparison of medical images', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 36, no. 1, 2002, pp. 18, 22). Weindling also argues that with the discovery that insects carried disease, 'the human carriers of insects were stigmatised as vermin ... [r]eligious notions of disease as punishment for evil were transmuted into biological possession by insect parasites' (*Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p. 37).

that we must guard against.’<sup>106</sup> The advent of germ theory also gave rise to an important change in understanding of the nature of incarnated pollution. It was no longer identifiable by outward appearance, which became deceptive: the cleanest-looking person might harbour hidden and contagious impurity.<sup>107</sup> In the metaphors created by germ theory, this tied in neatly with the ideological view which saw assimilation as an unacceptable, and even a threatening, option. Assimilated minorities and ‘political traitors’ were more, not less, dangerous because they fitted in and because they could not be readily identified.<sup>108</sup> For it was their essential, immutable inner nature which was the source of the threat.

The rhetoric of victims as disease organisms appeared soon after the inception of germ theory – and, in Germany, in parallel with Jewish emancipation and the entrance of ‘upstart’ Jews into the previously separate *Gemeinschaft* (‘community’). De Gobineau maintained (in the words of Tatz) that ‘civilisations degenerate and die when the primordial race-unit is broken up and swamped by an influx of foreign elements ... Purity of blood was essential to maintain that power, and purity had to be protected from dangerous germ plasms, the bacilli – the Jews.’<sup>109</sup> By 1886 the German scholar and politician Paul de Lagarde, who has been characterised as the founder of the *Völkisch* movement, could describe Jews as ‘nothing but carriers of decomposition’ and argue that ‘with trichinae and bacilli one does not negotiate...they are exterminated as quickly and thoroughly as possible’;<sup>110</sup> and in 1895 Hermann Ahlwardt (a German antisemitic agitator and member of parliament), attacking

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<sup>106</sup> Tomes, p. 237.

<sup>107</sup> Tomes, p. 63.

<sup>108</sup> Friedländer, p. 213; see also, for example, Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 225, 264.

<sup>109</sup> Tatz, ‘The “Doctorhood” of Genocide’, p. 87.

<sup>110</sup> Lifton, p. 478; on Lagarde, see Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, p. 31 (Mosse describes Lagarde’s antisemitism as essentially non-racial’ [p. 44]). See also Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, pp. 70-72.

Jewish immigration, labelled Jews 'cholera bacilli.'<sup>111</sup> Richard Wagner's son-in-law, Houston Stuart Chamberlain, wrote that 'alien elements' in Teutonism had not yet been exorcised 'and still, like baneful germs, circulate in our blood.'<sup>112</sup>

From this point onwards, such rhetoric is commonly found in the words of the perpetrators of genocidal episodes. The term 'ugly microbes' was employed in Khmer Rouge rhetoric in Democratic Kampuchea.<sup>113</sup> A 1976 Khmer Rouge Party Center Report (thought to have been written by Pol Pot himself) states the following: 'there is a sickness inside the Party ... we cannot locate it precisely. The illness must emerge to be examined ... we search for the microbes within the Party without success ... They will rot society, rot the Party, rot the army ... We must expose them.'<sup>114</sup> Those who exhibited 'regressive' signs were held to have a 'sick consciousness' (*chhoeu sâtiarâmma*); and a Khmer Rouge saying held that the goal was to 'completely annihilate diseases of consciousness' and create a society of pure revolutionaries: 'what is infected must be cut out.'<sup>115</sup> Advances in health science, however, were to have political effects beyond making such genocidal figures available for discursive use. As well as providing this symbolic rhetoric, these new ideological worldviews, and the practices which both prefigured and accompanied them, would alter the very enactment of government.

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<sup>111</sup> Gerhard, p. 89. Gerhard comments that '[t]he embodiment of the need for segregation and exclusion is provided symbolically using the model of hygienic defense against epidemics.' See also Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>112</sup> Tatz, 'The "Doctorhood" of Genocide', p. 87.

<sup>113</sup> Chandler quoted in E. Kissi, 'Genocide in Cambodia and Ethiopia' in R. Gellately & B. Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 315.

<sup>114</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 96.

<sup>115</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 222; Straus, 'Organic purity', p. 52.

## Ile. Disease and 'Public Health'

With the advent of the nation-state, hygienic medicine as a technique of health assumed an increasingly important place in the administrative system and the machinery of power. The health of the population as a whole became one of the essential objectives of political power.<sup>116</sup> The nation-state, shaped as it was by the new technology of population (that is, political science), encompassing the tools for internal measurement and regulation, was the only body equipped to deal with the necessary processes of discipline: identification, categorisation, containment, and (if necessary) elimination.<sup>117</sup> According to this ideology, the health of the population must be ensured by the 'police' of the social body, and specifically by the new formation, 'medical police';<sup>118</sup> thus, with the new conception of illness, public health became more than ever before a question of *policing*.<sup>119</sup>

Germ theory thus redefined the concept of individual liberty, 'making it acceptable for governments to investigate citizens and restrict their movements, since no individual had the right to contaminate others.'<sup>120</sup> Furthermore, in a refashioning of the imperatives of

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<sup>116</sup> M. Foucault, 'The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century', in M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977* (ed. & trans. C. Gordon), Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hertfordshire, 1980, pp. 169-170, 176.

<sup>117</sup> M. Foucault, 'Governmentality', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon & P. Miller (eds), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1991, pp. 100-102.

<sup>118</sup> Foucault, 'The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century', pp. 170-171. See also Seidelman, p. 436; for the relationship between metaphor, medical science and medical policing in Europe, and their relationship to the other constructed from the position of the Western European subject, see Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, pp. 16-18.

<sup>119</sup> See for example Tomes, p. 179.

<sup>120</sup> Paraphrased in Otis, p. 34. The quicker absorption of the lessons of hygiene by the educated classes and by 'civilised' Western nations created a vicious cycle in which the drastic drop in communicable disease amongst the upper strata of society meant that 'it became far easier to conceive of controlling infectious diseases by finding and isolating the infected person' (Tomes, p. 242).

However, it's worth noting that a different tradition saw germ theory as an imperative to help the less privileged; the fact that the microbe did not respect wealth or race meant that it was in the interests of the more privileged



morality, the elimination of illness through state surveillance and state control of the individual could be seen not only as a necessity, but also as humane; such a view was espoused by important scientists, notably Koch, a founder of bacteriology.<sup>121</sup> In Australia, for example, in at least one episode (occurring in 1887) the 'mercy' killing of indigenous people by the Native Police was related to the allegation that 'the niggers are propagating with terrible rapidity the most dreaded form of the syphilitic virus and ruining hundreds of men's constitutions.'<sup>122</sup>

Whether they were depicted as merciful, or as imperatives in which mercy would play a counterproductive role, extreme measures could be justified when framed in terms of public health. The Nuremberg laws passed in Germany in 1935, which deprived Jews of their citizenship and forbade their marriage to non-Jews, as well as forbidding the marriage of those who were 'genetically ill' (*Erbkranken*) to the 'genetically fit,' were generally considered public health measures.<sup>123</sup> The Blood Protection Law was listed among the official measures of German health legislation, while German medical journals described 'miscegenation' as a 'public health hazard' and scholars analysing community racial makeup claimed to be producing a 'racial diagnosis' (*Rassendiagnose*). The law covering the 'genetically ill' was named the Law for the Protection of the Genetic Health of German People.<sup>124</sup>

The sterilisation of the 'unfit' in Germany began in 1933. Their 'medical' murder, by gas and injection (in Germany itself) and shooting (in the occupied East) began in 1939,

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to improve conditions for those less fortunate. But this spirit faltered, at least in the United States, in the conservative climate which emerged from the late 1910s onward (Tomes, pp.128-130, 205-233, 241-242). See also Seidelman, pp. 436-437, on the historical development of quarantine and the outgroups who were made the object of this practice.

<sup>121</sup> Otis, p. 35.

<sup>122</sup> Barta, p. 41.

<sup>123</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 141-142.

<sup>124</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 131-132, 141-142.

designated by the government as the year of 'the duty to be healthy.'<sup>125</sup> These actions took place under a strictly medicalised aegis; for example, administration of the killing institutes was carried out by the 'Reich Association for Hospitals.'<sup>126</sup> The mass murder of Jews, employing many of the same individuals, began in 1941. Numerous scholars have drawn a link between these events, inasmuch as they involve an evolutionary progress of the removal and destruction of those who had been categorised in essentialised biological terms, and in metaphorical medical terminology, as a threat to society.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, the connection between the discourse of medicine and the practice of killing is a continuous thread linking these events in the discursive register.

Götz Aly theorises that the most important connection between Aktion T4 (the Nazi 'euthanasia program,' which was the first Nazi mass murder program to target an entire, carefully defined set of people) and the murder of Jews was 'the discovery made by the organisers that all levels of German administration, as well as the German people in general, were willing to accept such a procedure.'<sup>128</sup> Dehumanising strategies which cast particular groups as a threat and excised them, discursively, from the national community had worked more than effectively. Walter Gross, head of the Nazi Office of Racial Policy, dated the explicit link made between genetic health and German blood to the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. All subsequent legislation on race and population, Gross claimed, was based on the distinction these laws drew between 'healthy' and 'diseased races.'<sup>129</sup> The concentration and elimination of Jews took place under the guise of 'quarantine': ghettos were a 'hygienic

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<sup>125</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 177.

<sup>126</sup> Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, p. 549.

<sup>127</sup> See for example Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 194-217. On this issue and the relationship to disinfection and gassing, see Weindling, pp. 292-315.

<sup>128</sup> Aly, 'Medicine against the Useless', pp. 92-93. The killing of the disabled caused a much greater public outcry than did that of Jews, and was 'officially' ceased (though not ceased in fact) for this reason; it has been suggested, however, that this is related not to different perceptions of the object, but to the fact that this killing, as opposed to that of Jews and other 'racial' groups, began before the outbreak of the Second World War (with its consequent increase in personal and national concern on the part of non-Jewish Germans).

<sup>129</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 195.

necessity' and Jews were characterised as 'germ-carriers' who spread epidemic disease.<sup>130</sup>

Such rhetoric emerges again in DK, where at times

the eradication of 'microbes' was likened to a public health decision ... 'Leaders justified destruction of the "diseased elements" of the old society ... We were told repeatedly that in order to save the country, it was essential to destroy all the contaminated parts ... It was essential to cut deep, even to destroy a few good people rather than chance one "diseased" person escaping eradication.'<sup>131</sup>

The demands of 'public health,' when framed in this way, were in themselves both a motivating and a legitimating factor in any calls for eliminationist action. But it was not only the dictates of public health which were seen to necessitate such action, but the discursive connection of this language to the enactment of 'legitimate' killing in the context of warfare.

#### II. The Military Metaphor and the Role of Physicians

In the modern discursive order legitimate killing is monopolised in the hands of the state. Hence, killing becomes legitimate when it is ordered by the state; and mass killing is legitimately ordered by the state in warfare (a situation wherein the wellbeing, and very often the survival, of the nation is understood to be at stake, just as in Darwinian and medicalised rhetoric). Furthermore, implicit in the invocation of military discourse is a construction, or a 'cognitive redefinition,' of the object of harmful action as intent upon harming the subject, thus constructing that object as 'the enemy' and justifying that harmful action in terms of self-defence.<sup>132</sup> Therefore, perpetrators often use the rhetoric of combat

<sup>130</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 199-200. See also Weindling, pp. 271-274.

<sup>131</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 155.

<sup>132</sup> See A. Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency', *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2002, p. 103.

and warfare, and the redefinition of civilians as combatants, to justify their roles as killers.<sup>133</sup> During the Second World War, for example, Hitler described 'Jewry' as having made a 'declaration of war' against 'the European peoples,' and periodicals were ordered to use the term 'self-preservation' to describe anti-Jewish measures.<sup>134</sup> Victor Klemperer has attested to the way in which Jewish Germans were treated as 'the enemy' in 'the Jewish war.'<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> See for example Herf, pp. 268-269. Warfare in itself is very often one important enabling and/or causal factor in genocide, a subject which there is no space to discuss within the context of this thesis; see for example P. Bartrop, 'The relationship between war and genocide in the twentieth century: a consideration', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4 no. 4, 2002, pp. 519-532; E. Markusen & D. Kopf, David *The Holocaust and Strategic Bombing: Genocide and Total War in the Twentieth Century*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1995, M. Shaw, 'The general hybridity of war and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 9, no. 3, 2007, pp. 461-473; D. Bloxham, 'Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participation, and Motivation in Comparative Perspective', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2008, pp. 203-245; E. Kissi, 'Rwanda, Ethiopia and Cambodia: links, faultlines and complexities in a comparative study of genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, pp. 119-122; J. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (trans. C. Schoch), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, pp. 145-146.

We might, however, quote Helen Fein:

the calculus of the costs of exterminating the victim – a group excluded from the circle circumscribed by the political formula – changes as the perpetrators instigate or join a (temporarily) successful coalition at war against antagonists who have earlier protested and/or might conceivably be expected to protest persecution of the victim. This calculus changes for two reasons: the crime planned by the perpetrators becomes less visible and they no longer have to fear sanctions.

(H. Fein, *Accounting for Genocide: National Responses and Jewish Victimization during the Holocaust*, The Free Press, New York, 1979, p 8). Christopher Fettweis suggests that, an important reason for the lack of challenge to the Holocaust was the wartime context (unlike the T4 program, which did induce protest) in which the public 'rally round the flag' and become intent upon the destruction of 'enemies,' while ethical constraints are lowered (C. J. Fettweis, 'War as catalyst: moving World War II to the center of Holocaust scholarship', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003).

On the relationship between conflict, group perceptions, and the perceived morality of harmful action, see S. Opatow, 'Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 6-7; A. Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement of Moral Control', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, p. 29; D. Bar-Tal, 'Causes and Consequences of Delegitimization: Models of Conflict and Ethnocentrism', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, pp. 66-73.

On the 'war' metaphor and its associated entailments, see Lakoff & Johnson, pp. 156-157; in the context of Hitler and *Mein Kampf*, see Rash, 'Metaphor in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', pp. 99-100; Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, p. 545.

<sup>134</sup> In Herf, pp. 189-190.

<sup>135</sup> V. Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook* (trans. M. Brady, 3rd edn), The Athlone Press, London & New Brunswick (New Jersey), 2000 (original German date of publication 1957), pp. 172-173.

During the Second World War, Peter Schrijvers notes that '[w]hen the Japanese government announced that men and women, old and young, would be called up for home defense, the Fifth Air Force's intelligence officer was swift to declare in July 1945 that "the entire population of Japan is a proper Military Target ... THERE ARE NO CIVILIANS IN JAPAN."' <sup>136</sup> In Bosnia, according to Norman Cigar, a means of denial 'was the Serbs' portrayal of the situation ... as one exclusively of "combat," an argument that lent legitimacy to virtually any target attacked, including civilian ones ... Preemptive [sic] arrests of Muslims also found justification because of the "threat.'" <sup>137</sup> Jean Hatzfeld also observes this tendency among Rwandan killers:

Pancrace Hakizamungili, who sometimes seems like the most cynical or indifferent member of the gang, boldly announces: 'Then began the terrible battle of the marshes.' The excessively pious Fulgence Bunani informs us, 'We usually made war with machetes because we had no other weapons.' Encountering our disbelief or irritation, they rapidly abandon that tactic to return to a more realistic vocabulary. They say that they 'hit' or 'cut.'<sup>138</sup>

ALPHONSE: ...In the town, we had got ready to begin new massacres to counter the inkotanyi attacks. We anticipated just the usual massacres, however, the kind we had known for thirty years. The more the inkotanyi pushed into the country, the more we would massacre their Tutsi brothers on their farms, to deter them and halt the advance; that was how we saw the situation at the municipal level. <sup>139</sup>

Killing in warfare is justified not only by the legitimate order of the state, but by the animosity of the object. Michel Foucault writes that, in the modern order 'the principle

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<sup>136</sup> P. Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan: American Soldiers in Asia and the Pacific during World War II*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, p. 258.

<sup>137</sup> Cigar, pp. 97-98; and see these pages for more detailed examples.

<sup>138</sup> J. Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers In Rwanda Speak* (trans. L. Coverdale), Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, New York, 2005, p. 155.

<sup>139</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 177.

underlying the tactics of battle – that one has to be capable of killing in order to go on living – has become the principle that defines the strategy of states. But the existence at stake is no longer the juridical existence of sovereignty; at stake is the biological existence of a population.<sup>140</sup> The nation-state thus situates power, and enacts its militaristic tactics, at the level of the life, the species, the race, ‘population’.

How does this relate to the medical metaphor? The nineteenth-century tradition of hygienic representation and public health practice, argues JoAnne Brown, ‘figuratively bound the police power of the state to the healing power of medicine ... at once furthering and denaturing the militaristic-cultural equation that permits such barbarous euphemisms as “surgical strikes,” the “war on drugs,” and “ethnic cleansing.”’<sup>141</sup> The new conceptualisation of disease created a metaphorical rhetoric drawing a parallel between medicine and military practice. ‘It was when the invader was seen not as the illness but as the micro-organism that causes the illness that medicine really began to be effective, and the military metaphors took on new credibility and precision.’<sup>142</sup>

The revelation that illness could be caused by microscopic living organisms lent itself immediately to a militarised understanding which turned around the traditional metaphor of the body as a metaphor to interpret society, instead using society as a metaphor to interpret

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<sup>140</sup> M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley), Pantheon Books, New York, 1978, p. 137. The concept of biopower, developed both in Foucault and in Giorgio Agamben, is one which, although it is related to the concerns examined here, there is unfortunately no space to develop without departing far from the central concerns of this work; for an examination of dehumanising medical rhetoric from the perspective of Foucault’s and Agamben’s theories, see M. Landzelius, “‘Homo Sacer’ out of left field: Communist “slime” as bare life in 1930s and second world war Sweden’, *Human Geography*, vol. 88, no. 4, 2006, pp. 453–475. For a critique of Agamben in the context of genocide, see Stone, ‘Biopower and Modern Genocide’, pp. 167–169.

<sup>141</sup> Brown, p. 81. Brown wrote specifically about the North American context, but the relatively close cultural connections among the Western nations mean that her work also casts light on this issue outside the context of the United States.

<sup>142</sup> Sontag, p. 95.

the individual body. Sontag identifies the way in which ‘the military metaphor in medicine first came into wide use in the 1880s, with the identification of bacteria as agents of disease. Bacteria were said to “invade” or “infiltrate.”’<sup>143</sup> This metaphor could all too easily be turned around to depict out-groups as threatening infiltrators: by the 1920s ‘[t]o liken a political event or situation to an illness [was] to impute guilt, to prescribe punishment.’<sup>144</sup> Speaking of the cancer metaphor in particular, Sontag claims that its use is an incitement to violence, and may in itself be implicitly genocidal.<sup>145</sup> Brown explains that ‘the criminological and military analogies of public health were not merely modelled after law enforcement and war but also became, and remain, models for criminology and military strategy.’<sup>146</sup>

In the discourse of biopolitics, then, a twofold metaphorical process takes place: a military metaphor interpreting disease, along with a bodily metaphor interpreting society, legitimises the use of military techniques of destruction against a civilian outgroup. Brown, describing the rise of an adversarial model employing criminological and military analogies for disease in the last third of the nineteenth century, argues that ‘[t]he crime-disease and hygiene-war equations ultimately strengthened the cultural institutions of policing and the military (including the reservoir of public language available for political discussion); that is, these equations strengthened the coercive powers of the state ...’<sup>147</sup>

We see this conceptualisation borne out in genocidal episodes. In German utterances, the Herero uprising, and subsequent genocide of the Herero by German colonialists, was frequently described as a *Rassenkampf* (racial struggle); meanwhile, General Lothar von Trotha, commander of the colonial forces in German South West Africa, wrote in his diary

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<sup>143</sup> Sontag, p. 67. For a history of bacteriology in Germany and its relationship to antisemitism, see Weindling, pp. 20-30.

<sup>144</sup> Sontag, p. 82.

<sup>145</sup> Sontag, p. 84.

<sup>146</sup> Brown, p. 53.

<sup>147</sup> Brown, p. 55.

that 'I find it most appropriate that the nation perishes instead of infecting our soldiers and diminishing their supplies of water and food.'<sup>148</sup> The carnage of the First World War and the accompanying shortages in food and medical supplies, along with the Great Depression of 1929, spurred the nascent German impulse to destroy 'life unworthy of life.'<sup>149</sup> Military discourse was clear in Nazi-era rhetoric: Adolf Jost, an early advocate of direct medical killing, published *Das Recht auf den Tod* ('The Right to Death') in 1895, in which he pointed out that the state already exercises the right to demand an individual's death for the good of the state in war.<sup>150</sup> Doctors were no longer caretakers of the individual, but must become 'warriors against disease,' 'physicians to the Volk,' and 'biological soldiers' (while, conversely, soldiers could become expert hygiene police);<sup>151</sup> patients should overcome the individualistic principle of 'the right to one's own body' and embrace instead the 'duty to be healthy.'<sup>152</sup> Doctors' responsibility was not to the individual, but to the *Volkskörper* (roughly, 'body of the people');<sup>153</sup> curative medicine (*Fürsorge*) was to be replaced by preventive medicine (*Vorsorge*).<sup>154</sup> Racial hygiene was conceived as long-term preventive care for human genetic

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<sup>148</sup> Stone, 'White men with low moral standards', pp. 40, 42.

<sup>149</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 178; C. Pross, 'Introduction', in Aly, Chroust, & Pross (eds), p. 2. During the First World War, due to shortages in food and medical supplies, nearly half of all patients in German psychiatric hospitals died of starvation or disease. See also Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 301-307.

Bartrop also suggests (following Hobsbawm) that the 'total war' experience in itself demonstrated the possibility of the deliberate killing of millions with impunity (Bartrop, 'The relationship between war and genocide', p. 522).

<sup>150</sup> Lifton, p. 46.

<sup>151</sup> Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, p. 167; P. J. Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p. 247.

<sup>152</sup> See Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 157-158.

<sup>153</sup> Lifton, p. 30; see also Rash, 'Metaphor in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', pp. 94-97; Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 240, on the Nazi slogan 'the good of the whole comes before the good of the individual' (*Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz*); Seidelman, p. 440; and Aly, 'Pure and Tainted Progress', in Aly, Chroust, & Pross (eds), p. 209: 'where a collective, rather than an individual patient, was the object of curative efforts, mass murder could be considered a quasisurgical operation on the body of the nation.' Peter Haas suggests that a fundamental characteristic of the Nazi ethical system was that 'social groupings are the primary concern of ethics, not individuals.' (P. J. Haas, 'The Morality of Auschwitz: Moral Language and the Nazi Ethic', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1988, p. 385).

<sup>154</sup> For the connection between defensive war and preventive medicine, see Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p. 228.



material.<sup>155</sup> In the words of Aly, 'treatment of sick people was declared a war, and the laws of war are different from those of peace.'<sup>156</sup> While the camp experiments of Nazi doctors are infamous, the role of physicians was thus much more central and widespread than even these outrages.<sup>157</sup>

In this environment, as we have seen, the destruction of the mentally ill (beginning in 1939) was the Nazis' initial act of organised exclusory mass murder, one which provided a template for the 'excision' of Jews and Gypsies from an utopian Thousand Year Reich. This killing, that is, was the first time the Nazi ideological policy of utopia through murderous exclusion was put into practice; but it would not be the last. As well as perpetuating an ideology of exclusion as solution, and answering the question of what to do with outgroups, the initial mass killing created a framework associating outgroups and health, which could then be easily transposed to different victim groups in the form of metaphor. This metaphor in turn necessitated the understanding of the problem posed by outgroups as a biological one, appropriately dealt with by biological methods. 'Selections' in Auschwitz, for example, were always made by physicians, and were constantly compared to combat and to wartime medical triage.<sup>158</sup>

Indeed, the metaphor of health and disease is particularly useful in understanding the involvement of physicians in genocide, despite the Hippocratic Oath. Medical doctors were prominent figures in three of the four cases I focus on in this chapter; and in the Nazi case, the medicalised understanding of killing meant that SS doctors were required to oversee virtually every aspect of the killing process, despite the fact that many if not most of these

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<sup>155</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 73, 240-241.

<sup>156</sup> Aly, 'Pure and Tainted Progress', p. 209.

<sup>157</sup> In terms of Nazi human experimentation, there may also be a connection to animalising discourses; Mann notes a comment by doctor Kurt Hessmeyer (who experimented on child inmates) that there was no difference 'between Jews and guinea pigs' (M. Mann, 'Were the Perpetrators of Genocide "Ordinary Men" or "Real Nazis"? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2000, p. 352).

<sup>158</sup> Lifton, p. 173.

roles did not require specialised medical knowledge.<sup>159</sup> This discourse allowed the creation of what Lifton terms a ‘healing-killing paradox’:<sup>160</sup> the doctor fulfils his (or, less commonly, her) traditional and obligated role by destroying the source of disease, in order to heal the organism. As Lifton also observes, ‘[w]ar is the only accepted institution...in which there is a parallel healing-killing paradox. One has to kill the enemy in order to preserve – to ‘heal’ – one’s people, one’s military unit, oneself.’<sup>161</sup>

In the modern order, according to Foucault, medicine, as a science of the normality of bodies, finds a place at the centre of penal practice, in which the penalty must have healing as its purpose. In genocide, however, in a murderous inversion, the body to be healed becomes solely the *Volkskörper*. The restoration of its normality utilises what Foucault terms the new ‘physics of power,’ which involves bureaucratic organisation, manipulation and monitoring of individuals, and the definition of standards which are (re)established through corrective interventions that are ambiguously therapeutic and punitive.<sup>162</sup> So much for modernity; but the Nazi ideology, in its ‘reactionary modernism’ (Jeffrey Herf’s term), blended high-rationalist technological modernity with irrationalist, romantic traditionalism.<sup>163</sup> This is made manifest in the fact that the ultimate aim of this process harks back to an earlier form of corporal punishment: the complete obliteration of the object from the polity.<sup>164</sup> As Jacques Semelin puts it, ‘[t]he state is no longer content merely to “discipline and punish.”’<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Lifton, p. 150. One slogan used in regard to Nazi ‘euthanasia’ was: ‘Let the syringe remain in the hand of the physician’ (p. 392).

<sup>160</sup> Lifton, pp. 430-432; see also E. Staub, ‘Moral Exclusion, Personal Goal Theory, and Extreme Destructiveness’, *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, p. 51.

<sup>161</sup> Lifton, p. 431.

<sup>162</sup> M. Foucault, ‘The Punitive Society’, in M. Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (ed. P. Rabinow, trans. R. Hurley et al), Allen Lane, London, 1997, pp. 34-35.

<sup>163</sup> In Proctor, *Nazi War on Cancer*, p. 15.

<sup>164</sup> Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, pp. 149-150. In Foucault’s analysis, Nazism throws the full historical weight of the old politics of blood (that is, of sovereignty) behind their modern, eugenic (and therefore sexualised) fantasies of a utopian society.

<sup>165</sup> Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 338.

It is not only Nazi genocide in which physicians, and medical rhetoric, are prominent. The genocide of Christians in Asia Minor was carried out at the behest of, and with the involvement of, many physicians, both as ideologues and as direct killers.<sup>166</sup> Dr. Mehmed Resid gave the following rationale for his actions: 'Even though I am a physician, I cannot ignore my nationhood ... My national identification takes precedence over everything else ... Armenian traitors had found a niche for themselves in the bosom of the fatherland; they were dangerous microbes. Isn't it the duty of a doctor to destroy the microbes?'<sup>167</sup> Genocide scholar Vahakn N. Dadrian cites a series of threatening letters, inspired by Dr. Mehmed Nazim and possibly composed by Hüseyin Azmi, the Director General of Istanbul Police, written to the Armenian press and the Armenian Patriarch. Among other threats was this: 'Know this that the Turks have committed themselves, and have vowed to subdue and clean up the Armenian gâvurs [infidels] who have become a tubercular microbe for us.'<sup>168</sup>

A few years later, in 1920, Karl Binding and Alfred Hoche had produced their crucial work *Die Freigabe der Vernichtung lebensunwerten Lebens* ('The Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life') in which they 'stressed the therapeutic goal of their concept: destroying life unworthy of life is "purely a healing treatment" and a "healing work."<sup>169</sup> In a reversal of the military-medicinal metaphor, in the late 1930s one Bielefeld physician compared the 'genetic defective' to a 'grenade' waiting to explode.<sup>170</sup> In Auschwitz, doctors referred to the gas chambers, at first mockingly but then unselfconsciously, as *Therapia Magna*

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<sup>166</sup> Most notably, Drs Behaeddin Sakir and Mehmed Nazim, but also others such as Fazal Berki, Mehmed Hasan, Mehmed Esad Pasa, Ali Saib and Hamdi Suad (Tatz, 'The "Doctorhood" of Genocide', p. 89).

<sup>167</sup> In Tatz, 'The "Doctorhood" of Genocide', p. 89.

<sup>168</sup> In V. N. Dadrian, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus* (3rd revised edn), Berghahn Books, Providence, 1997, p. 216. Similarly, in 1942, writing in his diary, Goebbels described the Nazi genocide of Jews as 'cleaning up the Jewish mob.' See Herf, p. 177.

<sup>169</sup> Lifton, p. 46.

<sup>170</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 194.

*Auschwitzciense* – thus creating the illusion of humane action.<sup>171</sup> One medical collaborator went so far as to refer to the chambers as ‘the central hospital.’<sup>172</sup> Nazi doctor Fritz Klein, when asked, ‘How can you reconcile [killing] with your [Hippocratic] oath as a doctor?’ replied, ‘Of course I am a doctor and I want to preserve life. And out of respect for human life I would remove a gangrenous appendix from a diseased body. The Jew is the gangrenous appendix in the body of mankind.’<sup>173</sup> One doctor described Jews as a ‘diseased bacillus, eating its way into the body of the German people’; another said that ‘there is a resemblance between Jews and tubercle bacilli; nearly everyone harbours tubercle bacilli, and nearly every people of the earth harbor the Jews; furthermore, an infection can only be cured with difficulty.’<sup>174</sup>

In a 1936 lecture on radiotherapy, SS radiologist Hans Holfeder showed students a slide in which cancer cells were portrayed as Jews, and X-rays launched against them as Nazi storm troopers.<sup>175</sup> Gerhard Wagner, leader of the German medical profession, argued that the racially ‘bastardized’ Jews suffered higher rates of certain illnesses (a common argument which was used to justify anti-miscegenation laws intended to preserve the ‘relatively pure’ European racial stock). From this, he concluded that Jews were a diseased race, and Judaism was ‘disease incarnate.’<sup>176</sup> Indeed, William Seidelman argues that one of the reasons for the

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<sup>171</sup> Lifton, p. 208.

<sup>172</sup> Lifton, p. 244.

<sup>173</sup> Lifton, pp. 15-16.

<sup>174</sup> In Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 176, 195. For another example of ‘infection’ terminology, see Herf, p. 239.

<sup>175</sup> Proctor, *Nazi War on Cancer*, p. 46. Jews were also blamed for the spread of cancer, through their putative role in the introduction of tobacco and the tobacco trade, as well as the alleged role their immoral capitalism played in the deterioration of German foods (p. 68).

The cancer metaphor was also used in reverse: cancer cells were referred to as a ‘pathological race’ of cells, as anarchists, Bolsheviks, a ‘state within a state’, ‘directing a civil war against the body’ and other similar metaphors (pp. 46-50).

<sup>176</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 195-196; Proctor, *Nazi War on Cancer*, pp. 61-62. In the spirit of Cesare Lombroso’s influential theory of *l’uomo delinquente* (‘the criminal man’), Jews were also constructed as biologically disposed to criminality; see Proctor, 1988, pp. 202-205.

creation of walled-off Jewish ghettos in occupied Eastern Europe was an association between Jews and typhus.<sup>177</sup>

The medicalisation of genocide also extends beyond the role of the traditional physician. Psychiatrists and psychiatry had important roles to play in Serbian discourse:

Jovan Rašković headed the psychiatry department at the Neuropsychiatric Clinic in Šibenik, Croatia, where he enjoyed the reputation of taking pleasure in administering electroshock therapy to Croats, especially Croatian women. He developed his own psychoanalytic theory explaining the inferiority of Croats and Muslims and the superiority of Serbs, by which Serbs were destined to dominate and rule over the others.<sup>178</sup>

Rašković was the mentor of infamous Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić, also once a practicing psychiatrist.

In the modern era, then, the doctor, in her/his function as a hygienist rather than a therapist, 'becomes the great advisor and expert, if not in the art of governing, at least in that of observing, correcting, and improving the social "body" and maintaining it in a permanent state of health.'<sup>179</sup> 'In the microbial age', writes Laura Otis, 'scientists assumed the heroic role of soldiers, the creators and the defenders of empires.'<sup>180</sup> The new theories

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However, the association between Jews and the spread of disease was by no means universal; in the United States of America, in regard to tuberculosis, Jews came to be viewed as more resistant or 'hardier,' given their supposed lack of a 'natural habitat' (in earlier theories) or their alleged status as persecuted, or (less sympathetically) as urban dwellers (in later, social Darwinist theories); this also held for syphilis (see Hödl, pp. 24-33; Ehrenreich, p. 64).

<sup>177</sup> Seidelman, p. 442. See also Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p. xix.

<sup>178</sup> P. J. Cohen, 'The Complicity of Serbian Intellectuals in Genocide in the 1990s', in T. Cushman & S. G. Meštrović (eds), *This Time We Knew: Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia*, New York University Press, New York & London, 1996, pp. 49-51.

<sup>179</sup> Foucault, 'The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century', p. 284.

<sup>180</sup> Otis, p. 28; on the image of the soldier as warrior and *conquistador* see also Otis pp. 85-86, 88, 97. See also Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, pp. 26-28, 233, 257.

allowed doctors to understand murderous behaviour in this flattering light. They also allowed the use by non-doctors of strategic justification in the form of murderous medical rhetoric. Armenians were described as ‘a canker, a malignance which looks like a small pimple from the outside, which, if not removed by a skilful surgeon’s scalpel, will kill the patient.’<sup>181</sup> In Nazi Germany, one cartoon in *Der Stürmer* depicted a microscope under which were symbols for Jews, communists and homosexuals, along with the British pound and the American dollar. The cartoon was titled ‘Infectious Germs’, while the accompanying poem ran: ‘With his poison, the Jew destroys/The sluggish blood of weaker peoples;/So that a diagnosis arises,/Of swift degeneration./With us, however, the case is different:/The blood is pure; we are healthy!’<sup>182</sup> Joseph Goebbels declared that ‘our task here is surgical ... drastic incisions, or some day Europe will perish of the Jewish disease.’<sup>183</sup> Hitler ‘was lauded as the great doctor of the German people.’<sup>184</sup> Raul Hilberg describes the way in which the removal of ‘asocials’ from prisons to camps took place:

In consequence of an agreement between Himmler and Justice Minister Thierack, so-called asocials were transferred from prisons to concentration camps. On November 16, 1944, after the transfer of ‘asocials’ had been largely completed, the judiciary met to discuss a weird subject: ugliness. The phrase on the agenda was “gallery of outwardly asocial prisoners.” The summary of that conference states:

During various visits to the penitentiaries, prisoners have always been observed who – because of their bodily characteristics – hardly deserve the designation human: they look like miscarriages of hell. Such prisoners should be photographed. It is planned that they too

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<sup>181</sup> In Lifton, pp. 488-489.

<sup>182</sup> Image in Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, fig. 34; translation in Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 162.

<sup>183</sup> Lifton, p. 477. As Proctor writes, ‘Goebbels routinely castigated the objects of his contempt as “cancers” or “malignancies” – this included not just the Jews and homosexuals but the Foreign Office ... and Stalin’s communist empire’ (*The Nazi War on Cancer*, p. 46).

<sup>184</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 64; fig. 11; see also Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, p. 493. On the metaphor of Hitler as healer in *Mein Kampf*, see also Musolff, pp. 29-30.

shall be eliminated. Crime and sentence are irrelevant. Only such photos should be submitted which clearly show the deformity.<sup>185</sup>

Another example is Heinrich Himmler's notorious speech in which he congratulated senior SS officers on having killed thousands and still 'stayed decent': '[w]e had the moral right, we had the duty towards our people to destroy this people that wanted to destroy us ... We do not want, in the end, because we destroyed a bacillus, to be infected by this bacillus and to die. I will never stand by while even a small rotten spot develops or takes hold. Wherever it may form we will together burn it away.'<sup>186</sup> German radio stations carried a report by an associate of Goebbels who had recently visited wartime Warsaw and Lodz, which described the ghetto Jews as 'ulcers which must be cut away from the body of the European nations.'<sup>187</sup>

This specific type of utterance was also present in the former Yugoslavia. Cigar documents the following case:

In late 1991, lashing out against the alleged Islamic inspiration of articles in a Sarajevo newspaper, a Serbian Orthodox cleric wrote in the official Church organ about the 'malignant disease of the authors of these texts and of those at whose orders they write.' ... [H]e rhetorically asked the Muslim population in Bosnia-Herzegovina to decide 'whether this disease has been contained or whether it has infected the majority of its organism.' Moreover, he suggested menacingly that 'instead of a condemnation or a tit for tat, the Serb must help the Muslims to cure or excise that rather naïve tumor from their breasts.'<sup>188</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> R. Hilberg, 'The Nature of the Process', in J. Dimsdale (ed), *Survivors, Victims, and Perpetrators: Essays on the Nazi Holocaust*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1980, p. 11.

<sup>186</sup> Quoted in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ABC-CLIO, California, 1999, p. 241.

<sup>187</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 200.

<sup>188</sup> Cigar, p. 31.

The Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić used the same imagery: Serbs were protecting Europe by making sure 'Islamic fundamentalism doesn't infect Europe from the south.'<sup>189</sup> Thus, in all these cases, discursive resources were available not only allowing physician-perpetrators to take on the role of legitimate and moral killers; but allowing killers to represent themselves as fulfilling the healing role of the physician.

## §

From where do these examples arise, and what do they demonstrate? The rise of the nation-state, and developments in science, allowed the creation of a narrative determined by a bodily metaphor in which the perpetrator society was presented as a unitary body invaded or infected by threatening life-forms, which might be all the more dangerous because of their invisibility.<sup>190</sup> For the very survival of the patient, these organisms must be destroyed. This metaphor has been persistent since its establishment: Brown writes that from the inception of germ theory until the mid-twentieth century, although the specific threat changed, 'the generic image of the germ as "enemy," and of hygiene as "defense," remained constant, with

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<sup>189</sup> Cigar, p. 100. Non-Serbian supporters of the genocidal Serb actions used similar rhetoric: 'Russian ultra-nationalist Zhirinovskiy, known for his deeply ingrained anti-Muslim outlook, approved unreservedly Serbian policy with regard to Muslims. He equated the policy with a defense of Europe from "Islamic fundamentalism" ... "It is better to have an influenza in Bosnia-Herzegovina than AIDS in Europe"' (p. 113).

<sup>190</sup> Semelin suggests that it is the similarity (and hence invisibility) of the other which causes the perceived threat to be understood as 'betrayal' (*Purify and Destroy*, pp. 31-32). Otis writes that '[i]n the 1880s, because of their minuscule size and deadly effects, bacteria became a metaphor through which one could articulate fears about all invisible enemies, military, political, or economic' (p. 94). See also, for example, Otis, p. 70, on Santiago Ramón y Cajal, director of the Spanish National Institute of Hygiene and founder of neuroscience: 'The greatest threat of infectious bacteria was that they could enter human beings unobserved; if rendered visible, they could eventually be defeated.' Cajal called microbes 'invisible poisoners' and 'the invisible enemy of the human race' and envisaged health workers, analogous to police, as 'soldiers destined to shelter us from the formidable gang of poisoning microbes, that lie in wait, traitorously hidden in the invisible.' See also Herf, p. 10. This construction might also apply to literal scientific discourse about race and disease; see for example Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p. 256.



continuing implications not only for health, disease and medicine but also for ... political conceptions of social danger.<sup>191</sup>

It is important to acknowledge that in and of itself this metaphor alone was not a motivation for genocide. I do not attempt to establish a relationship of singular causality; this rhetoric had been available for use, and had been used by various figures, for 70-odd years before it was employed by the Nazis in support of their quest to make greater Germany *Judenrein* ('Jew clean'). Rather, such rhetoric, as a discursive strategy, is a tool: when it is used by those in positions of power and influence as widespread and widely-accepted public discourse it serves a justificatory and a legitimatory function. As Lifton observes, the 'genocidal threshold requires extensive prior ideological imagery of imperative.'<sup>192</sup> Such discourse is, according to Alexander Laban Hinton, a key part of the process of 'genocidal priming': victim groups, too, are 'imagined communities,' imagined, however, not by themselves but by their persecutors.<sup>193</sup>

It is not the metaphor itself, but the 'reality' which this metaphor represents, the perception of intrinsic essentialised threat, which is a motivation for genocide; and such rhetoric serves to establish the connection in populist and powerfully symbolic terms.

Nancy Tomes writes that

[t]he identification of dread disease with a concrete enemy piqued popular interest in germ theory from its earliest days. As one commentator observed in *Popular Science Monthly* in 1885, 'The germ theory appeals to the average mind: it is something tangible; it may be hunted down, captured, colored, and looked at through a microscope, and then in all its varieties, it can be held directly responsible for so much damage.'<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Brown, p. 62.

<sup>192</sup> Lifton, p. 480.

<sup>193</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 280, 283-4.

<sup>194</sup> Tomes, p. 6.

We have established, then, how this metaphor became available for use by political elites and ideologues; and how it has been used to legitimise and motivate genocidal action to the direct perpetrators, the ‘men on the ground,’ constructing victim groups as a threat and quashing whatever moral qualms may be felt in relation to the destruction of people who might otherwise be seen as fellow human beings. We may now examine in more detail how tropes of purity and contamination operate in constructing victim identity to serve these purposes.

### III. Hygiene, Purity and Cleanliness in Metaphor

Auschwitz was described by the Nazi doctor Heinz Thilo as *anus mundi*, the anus of the world: psychiatrist Antoni Kępiński perceptively suggests that, rather than being an expression of disgust at what was happening there, this statement accurately reflects the Nazi vision of ‘the necessity to sweep clean the world,’ of ‘a world where there would be no place for sick people, cripples, psychologically immoral people, contaminated by Jewish, Gypsy or other blood.’ All of these were, for the Nazis, biomedical waste material, and Auschwitz was the locus of their expulsion.<sup>195</sup>

Identity, it has been argued, is defined not by inclusion, but by exclusion. In the narrative of what has been termed the social bodily metaphor, a discursive vocabulary of sickness and health in the context of the container schema becomes a polarised system in which

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<sup>195</sup> In Lifton, p. 147. In similar rhetoric, the Danzig surgeon Erwin Liek, infamous as ‘the father of Nazi medicine,’ wrote in 1933 that Nazism represented the cleansing of Germany’s ‘Augean stables’ (Proctor, *Nazi War on Cancer*, p. 23); again, Jovan Rašković described Bosnian Muslims as ‘victims, as Freud might have said, of anal frustrations, which incite them to amass wealth and to seek refuge in fanatic attitudes’ (Cohen, ‘The Complicity of Serbian Intellectuals’, p. 50).

'[t]otality may be reinterpreted as bodily integrity, giving the idea of health vs. illness.'<sup>196</sup> Furthermore, 'the borders of the self made identity possible. To be was to determine what one was not, and to reject it.'<sup>197</sup> Disease organisms are not a part of the patient, but an alien other: 'you are being replaced by the nonyou. Immunologists class the body's cancer cells as "nonself."<sup>198</sup> Brown has coined the term 'Social Contagionism' (as a counterpart to Social Darwinism) to describe the way in which germ theory created a perception of particular danger inherent in contact with the alien other.<sup>199</sup> In this way we see how disease-bearing organisms, which threaten the homogenous 'purity' of the body, are, to use anthropologist Mary Douglas' concept, matter out of place: they are *dirty*.<sup>200</sup> In the modern period, then, in which these narratives arise and coincide, marginal or liminal groups may thus be seen as polluted and polluting, particularly as they come to move within wider society as a result of the levelling processes of the modernist project;<sup>201</sup> 'organic' models of nationalism suggest the possibility and desirability of 'organic purity.'<sup>202</sup> Furthermore (as noted by Semelin), the very definition of the self as pure 'implies categorizing some "other" as impure.'<sup>203</sup> The disorder, and therefore dirtiness, that such impure alien presences engender may be solved by a murderous reordering process, by the inscription of impurity and of difference (and thus a clear demarcation between 'us' and 'them') on the body:<sup>204</sup> for example, ethnic Vietnamese in the 'clean' DK social system, who were turned into the nonhuman impurity that they putatively represented (that is, into grotesque, water-logged

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<sup>196</sup> D. Weiss, 'Stalinist vs. Fascist propaganda: How much do they have in common?', in de Saussure & Schulz (eds), p. 259.

<sup>197</sup> Otis, p. 63; see also p. 168. See also Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 27.

<sup>198</sup> Sontag, p. 68.

<sup>199</sup> Brown, pp. 70-71.

<sup>200</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo* (new edn), Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 44-45. On 'out-of-place-ness' and moral exclusion, see also C. Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion: A critical discursive reframing of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanisation', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 46, 2007, pp. 722-728.

<sup>201</sup> See for example Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 225, 284.

<sup>202</sup> See Mann, *The Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 61-68.

<sup>203</sup> Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 33.

<sup>204</sup> See Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 225-229, 286.

corpses) by being killed and tossed in the Mekong to float back to Vietnam – and thus both ‘cleansed’ and ‘reordered.’<sup>205</sup>

Dirt, as Douglas also observes, contaminates. The polluter ‘becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he crossed the line and second because he endangered others.’<sup>206</sup> It is not only the presence of foreign agents which weakens and destroys the body; it is their corruption of the healthy cells around them. Behaviours considered immoral are ascribed to the influence of the alien intruder. Not only does this intruder in his/her person destroy the body; her/his presence weakens its pre-existing and otherwise healthy structure. The lawmakers of the Nuremberg Laws, prohibiting marriage or sexual contact between Jews and non-Jews, described themselves as ‘permeated with the knowledge that the purity of the German blood is a precondition for the continued existence of the German people.’<sup>207</sup> These laws had their origins in the German colonies in Africa, where, three years after the 1905 genocide of the Herero and other peoples, ‘mixed-race’ marriages were annulled and henceforth forbidden in German South West Africa.<sup>208</sup> Indeed, one of the German objections to Jews was that Jews as a race were seen to be of ‘impure’ (mixed) blood, as were most ‘Gypsies’;<sup>209</sup> a similar fear of ‘race mixing’ existed with regard to the ‘purity’ of white Australia, a narrative which would lead to the institutionalised removal of ‘half-caste’ children.<sup>210</sup>

Discursive tropes constructing the other as dirty gave rise to the related concept of the ‘cleansing’ of victim peoples. As Cigar describes in relation to genocide in Bosnia,

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<sup>205</sup> Straus, ‘Organic purity’, p. 50; Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 217.

<sup>206</sup> Douglas, p. 172. For example, on the contrast between Nazi persecution of those who had never ‘belonged to the Volk’ and those who had ‘chosen’ by their actions to ‘deprive themselves’ of this position, see Kallis, pp. 7-8.

<sup>207</sup> Lifton, p. 25. On the rejection of mixing of different types in Hitlerian metaphor, see Musolff, pp. 32-33.

<sup>208</sup> Barta, p. 47.

<sup>209</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 197, 214.

<sup>210</sup> See Barta, pp. 41, 52.

[p]erhaps nowhere was the power of language to categorize and destroy as evident as the choice of the term ‘cleansing,’ used freely in unofficial discourse to describe the violent removal of Muslims. Logically, a procedure with such a name ... could only be viewed as positive and desirable, the implicit antithesis and correction of an assumed impure, unnatural, and demeaning state. When the commander of a Serbian militia unit was able to report that ‘this region is ethnically clean,’ for example, he was clearly proud of what he viewed as an achievement.<sup>211</sup>

‘Ethnic cleansing’ was ‘a euphemism invoked by the Serbs themselves to describe the process of creating ethnically pure Serbian regions through the methodical murder and expulsion of non-Serbs.’<sup>212</sup> The term has a long history: the ruler of Montenegro, the Vladika (Bishop) Petar II Petrović Njegoš, an early Serb nationalist intellectual, was ‘one of the first writers to use the word “cleanse” (*očistiti*), with all its Christian overtones of the redemptive powers of baptism, to describe the killing of Muslims in Belgrade in 1806.’ Četnik ideologue Stevan Moljević also advocated ‘cleansing the land of all non-Serb elements.’<sup>213</sup> Norman M. Naimark comments that ‘[i]n both Slavic and German usages, “cleansing” has a dual meaning; one purges the native community of foreign bodies, and one purges one’s own people of alien elements.’<sup>214</sup>

In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge announced the creation of ‘the cleanest, most fair society ever known in our history’ and, when their plans ran into problems, began to ‘purify’ the

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<sup>211</sup> Cigar, p. 71.

<sup>212</sup> Cohen, ‘The Complicity of Serbian Intellectuals’, p. 45.

<sup>213</sup> C. Carmichael, *Ethnic cleansing in the Balkans: nationalism and the destruction of tradition*, Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 23, 32, 87.

<sup>214</sup> N. M. Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.)/London, 2001, pp. 4-5. Naimark also notes that the Russian equivalent, *chistki*, was used to refer to Soviet Union purges.

general populace.<sup>215</sup> ‘Hidden enemies burrowing from within’ were to be ‘cleansed from inside the ranks of our revolution,’ while regiments were charged with ‘sweeping clean’ (*baos samat*) the enemy, and ‘revolutionary young men and women’ were exhorted to ‘purify various bad compositions so that they are completely gone, cleansed from inside the ranks of our revolution.’<sup>216</sup> Urbanites were described as being ‘poisoned’ by the ‘rotten culture’ of U.S. imperialism, in contrast to the practices of the ‘pure and clean’ peasantry.<sup>217</sup>

Nazi medicalised killing, both of ‘life unworthy of life’ and of Jews, was termed ‘disinfection,’ and in Auschwitz, under the supervision of a presiding doctor, medical technicians called *Desinfektoren* (‘disinfectors’) transported and inserted the pellets of Zyklon B into the gas chambers.<sup>218</sup> In 1941, Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg referred to the ‘total solution to the Jewish question’ as a ‘cleansing biological revolution.’<sup>219</sup> In such a context, Lifton argues that genocide ‘is a response to collective fear of pollution and defilement,’ one which brings to an older impulse toward ritual purification a deadlier modern stress on health and hygiene.<sup>220</sup> Paul Julian Weindling suggests that, in early twentieth-century Germany, particularly in the context of colonialism and scientific claims around the role of animals in spreading disease, ‘the rhetoric of extermination ... invaded the vocabulary of hygiene.’<sup>221</sup> ‘Extermination’ could be thus viewed as a complete removal of the sources of pollution. In Nazi genocide,

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<sup>215</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 8-11.

<sup>216</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 34, 39, 261; for further examples of ‘purification’ and of ‘cleaning up’ the enemy, see pp. 82, 143, 162, 205.

<sup>217</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 78, 82.

<sup>218</sup> Aly, ‘Pure and Tainted Progress’, p. 215; Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 190; Lifton, p. 148. Zyklon B was originally used for ‘pest control’ and delousing, a reason which continued to be listed on paper for its necessity; and after 1942 it was supplied by the SS Hygienic Institute. In this context one might recall Himmler’s claim that ‘anti-Semitism is exactly the same as delousing’ (Lifton, p. 477). For a history and a close reading of Zyklon, poison gas as a disinfectant, and the discursive and practical relationship of these to Nazi genocide, see Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, pp. 118-130, 260-263.

<sup>219</sup> Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, p. 556.

<sup>220</sup> Lifton, pp. 481-482. See also J. Semelin, ‘Toward a vocabulary of massacre and genocide’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003, pp. 197-198.

<sup>221</sup> Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe*, p. 29; see also p. 39 on the emergence of ‘[a] new vocabulary of destruction with terms like “disinfestation” and “deratization.”’

purifying principles were subsumed into modern 'medical materialism,' the invocation of bodily hygienic explanations for spiritual and psychological matters, in a way which lent itself directly to purification through killing in the name of healing.<sup>222</sup>

The image of the pure, homogenous, body whose defenses are penetrated, violated by foreign agents, was also guaranteed to arouse sexualised anxiety.<sup>223</sup> The desired 'body politic' was a strong, in-control, and therefore masculine body which could be sullied and emasculated by its own incapability to defend itself against violation in such forms as "foreign racial penetration" (*rassische Überfremdung*).<sup>224</sup> For the Khmer Rouge, for example, it was necessary to recreate the history of the party 'into something clean and perfect, in line with our policies of independence and self-mastery.'<sup>225</sup> This particular fear is closely related to the nature of the scientific discourse from which the narrative emerges; Evelyn Fox Keller hypothesises 'that the ideal of scientific objectivity reflects a carefully cultivated masculine personality type that conceives of connectedness as a loss of control.'<sup>226</sup> The desire for control, writes Julia Epstein, is produced by metaphors of mystery and otherness.<sup>227</sup>

The specifically sexual-biological anxiety which this narrative arouses may be read in the putative threat posed by the reproduction of the other, from the threat to the national 'germ plasm' or to the 'white race' allegedly posed by the 'genetically ill' or by

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<sup>222</sup> Lifton, pp. 482-483.

<sup>223</sup> See Otis, p. 60. This rhetoric also emerges conspicuously in the late nineteenth century; Heinrich von Treitschke, notorious for his comment 'the Jews are our misfortune,' was warning in 1879 of the 'penetration' of Germany's eastern boundary by Polish Jews (Gerhard, p. 85).

<sup>224</sup> The German 'racial hygienist' Otmar Freiherr von Verschuer, writing in 1934 (quoted in Ehrenreich, p. 62).

<sup>225</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, p. 141.

<sup>226</sup> Otis, p. 172. For an insightful empirical analysis of masculinity (including considerations of bureaucracy) in the self-conception of torturers and killers which touches on various among the issues mentioned here, see M. K. Huggins, M. Haritos-Fatouros & P. G. Zimbardo, *Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 2002.

<sup>227</sup> Otis, p. 171.

'miscegenation,' to the fear of biological 'swamping' of Serbs due to the allegedly high Muslim birthrate. Nazi-era racial hygienist Martin Stammer called Germany's declining birthrate a 'black plague.'<sup>228</sup> The 1935 Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour defined and outlawed 'racial pollution' (*Rassenschande*), sexual contact between Germans and Jews;<sup>229</sup> the *Deutsches Ärzteblatt*, Germany's leading medical journal, praised the law, arguing that it would help protect the German 'body' against 'foreign racial elements' and help to 'cleanse the body of our Volk.'<sup>230</sup> A biological problem must be met with a biological solution, from the sterilisation of the genetically inferior, or the Serb rape camps which aimed at the impregnation of Muslim women, to the physical destruction of 'unwanted biological material.'<sup>231</sup> In all of these examples we see the way in which the modern medical-military dehumanising narrative both pointed to a problem, and, implicitly or explicitly, named a specific solution.

#### IV. Conclusion

With the inception of modernity, various discourses emerged which contained ideological ideals of integrity, homogeneity, and the determinability of essentialised identity. These converged to form a discursive strategy of biopolitics; under certain conditions, in otherwise widely different circumstances, this narrative provided both a literal reason and a metaphorical rhetoric calling for the destruction of alien others, each of which served the

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<sup>228</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, p. 125. For discussion of 'heredity' and sexuality in German race science, see Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 90-94; for discussion of social hygiene, racial hygiene and birthrate, see Weindling, *Health, race and German politics*, pp. 291-295.

<sup>229</sup> This term is also translated into English as 'racial defilement'; literally, it means 'racial shame' (Klemperer, p. 178).

<sup>230</sup> Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 132-133, 214. The paper also wrote of the 'struggle against the Gypsy plague [Plage].' See also Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology*, p. 141 on the obsession of *Völkisch* thinkers with sexual contact between 'Aryan' women and Jewish men.

<sup>231</sup> It should be noted that 'eugenic' sterilisation was widely practiced not only in Nazi Germany, but in the United States, Europe and elsewhere.



same motivatory and legitimatory purpose at different registers. Literal rhetoric worked at the scientific-intellectual-political level; metaphorical, at the emotional-populist level. Thus emerged an entirely novel medicalised and militarised discursive formation which allowed for 'genocide' to be conceivable, and which, furthermore, eased the path for its enactment by the legitimisation and justification of the acts of perpetrators through the dehumanisation of victims. As we have seen, such dehumanisation 'primes' the society or the perpetrator group, and provides one motivation for destruction, one reason to follow the 'twisted path' to genocide. Once that end is reached, dehumanising discourse continues, as perpetrators and bystanders justify their acts to themselves and to others. In the final stages of genocide, this rhetoric is literally imprinted on the bodies of the victims; they are forced to live under conditions 'which (re)produce their essentialized identity.' In the cases examined here, the disease-ridden, dehumanised state to which victims are reduced makes genocide 'seem like a justifiable "purification" process' for the protection of the national body.'<sup>232</sup>

As mentioned elsewhere in this work, not all episodes of genocide demonstrate the *specific* biomedical utterances which are apparent in the cases examined in this chapter; neither does every episode which employs the *discourses* of modernity employ its *techniques*.<sup>233</sup> Many factors motivate genocide, and many different categorisations and metaphors are used to understand outgroups as undesirable or as legitimate targets for destruction. But without the specifically modern, essentialist concept of a group as extraneous and as indelibly wrong, genocide as we know it is conceptually unthinkable. And when this rhetoric is presented in the biomedical terms we have seen throughout this chapter, it is universally a motivating and legitimating factor in genocide.

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<sup>232</sup> Hinton, *Why Did They Kill?*, pp. 212, 223-225.

<sup>233</sup> In Rwanda, for example, the naming of Tutsi as 'cockroaches' had a strong relationship not only to animalising the victims but to naming them as objects of pollution; but this modern rhetoric was matched with much more so-called 'primitive' techniques and methods of killing, though deployed in modern fashion in terms of forms of organisation and implementation.

My aim in this chapter has been to sketch the features of biopolitical dehumanisation in genocide, both as a common factor and as an essential aspect of the process when it is present. In doing so I have attempted to weave together a number of seemingly disparate theoretical and historical threads to create a synthesis which allows this subject to be understood as a coherent and influential narrative of exclusion, rather than glimpsed in scattershot fashion. The twentieth century is bookended by cases I have examined here (namely, genocides in Asia Minor, and in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda). In 2005, when I first began work upon this chapter, in Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe began a campaign to clear 'slum' areas, ostensibly to crack down on illegal housing, and *as an effort to prevent the spread of infectious disease* (it should be noted that the targeted sections of Zimbabwean society form much of the internal opposition). The campaign was named 'Operation *Murambatsvina*,' Shona for 'Drive Out Trash.' There is no reason, in other words, to think that the discourse I have examined has lost its power in the contemporary period. In societies and cultures which remain wedded to a particular convergence of cultural and social models provided by modernity – in which biopolitical language and imagery is available for use in a vocabulary of exclusion – the presence of this rhetoric in its typical manifestations should be viewed as a sign of very dangerous societal tendencies. In this chapter I have traced the way in which biopolitical dehumanisation in the modern era became a lethal self-fulfilling prophecy; but for as long as the discursive formations of any society provide this rhetoric as a viable manifestation of exclusory practice, biopolitical dehumanisation will continue to play an integral role as a mechanism of genocide.

In the next chapter, we turn to a discursive formation which, in its extreme forms, at times has some resemblance to medicalised rhetoric in its representation of outgroups as vermin or disease-carrying organisms; the representation of victims as animals, and as sub-humans.

## Chapter 6.

### **'No war may be conducted humanely against nonhumans':**

#### **Victims as animals and subhumans**

*[The] rhetoric of threat and conspiracy is added to by that of the dehumanisation of the 'enemy' or rather by his 'bestialization.' Whether it be in Africa, Asia or Europe, victims are described as 'germs,' as 'harmful pests,' as 'rats' or 'cattle.' But to what extent is this zoological representation (that is also found on military battle grounds) a 'preparation' for the act of massacring one's fellow human? Or rather is it a rationalization elaborated in situ or a posteriori by the executioner who becomes convinced that his victims are animals? There is a lack of empirical studies of the vocabulary of executioners before and during massacres.*

- Jacques Semelin<sup>1</sup>

Jacques Semelin's quote encompasses the way in which 'bestialising' dehumanisation of victims serves all three of the purposes – *pre-hoc* preparation, *in situ* rationalisation, and *post-hoc* justification – outlined in Chapter Four. But what of the role of motivation? In the previous chapter, examining biopolitical rhetoric, we have seen a form of dehumanisation which is inherently motivational. In this chapter the animalisation of victims will be revealed as motivational in some instances (when the element of threat is present), and solely legitimatory in others. Semelin is one of few authors in the field to recognise the

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<sup>1</sup> J. Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary of massacre and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003, pp. 193–210. From a social psychology perspective, see also Afrodita Marcu, Evanthia Lyons and Peter Hegarty: 'few theorists and experimentalists have reflected on how the human–animal boundary is drawn or why it might serve as such a robust resource for delegitimizing out-groups' (A. Marcu, E. Lyons & P. Hegarty, 'Dilemmatic human–animal boundaries in Britain and Romania: Post-materialist and materialist dehumanisation', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 46, 2007, p. 877)

importance of this form of dehumanisation, and the fact that the questions that the existence of such discourse raises have not been satisfactorily explored. Furthermore, scholars including Semelin and Peter Coates have pointed to the historical and semantic importance of the connection between killing animals and human beings which is found in the etymology of the word 'massacre'.<sup>2</sup> As we will see over the course of this chapter, the interconnection between such killings extends beyond the strictly terminological.

We have already had an entrée to this subject in the previous chapter, in the examination of construction of collectivities as 'vermin' and 'parasites'; there exists an area of crossover between the negative depiction of outgroups as disease organisms and as certain kinds of animals, one which will be explored here. The issue thus indicated is the *nature* of the names used – and hence their functionality – when outgroups are constructed as 'lesser' humans or as non-human animals. In episodes of mass killing, the animal world, in Leo Kuper's words, 'has been a particularly fertile source of metaphors of dehumanisation.'<sup>3</sup> In genocidal killing, the 'bestialising' of victims is a form of dehumanisation which legitimises the killing of victims in that it names them as creatures to whom little or no moral obligation is owed – and, as I have mentioned, it may also provide a motivation.<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I examine how this has come to be so, and I demonstrate the discursive process by which particular human groups are discursively classified beyond the pale of humanity, as non-human or 'less-than-human' life forms. Specific attention is given to the distinction between victims represented as non-threatening and as threatening animals (wild animals, loathsome animals, and vermin); that is, in the context of our argument, the functional use of such

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<sup>2</sup> J. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (trans. C. Schoch), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, p. 32; P. Coates, "'Unusually cunning, vicious and treacherous": The Extermination of the Wolf in United States History', in M. Levene & P. Roberts (eds), *The Massacre In History*, Berghahn Books, New York/Oxford, 1999, p. 164-165.

<sup>3</sup> L. Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century*, Yale University Press, New Haven/Yale, 1981, p. 88.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted here that humans are themselves animals; in this chapter, then, the term 'animals' is used as a shorthand for 'non-human animals,' rather than suggesting a dualistic or mutually exclusive distinction between these two classes.

utterances either to solely legitimise, or also to motivate killing. In this chapter, then, I will inquire as to how naming victims *in general* as animals and lesser humans reshapes moral narratives to construct killing as *legitimate*; and why naming them as *specific* animals constructs killing as necessary, that is, *motivates* killing.

In Chapters Five and Seven I give more emphasis to establishing the historical patterns which created the type of utterance than to enumerating documentary examples by class. In this chapter, however, I will devote more space to establishing actual examples of animalising language, prefaced by a relatively short excursus on the history and the modern development of the conceptual narratives on which thinking about the ‘human’ and the ‘animal’ is based, and the meaning of this distinction for practice. I follow this method of argument for two reasons: firstly, because, unlike the other types, the animalisation of a collectivity is clearly internally differentiated as regards the type of animal names employed by perpetrators, and each of these types is a different repository of meaning which must be separately explored; and secondly, because the links between the types presented in the other chapters – that is, medical and bureaucratic discourse – and killing, have been more firmly and fully established in previous work dealing specifically with genocide and genocidal killing, whereas animalisation as such has, for the most part, been given a less in-depth investigation, and, in the few cases that it has been examined, has been confined to specific types of genocide, usually colonial episodes (even if they are then related to non-colonial episodes).

In this chapter, then, after examining the history of moral obligation owed to animals with regard to killing, I enumerate the various different animal names which perpetrators of genocide and mass killing have affixed to their victims, and I give some background as to why these names perform certain functions (I will also mention the positive discursive associations which inhere in certain animal types). The projection of animality onto groups

seen as inferior or undesirable is by no means limited to the context of genocide, mass killing, or even that of violence. However, the fact that such discourse can exist in other situations should not discount the role it plays in genocide and genocidal killing (indeed, it may be seen as evidence for a continuum of dehumanisation). Rather, in the context of the existence of motivation for involvement in genocidal action, this narrative may play a vital part. In the course of this chapter it will be established that bestialisation plays the *specific* role in such episodes of legitimising *killing* (as opposed to other actions against outgroups); while naming outgroups as particular, threatening animals is either representative of a distinct pre-existing motivation, or provides in itself a motivation, for their destruction. In this way, it will become evident that ‘bestialisation,’ as sometimes motivational and sometimes legitimatory, can be seen as an intermediate form between medicalised dehumanisation (which is *always* motivational) and bureaucratic-euphemistic reification (which is *solely* legitimatory). In undertaking this task here, I begin with the question of the discursive place of animals within the moral order.

## I. What Moral Obligation is Owed to Animals?

*[W]e distance ourselves from whatever is different by equating it with something we have already objectified.*

–Carol J. Adams<sup>5</sup>

Ideology that constructs a one-way instrumental relationship between humans and non-human animals has a long pedigree. The European conception of animals, based on both the Bible and classical thought, was that they were created for the use of ‘man’ (despite classical dissenters such as Pythagoras, Plutarch and Porphyry). Aristotle taught that nature made

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<sup>5</sup> C. J. Adams, *The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory* (10<sup>th</sup> anniversary edn), Continuum, New York, 2000, p. 55.

nothing in vain and everything had a purpose. 'Plants were created for the sake of animals and animals for the sake of men. Domestic animals were there to labour, wild ones to be hunted.'<sup>6</sup> In Genesis, after creating life the Biblical God grants Adam dominion over all living things. This authority is renewed after the Flood: 'the fear and the dread' of man shall be upon all other living things, and 'every moving thing that liveth shall be meat' for him.<sup>7</sup> In other words, there was no reason why humans should not kill animals if it was considered to be in their interest to do so. Important Christian thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas took the same view: '[t]here is no sin in using a thing for the purpose for which it is. ... [I]t is lawful ... to take life ... from animals for the use of men.'<sup>8</sup> These foundations shaped Christian attitudes to animals for many centuries. Keith Thomas presents some telling examples from 17th century England:

'They have no right or propriety in anything,' emphasized Samuel Gott, 'no, not in themselves' ... When animals grew troublesome, [said] Henry More, then man had the right to curb them, 'for there is no question but we are more worth than they' ... [e]ven Thomas Hobbes, who rejected scriptural sanctions for man's ascendancy, agreed that there could be no obligation to animal, because 'to make covenants with brutes is impossible' ... In the eighteenth century Philip Doddridge considered that ... it was 'fit that their interests should give way to that of the human species whenever in any considerable article they come in competition with each other.'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Paraphrased in K. Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800*, Allen Lane, London, 1983, p. 17; see also P. Singer, *Animal Liberation* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Pimlico, London, 1995, pp. 188-189.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas, p. 18. On this topic, and the issue of animal offerings in religion, see also W. Sofsky, *Violence: Terrorism, Genocide, War* (trans. A. Bell), Granta Books, London, 2003, pp. 4-5.

<sup>8</sup> In Singer, pp. 193-194.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas, pp. 21-22.

Not everyone believed that animals had absolutely no rights whatsoever (although many did), and nor was any cruelty to animals for any reason necessarily considered permissible;<sup>10</sup> but whenever the interests of humans and animals (assuming a position, by no means held universally, in which animals were considered to have interests) was understood to conflict, this narrative constructed the right of 'man' to enforce his own desires in whatever way he deemed necessary, including killing, as both moral and legitimate.<sup>11</sup>

The concept of the 'great chain of being,' extending from the Classical through the Medieval tradition, posited a hierarchy of beings, at the top of which, in Christian philosophy, was 'God,' and beneath 'him,' 'man.'<sup>12</sup> This pre-modern view was heavily influential on the development of modern scientific-rational discourse emerging from the Enlightenment, a discourse which was shaped by the context of the eighteenth-century Christian pietist and evangelical revival (and was hence in evidence not only in Britain but in many European countries).<sup>13</sup> In discursive terms, the development of evolutionary theory in the context of modern Enlightenment science built on the Great Chain of Being concept such that the evolution of 'man' proceeded 'up the ladder' of animal life to remain in 'his' position at the apex – in which position 'he' is, as Mary Clark notes, 'inevitably equipped at an early stage with a weapon!'<sup>14</sup> (it's worth noting here, in terms of the psychological 'pull' of this conception, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's argument that orientational, that is, spatial

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<sup>10</sup> See Thomas, p. 153. The concept of 'rights' which may be 'possessed' is, of course, in itself a particular and contingent historical development.

<sup>11</sup> This was an ideology which it was in the human interest to support, even when its purported sources were less than clear; Thomas observes, for example, that English theologians who used Biblical arguments to justify human dominion over and killing of animals 'tended to disregard those sections of the Old Testament which suggest that man has a duty to act responsibly towards God's creation' (p. 24).

<sup>12</sup> For an interesting commentary on the relationship of this concept to human metaphor, see A. Goatly, *Washing the Brain: Metaphor and Hidden Ideology*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2007, pp. 148-152.

<sup>13</sup> See G. Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1978, pp. 2-5.

<sup>14</sup> M. E. Clark, 'Human Nature: What We Need To Know About Ourselves In The Twenty-First Century,' *Zygon*, vol. 33, no. 4, 1998, p. 647. See also S. Opatow, 'Animals and the Scope of Justice', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 49, 1993, p. 72.



metaphors are the way in which most fundamental concepts are organised; and that 'high' or 'up' is generally a positive association<sup>15</sup>).

In the seventeenth century René Descartes famously declared that animals were nothing more than machines or automata without minds or souls, incapable of reason, speech, and even (on some interpretations) sensation, thereby forming (in Thomas's words) 'the best possible rationalization for the way man actually treated animals,'<sup>16</sup> and, as Descartes put it, freeing men 'from any suspicion of crime, however often they may eat or kill animals.'<sup>17</sup> According to this ideological belief system – one which was shared and shaped both by pre-modern and modern discourse – the killing of animals, if considered needful for whatever reason, was entirely morally legitimate. With the advent of the modern possibility of 'genocide,' given these pre-existing attitudes, it is easy to see how naming victims as animals becomes a step to removing the 'old, normal knowledge' that killing is wrongful murder.<sup>18</sup>

This narrative, with its moral implications for action, was available not only in regard to a distinction between humans and animals, but also between different human collectivities. A scientific taxonomical view of animals, beginning with Carl Linnaeus, created the discursive possibility of classificatory hierarchies of worth and 'dispassionate' scientific classification of living creatures, which might then be mapped on to humans (a theme we have already developed in the previous chapter). Indeed, Linnaeus explicitly included distinct human 'races' in these systems of categorisation.<sup>19</sup> Within the 'great chain of being,' then, the category 'man' was not necessarily unitary, and its boundaries might be shifted to exclude groups which had previously been included. The place of Jews within such racial hierarchies

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<sup>15</sup> G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1980, pp. 14-18.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas, pp. 33-34.

<sup>18</sup> H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (revised and enlarged edn), Penguin, New York, 1983, p. 86. See Chap. 4, n186.

<sup>19</sup> Goatly, pp. 45-46.

was confused and ambiguous (and hence stood in defiance of boundary-drawing activities); black peoples were very commonly placed between animals and (white) humans, either as ape-like humans or as human-like apes.<sup>20</sup> These raci(al)ist discursive constructions had vitally important consequences for pragmatic institutional action: as Mark Cocker writes,

It was an axiom of Christian thought, propounded in the opening portion of its most sacred text, the Bible, that all organic life on earth was arranged in a hierarchy, at whose apex stood Christian man. As its appointed masters, Christians could look down upon this entire physical realm as a God-given field for their use and enjoyment. If the savage were not differentiated from the natural environment, then it followed that he too would be incorporated in that utilitarian prospect. Since he was outside the fellowship of Christian civilisation, he would enjoy no greater legal or moral status than any other flora and fauna.<sup>21</sup>

An example in the genocidal context (as observed by Paul Chilton) is found in metaphorical passages in *Mein Kampf* in which 'animals and the captivity of animals are merged with a domain of knowledge about humans,' endowing that domain with a 'great chain of being'-esque vertical orientation.<sup>22</sup> With regard to the relationship of this discursive domain to the genocide of indigenous peoples, we may turn again to the words of Cocker:

Nature was fruitful, but she was also wild and threatening, which carried profoundly negative implications for those humans who lived closest to her ... many Europeans [viewed] tribal

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<sup>20</sup> Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 14-16.

<sup>21</sup> M. Cocker, *Rivers of Blood, Rivers of Gold: Europe's Conflict with Tribal Peoples*, Pimlico, London, 1999, p. 14.

<sup>22</sup> P. Chilton, 'Manipulation, memes and metaphors: The case of *Mein Kampf*', in L. de Saussure & P. Schulz (eds), *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, language, mind*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2005, p. 30. Chilton mentions that the cognitive sciences have postulated a module for zoological categorisation as part of the human brain, which may then be related to the persistence of human racial categorisation and the 'naturalisation' of racial categories (pp. 31-33); there is also a possible connection between categorisation and the technical (tool-making) 'module' of the mind, which then allows human groups to be treated as non-human instruments (p. 40). For a thorough analysis of the use of animal dehumanisation in *Mein Kampf*, see F. Rash, 'Metaphor in Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*', *metaforik.de*, September 2005, retrieved 10 September 2008, < <http://www.metaforik.de/09/rash.pdf>>, pp. 103-106.

peoples as having retained the menacing characteristics of wild animals, as much as the natural qualities of fellow men. Time and again, Christian society defended its transgressions against tribal society on the grounds of the latter's subhuman condition.

It is perhaps as much a measure of the prevalence of such attitudes in the fifty years after Columbus' historic voyage, as it is of papal concern, that Pope Paul III issued a bull in 1537 giving the Catholic Church's official judgement that Indians were indeed 'true men', not beasts. It is equally a measure of how ineffectual such official statements were in challenging attitudes that as late as 1902 a member of the Commonwealth parliament in Australia felt able to announce that 'There is no scientific evidence that the Aborigine is a human being at all.' ... Viewing aboriginal society as beyond the pale of humanity had legal and political implications that were deeply sinister for its constituents.<sup>23</sup>

In this traditional qualitative or characteristic-oriented taxonomy, then, all animals are worth less than humans. Susan Opatow suggests that animals are very often 'outside the scope of justice'; they are 'perceived as expendable creatures that deserve neither rights nor autonomy.'<sup>24</sup> Albert Bandura has empirically demonstrated that people described in animalistic terms are treated more punitively than those invested with human qualities.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, as we will see, some animals are also less worthy of consideration than other animals.

The distinction at play here, however, is not only a vertical construction of moral worth or value in the sense of a distance from 'true' or normative humanity, but also regards the supposed behaviour of particular collectivities with regard to the threat that they may pose to worthier groups. In my research, I have found that when they are named, not as lesser

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<sup>23</sup> Cocker, pp 13-14.

<sup>24</sup> Opatow, 'Animals and the Scope of Justice', p. 72.

<sup>25</sup> Albert Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1999, p. 200.

humans, but as animals, victims of genocidal killing are most often (though not exclusively) compared to wild animals, dangerous animals, vermin and 'immoral' animals. As we will see, this is related to the threat that such animals pose. We will return to the question of why such animals are threatening; here, it is important to note that describing humans as wild animals and vermin dehumanises in a more extreme fashion than other animal terminology. Many scholars have claimed that, at least until the contemporary advent of conservation ideologies, wild animals have been owed less obligation than others. Edmund Leach argues that humans divide animals into verbal categories which 'discriminate areas of social space in terms of "distance from Ego (self)," and posits that wild animals are those which are farthest from the self.<sup>26</sup> Lynda Birke suggests that, '[i]n transforming animals from "wild" to "tame", humans reconstruct the boundary between the animal and ourselves. No longer symbolic or representative of recalcitrant nature, "taming" recasts the animal, bringing it closer to our idea of humanity.'<sup>27</sup> Given that 'vermin' also fall outside the sphere of human control, they too can be considered distant from the self. In the specific context of constructions of and harm to animals, James Serpell contends that:

In the field of social psychology, it is widely recognized that humans tend to apportion their social and moral obligations according to how close or similar others are to themselves (Deaux & Wrightsman, 1984). Thus people are more inclined to behave altruistically towards those who are familiar or related ... and are proportionately less inclined to treat these individuals in harmful ways. Conversely, people tend to feel less inhibited about harming more distant categories of individual, such as strangers or foreigners.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> E. Leach, 'Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse', in E. H. Lenneberg (ed.), *New Directions in the Study of Language*, M.I.T Press, Massachusetts, 1964, pp. 36-37. Leach is concerned with the English language. However, he argues that the principles he adduces are very general (p. 30), and, in illustration, discussed the Kachin language spoken by certain groups in northeast Burma (now Myanmar), who seem to have a parallel classificatory system in which, for example, the word *ni* means both 'near' and 'tame' (pp. 54-63).

<sup>27</sup> L. Birke, *Feminism, Animals and Science: The Naming of the Shrew*, Open University Press, Philadelphia, 1994, p. 19.

<sup>28</sup> J. A. Serpell, 'Sheep in wolves' clothing? Attitudes to animals among farmers and scientists', in F. L. Dolins (ed.), *Attitudes to Animals: Views in Animal Welfare*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 31.

Dehumanisation, as we have seen, is the purposive creation of distance-from-self; in genocide and genocidal killing the gap between perpetrator self and victim other becomes so wide that the victim falls beyond the boundary of the 'human' (a category of which the most knowable definition or manifestation is the self). In this chapter, the discursive boundary construction practices that we examine are those between humans and non-human beings (excluding plants, and microscopic life forms); and between different kinds of non-human beings. In what do these boundaries consist, and how have they been used?

'Inhibitions about the treatment of other species,' writes Thomas, 'were dispelled by the reminder that there was a fundamental difference in kind between humanity and other forms of life. The justification for this belief went back beyond Christianity to the Greeks.'<sup>29</sup> However, 'there was a marked lack of agreement as to just where man's unique superiority lay. The search for this elusive attribute has been one of the most enduring pursuits of Western philosophers ... What all such definitions have in common is that they assume a polarity between the categories 'man' and 'animal' and that they invariably regard the animal as inferior.'<sup>30</sup> A particular discursive formation which encapsulates the quest for the *nature* of such a distinction has in itself concealed the naturalisation of the posited *a priori* existence of the distinction itself.

The naturalisation of this binary differentiation has had disastrous consequences not only for animals, but for humans. 'In practice ... the aim of such definitions has often been less to distinguish men from animals than to propound some ideal of human behaviour'; 'if the essence of humanity was defined as consisting in some specific quality, then it followed that any man who did not display that quality was subhuman, semi-animal.'<sup>31</sup> Furthermore (in line with our discussion in Chapter Four regarding the nature of dehumanisation more generally)

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<sup>29</sup> Thomas, p. 30.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas, pp. 31, 41.

the ideological nature of such beliefs may not be firmly held by an individual, or in ideological rhetoric, but may be adapted to the pragmatic psychological needs of system justification in situations of dominance.<sup>32</sup>

It has been suggested that the functionality of the use of animal metaphorical terms in regard to human outgroups may be to 'show how little they matter, as a defence against sympathy.'<sup>33</sup> Michael Peters asserts that the definition of 'human'

has practical consequences since the distinction between man and the other animals has, for all practical purposes, been taken as synonymous with that between beings entitled to moral consideration and those not so entitled ... The true significance of defining 'Man' is not to tell us what a human being is ... but to rigorously bar any extension of man's rights and privileges to others ...

This kind of monopoly of privilege (such as the right to continue living, to control one's own body, etc.) by the human race is related to analogous forms of behaviour towards different races of human beings. Indeed, the connection is far more than an analogy, since any definition of 'humanity' can be used to exclude some humans who fail to match up to the conceptual criteria, or a criterion may be selected which is graded so that some human beings will be less human than others and therefore be given less of the privileges.<sup>34</sup>

'Once perceived as beasts,' writes Thomas, 'people were liable to be treated accordingly. The ethic of human dominion removed animals from the sphere of human concern. But it also legitimized the ill-treatment of those humans who were in a supposedly animal condition.'<sup>35</sup> Animals were 'outside the terms of moral reference.'<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> See Marcu, Lyons & Hegarty.

<sup>33</sup> Ekman quoted in Goatly, p. 152.

<sup>34</sup> M. Peters, 'Nature and Culture', in S. Godlovitch, R. Godlovitch & J. Harris (eds), *Animals, Men and Morals: An enquiry into the maltreatment of non-humans*, Victor Gollancz, London, 1971, p. 214.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas, p. 44.

The analysis thus far should begin to outline the way in which this animalising language is not standard or 'everyday' animal abuse of the kind heard in conversation, nor the typical insults or stereotypes which are used about a disliked individual or group (although it is related to these through the continuum of dehumanisation). Rather, it is a purposive discursive formation which is available for deployment as a resource in specific situations, shaping normative regimes of practice regarding the relationship and power dynamic between collectivities. John W. Dower, after cautioning that animal comparison is not inherently demeaning, goes on to say:

What we are concerned with here is something different: the attachment of stupid, bestial, even pestilential subhuman caricatures on the enemy, and the manner in which this blocked seeing the foe as rational or even human, and facilitated mass killing. It is, at least for most people, easier to kill animals than fellow humans.<sup>37</sup>

## II. Are All Animals Killable?

In the normative moral order which has been shaped by the aforementioned discursive practices, little, if any, moral obligation is understood to be owed by humans to animals. In drawing a connection between this conclusion and genocide, one criticism which might be raised is the fact that to animalise is not automatically to render killable. Thomas, for example, argues that '[a]nimal insults remain a feature of human discourse today. But they have lost the force they possessed in an age when beasts enjoyed no claim to moral consideration.'<sup>38</sup> A specific objection may be that, considering the value placed on certain animals, as well as the dissemination of concepts of animal welfare and animal rights, one

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<sup>36</sup> Thomas, p. 148. See also Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 38.

<sup>37</sup> J. W. Dower, *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, Pantheon Books, New York, 1986, p. 89.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas, p. 48; and see p. 119.

cannot say in a straightforward fashion that to call victims animals in general is to say that they may legitimately be killed out of hand.<sup>39</sup> However, a widespread political and philosophical conception of the concept of animal rights (as opposed to animal welfare, which still concerns itself with softening the impact of human instrumental use of animals rather than challenging such use) post-dates the majority of case studies examined here, and tends to be restricted to small groups in only a few nations. In any case, despite contemporary changes in attitude and the continuing historical value placed upon certain animals, human interests continue automatically to take *precedence* over those of animals (except in the beliefs of individuals and collectivities with little or no access to political or discursive power, generally considered to be an extreme fringe).

Just as I do not intend to argue that all animals are afforded no moral consideration whatsoever, so I do not intend to argue that there are no positive discursive associations with animality. Indeed, some perpetrators have associated themselves with positively-conceived aspects of animality, as with the notorious Serbian paramilitary group Arkan's Tigers. Many positive animal associations are related to predatoriness perceived as connected with 'virtues' like 'courage,' 'honour' or 'pride' (most notably, in the case of eagles and big cats), as well as to the positive qualities associated with dogs (also predators, and, as pack animals, relatively subservient to humans and hence 'faithful' or 'loyal'). However, as we will see in the next section, 'the animal' as a general category is not associated with any of these specific virtues. Victims are characterised either with unspecified 'animality,' or they are named as specific animal types in which positive qualities do not inhere: as Semelin puts it, in massacres the "Supernumary other" is certainly not

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<sup>39</sup> Marcu, Lyons & Hegarty suggest that 'the dilemmatic construction of the categories "animal" and "human" along such dimensions as rational autonomy and sentience suggests not only that these should be viewed as ends of a humanity continuum (cf. Demoulin et al., 2004) but also that one continuum may be not enough. Also, even if emotions and traits are placed on a humanity continuum, their places on this continuum may not always be the same, but may vary function of context or rhetorical purposes.' (p. 889)



endowed with the dignity of the European buck or African lion.<sup>40</sup> Victims of genocidal killing are not named as just any animal; they are named as particular types of animals in a way which both legitimises killing if necessary, and, when the animal is a threatening type, constructs victims as posing a threat to the in-group in a situation in which one or the other group must take precedence.<sup>41</sup> All animals may be killable, but some animals are more killable than others (*pace* Orwell).

The ideal of human ascendancy ... had implications for men's relations to each other, no less than for their treatment of the natural world. Some men were seen as useful beasts, to be curbed, domesticated and kept docile; others were vermin and predators, to be eliminated.<sup>42</sup>

### III. Animal Names: A *Génocidaire's* Bestiary

*ADALBERT: When we spotted a small group of runaways trying to escape by creeping through the mud, we called them snakes. Before the killings, we usually called them cockroaches. But during, it was more suitable to call them snakes, because of their attitude, or zeros, or dogs, because in our country we don't like dogs; in any case, they were less-than-nothings.*

*For some of us, those taunts were just minor diversions. The important thing was not to let them get away. For others, the insults were invigorating, made the job easier. The perpetrators felt more comfortable insulting and hitting crawlers in rages rather than properly upright people. Because they seemed less like us in that position.<sup>43</sup>*

*'The Japs,' a lieutenant of the 160th Infantry wrote to his parents on 26 January 1945, amidst vicious cave warfare in Luzon's Zambales Mountains, 'live like rats, squeal like pigs and act like*

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<sup>40</sup> Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 38.

<sup>41</sup> See Marcu, Lyons & Hegarty, p. 889.

<sup>42</sup> Thomas, pp. 46-47.

<sup>43</sup> J. Hatzfeld, *Machete Season: The Killers In Rwanda Speak* (trans. L. Coverdale), Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, New York, 2005, p. 132.

monkeys.' ... A booklet entitled *The Jap Soldier* made sure to tell GIs that marines fighting in the Solomons had reported the enemy to exude 'the gamey smell of animals.' Another War Department publication unabashedly likened Japanese soldiers to poisonous snakes. 'Our training led us to believe,' a private of the 5th marine Division admitted, 'That they were less than human.'<sup>44</sup>

As we have already seen, it is the element of threat which transforms a dehumanising narrative from legitimising genocide to motivating it. The distinction between the types of animal names which are used in given situations demonstrates something about the purposive use of discursive strategy. Dehumanising utterances can be legitimatory (where no element of threat is present) or motivatory (where such an element is present). For example, the Nazi politician Robert Ley wrote that it was not enough to 'take ["the Jew"] someplace' because 'that would be as if one wanted to lock a louse up somewhere in a cage ... It would find a way out, and again it [sic] come out from underneath and make you itch again.'<sup>45</sup>

At this juncture it should be noted that such utterances may also *represent* a pre-existing motivation. For example, in the case in which a colonised outgroup use violent means to resist their colonisation, utterances which represent this group as a threatening animal *represent* a motivation rather than *constituting* that motivation. However, the drawing of this line is not always clear. For example, there may be no evidence that such an outgroup are in fact planning rebellion; rather, their characterisation by the ingroup as violent and untrustworthy means that the ingroup expect and fear that they will do so (increasing the likelihood of repressive or 'pre-emptive' action against the outgroup, which in turn foments rebellious discontent). So we may divide animalising representation into three cases: dehumanisation which only legitimises; dehumanisation which directly motivates; and

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<sup>44</sup> P. Schrijvers, *The GI War Against Japan: American Soldiers in Asia and the Pacific during World War II*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, pp. 218-219.

<sup>45</sup> In J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London, 2006, p. 155.

dehumanisation which represents a motivation and which in doing so legitimises. None of this, however, invalidates either the ontological distinction between legitimisation and motivation, or the claim that motivation always legitimises, but not vice versa.

Having said this, we can turn to the question of how victims are animalised in cases of genocide and genocidal killing, and how this relates to the distinction between legitimisation and motivation, that is, to the role of dehumanisation in these events.

When outgroups are named as lesser humans or as less-than-human, the purposiveness of the discursive strategy is to legitimate, rather than to motivate. Later in this chapter we will return to examples of such utterances. In the context of killing, such language is sometimes seen, usually when victims are compared to domestic animals which are subject to slaughter; but more often, different names are employed. Specific animal names are used which tend to fall into particular categories of animal. 'Why,' asks Leach, 'should expressions like "you son of a bitch" or "you swine" carry the connotations that they do, when "you son of a kangaroo" or "you polar bear" have no meaning whatever?'<sup>46</sup> The case studies examined in this thesis beg a similar question. When I began my research, I found that in the majority of cases of genocide and massacre (as opposed to, for example, slavery and apartheid) victims were most often compared to particular types of animals: wild animals, morally offensive animals, and vermin and disease carriers. Why should this be so? The answer lies in the relationship of such constructions to a perception of threat, necessitating the elimination of victims. Each of these types of animal is constructed as threatening to human interests.

In discursive constructions of human morality and its connection to conceptions of 'human nature,' humans have projected many of their own exclusive characteristics which are

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<sup>46</sup> Leach, p. 29.

considered negative or immoral onto animals.<sup>47</sup> A binary distinction, reflecting that between the human and the non-human animal, has been constructed and naturalised *within* the human, between the allegedly exclusively 'human' aspect of the person (that is, positively-perceived virtues) and those qualities which humans supposedly share with animals. The second category of qualities have come to be understood to be characteristic or typical of the 'animal.'<sup>48</sup> Barry Lopez calls this 'theriophobia', the fear of the beast.<sup>49</sup> Characteristics and impulses perceived to be immoral or negative, like gluttony, ferocity, and sexuality, are displaced onto animals and perceived as the lower, 'animal' aspect of the human psyche.<sup>50</sup> Birke identifies this process in stating that "'beasts" clearly have considerable rhetorical power in the English language. They symbolize our denial of aspects of ourselves that we don't like.'<sup>51</sup> 'False and contemptuous' animalised terms not only construct the 'animal' as threatening and/or immoral; they are also used 'to establish and maintain emotional distance from other animals. This distance permits abuse without commensurate guilt. Humans blame their nonhuman victims.'<sup>52</sup> Negative constructions of the 'animal' are enshrined in the (English) lexicon: Peter Singer observes that '[t]o say that people are "humane" is to say that they are kind; to say that they are "bestial," "brutal," or simply that they behave "like

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<sup>47</sup> Harriet Ritvo suggests that human constructions of animals in all fields of research are often 'extended, if unacknowledged, metonymy, offering participants a concealed forum for the expression of opinions and worries imported from human culture' (H. Ritvo, 'The Animal Connection', in J. J. Sheehan & M. Sosna (eds), *The Boundaries of Humanity: Humans, Animals, Machines*, University of California Press, Berkeley/Los Angeles/Oxford, 1991, p. 70).

<sup>48</sup> See Goatly, p. 150, for a list of metaphorical-linguistic associations with the 'animal'.

<sup>49</sup> B. H. Lopez, *Of Wolves and Men*, J. M. Dent & Sons, London, 1978, p. 140.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas, pp. 40-41; see also J. Dunayer, 'Sexist Words, Speciesist Roots', in C. J. Adams & J. Donovan (eds), *Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations*, Duke University Press, Durham/London, 1995, pp. 17-18. Ironically, many actions considered 'bestial', such as torture for its own sake or mass killing of a group targeted as such, are for the most part practised, intra-species, *only* by humans (and, some claim, by our closest relatives, primates).

<sup>51</sup> Birke, p. 18.

<sup>52</sup> Dunayer, p. 18.

animals” is to say that they are cruel and nasty. We rarely stop to consider that the animal who kills with the least reason to do so is the human animal.<sup>53</sup>

This anthropomorphic conceptualisation of ‘the animal’ in general, and its direct relation to normative morality regarding characteristic action, allows specific animals to be blamed for the putative threat they pose to humans. This process is evident, for example, in the Nazi propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (‘The Eternal Jew’), in which Jews were compared to rats, but rats described anthropomorphically as ‘cunning, cowardly, and cruel.’<sup>54</sup> The negative general construction of the ‘animal’ has not only had catastrophic consequences for animals themselves, but has allowed the strategic possibility for humans who are named as animals to be automatically attributed with these ‘animal’ characteristics.

In discursive terms, some animals have become particular repositories for attributed characteristics which are threatening, either physically or morally. Colin Legum insists that the process in which ‘there is official sanction for talking about a minority group in non-human terms ... seems essential to provide some kind of justification for dealing with other human beings as one would treat dangerous animals – by eliminating them’;<sup>55</sup> Leo Kuper recognises that ‘[s]ome ... animal descriptions or animal analogies seem specially designed to awaken horror and to elicit fear, as in the image of the octopus-like tentacles reaching out.’<sup>56</sup> Given this perspective, then, I will examine in turn each of the categories of threatening animal mentioned in the introduction to this chapter – ‘lesser’ creatures, wild animals, vermin, and loathsome animals – in order to understand the nature of the threat they are

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<sup>53</sup> Singer, p. 222. As we have seen elsewhere, even a scholar such as Albert Bandura, who has empirically demonstrated that ‘animalised’ people are more punitively treated than ‘humanised’ people, refers to harmful intra-human acts as ‘inhumanities.’

<sup>54</sup> A similar process takes place with regard to disease organisms: see A. Musolff, ‘What role do metaphors play in racial prejudice? The function of antisemitic imagery in Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 41, no. 1, 2007, pp. 38-39.

<sup>55</sup> In Kuper, p. 86.

<sup>56</sup> Kuper, p. 88.

constructed as posing. Having done this, I will go on to provide examples demonstrating the existence in various different episodes of these types of animalising utterances.

To begin, I discuss the naming of outgroups as less than human or as lesser humans, a category which legitimises but does not, in itself, motivate (although it may be related to motivation, as, for example, when it is believed that these inferior, animal-like creatures reproduce more prolifically than 'truer' humans and thus pose a threat in this regard; an example is the statement by a Serb soldier fighting in the siege of Sarajevo to the journalist Ed Vulliamy that 'their [Muslim] women are bitches and whores. They breed like animals, more than ten per woman...'<sup>57</sup>).

I next turn to the subject of threatening animals. Wild animals, in the first place, lie outside the sphere of human control, and are thus unpredictable and potentially dangerous to person and property. According to Leach, wild animals are not only furthest-from-self, they are also perceived as hostile.<sup>58</sup> Predators such as wolves and snakes, furthermore, are not only dangerous, but also, through anthropomorphisation, are conceived as behaving in ways which are treacherous and immoral.<sup>59</sup> The use of the wild animal metaphor is seen particularly often, though by no means exclusively, in the genocide of tribal peoples. As Kuper observes, '[h]unters and gatherers have been a frequent repository of images borrowed from the bestiary. Described as animals, they have been hunted down like animals.'<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> C. Carmichael, *Ethnic cleansing in the Balkans: nationalism and the destruction of tradition*, Routledge, London, 2002, p. 33.

<sup>58</sup> Leach, p. 45.

<sup>59</sup> See, for example, Coates, p. 173. For a list of negative metaphorical-linguistic associations with the reptilian, see Goatly, p. 151.

<sup>60</sup> Kuper, p. 88.

Existing outside the sphere of human control, vermin are also wild: Birke views vermin as 'animals whose wildness we seek to eliminate by eliminating the animal itself.'<sup>61</sup> The dictionary definition of 'vermin', Leach notes, is 'comprehensively ambiguous: mammals and birds injurious to game, crops, etc; foxes, weasels, rats, mice, moles, owls, noxious insects, fleas, bugs, lice, parasitic worms, vile persons.'<sup>62</sup> Here we have a very clear example of the power of utterance to construct that which it ostensibly only describes: 'vermin' are *by definition* animals which are injurious to person or property. Apart from the threat they thus pose, Leach suggests another explanation for the loathsomeness of animals generally considered vermin: in English, '[a]ll creatures that are edible are fish or birds or beasts. There is a large residue of creatures, rated as either *reptiles* or *insects*, but the whole of this ambiguous residue is rated as not food. All reptiles and insects seem to be thought of as evil enemies of mankind and liable to the most ruthless extermination.'<sup>63</sup> 'Vermin' is an anomalous category which cuts across established boundaries. Thus, vermin, to use Mary Douglas' concept, are matter out of place: they are dirty.<sup>64</sup> The dirtiness of vermin manifests itself in the role they play as disease carriers (and thus this category of animalisation is closely related to the medicalised biopolitical model discussed in the previous chapter).

The next category of animals discussed here are animals which, while not falling into the other categories, have somehow been constructed as immoral, dirty and disgusting. When humans are compared to these animals, it is not in the first instance human life or property which is threatened, but rather the 'moral values' or moral schema of a society, represented as essential to its survival. One has only to think of the stereotype of the Jew as a greedy financier, or as a seducer of Christian or 'Aryan' women, to see that a people may be

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<sup>61</sup> Birke, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Leach, p. 45.

<sup>63</sup> Leach, pp. 41-42, original italics; Leach excludes only the bee from this category. See also Thomas, p. 57.

<sup>64</sup> M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An analysis of concept of pollution and taboo* (new edn), Routledge, London, 2002, pp. 44-45. For the demonization of lice and other insect parasites in European medical discourse from the 1890s onward, see P. J. Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide in Eastern Europe 1890-1945*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 6.

represented as a threat not only to the actual physical lives of those within the perpetrator society, but to the moral order of that society.<sup>65</sup> These groups threaten not individuals within a society (or not only), but the society (or indeed 'civilisation' itself) from within, through moral corruption and moral perversion. In the case studies I present, two animals fall into this category: pigs and dogs.

Pigs are immoral for their putative filth and greed;<sup>66</sup> comparison to the pig also holds a special sting for Jews and Muslims as a forbidden animal. Leach notes that not only is the pig a general scavenger, but also that, in contrast to other domestic animals reared for wool, or milk, or eggs, as well as for meat, pigs are bred 'for the sole purpose of killing and eating them, and this is a rather shameful thing, a shame which quickly attaches to the pig itself.'<sup>67</sup> Pigs, that is, are both shamefully dirty, and inherently 'killable' in a way that pets and other 'farm' animals are not.

Dogs are considered dirty, lustful and immoral in many cultures, even those which in other interpretations place great value upon them.<sup>68</sup> In England, for example, writes Thomas, '[t]he Eastern view of dogs as filthy scavengers had been transmitted via the Bible to medieval England and was still widely current in the sixteenth century. The Book of Revelations suggested that dogs, like other unclean beings, would be excluded from the New Jerusalem,' and dogs were sometimes even classified as 'vermin.'<sup>69</sup> Dogs, in their negative aspect, are lustful, cowardly and lazy (as well as 'wild' or 'mad'). They are also dirty, because they have no 'horror of excrement and no shame about their sexual functions';<sup>70</sup> verbally, they are often invoked as objects of contempt, and as creatures who are treated, in the

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<sup>65</sup> See Musolff, pp. 39-41.

<sup>66</sup> See Goatly, p. 151, for a list of English negative metaphorical-linguistic associations with the porcine.

<sup>67</sup> Leach, pp. 50-51.

<sup>68</sup> See Goatly, p. 150, for a list of English negative metaphorical-linguistic associations with the canine.

<sup>69</sup> Thomas, p. 105.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas, pp. 150-151.



general order of things, as the lowest of the low ('one wouldn't treat a dog that way').<sup>71</sup> The same connotations of dirtiness and shameful behaviour which attach to the pig also, in certain constructions, inhere in the dog.

Finally, the category of immoral animals includes creatures which are considered sinful or evil (for the Western or Christian perpetrators in the episodes examined here) because of religious or supernatural associations: the goat, the snake and the vampire bat.

Ultimately, the representation in utterance of a victim group as any of these types constructs them as a serious threat to the fabric of the perpetrator society in a way which means that their destruction is viewed as legitimate, as necessary, and as self-defence.

Having reviewed examples of these utterances, I will then return to an animalising type which, like the view of outgroups as lesser humans, does not make reference to specific threatening animals, but which, like the view of outgroups as specific animals, does inherently refer to their destruction as proper in the scheme of things: the view of outgroups as 'fauna' who may either be wild or tame (and are therefore to be treated accordingly), and who may be killed for 'sport and game.' Before concluding, I will mention in brief two related issues: that of perpetrators' utterances drawing a connection between their own identity or actions and animality; and that of animal naming in episodes of mass subjugation (which have also involved killing) such as slavery and apartheid. Examination of these issues will shed light both upon animalisation as such, and upon dehumanisation as a differentiated process occurring in the genocidal and non-genocidal context.

Before embarking upon this enumeration, however, we must briefly consider the problem of the huge cultural differences which exist between different collectivities in regard to

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<sup>71</sup> Thomas, pp. 150-151.

conceptions and constructions of ‘the animal,’ and between collective constructions of different animals.

#### IV. Attitudes to Animals and Cultural Difference

The material on attitudes towards animals presented here is for the most part analysis of language and culture in the European Judeo-Christian tradition. Many of the episodes I examine have taken place at the hands of European perpetrators; but by no means all. Some of the analytic material presented, such as the work of Thomas, is specific to the European and even the British historical circumstance; other analysis, such as that of Leach, may reveal patterns which occur both in Western and non-Western societies. While attitudes to animals vary greatly from culture to culture, from the research I have undertaken it seems to me that the *pattern* of animal naming which I discuss – that is, this particular discursive formation employed strategically in relationship to a particular practice toward an outgroup – is common to Western and non-Western cultures, although the specific animal names used to vilify may differ from culture to culture. The concept of genocide itself is, as we have seen, intimately related to Western modernity, and is perhaps inconceivable outside the ideological framework of the models of the modern Western nation-state and biological or bureaucratic essentialisation of identity (models which have been disseminated on a global scale). Furthermore, in many of the episodes I examine where perpetrators are non-Western (for example, Rwandan, Japanese, and Cambodian perpetrators) colonisation or Western cultural-ideological influence have played a highly significant role.

The non-Western examples presented here in themselves shed light on constructions of particular animals in the perpetrator societies: Rwandan Tutsi, for example, ‘will be crushed like cockroaches,’ and an operation to kill Tutsi is code-named ‘Insecticide.’ We can infer

from this evidence that attitudes toward cockroaches in Rwandan and European cultures are not too dissimilar.<sup>72</sup> From the way this naming takes place, that is, we may infer attitudes not only toward the victim groups but also toward the animals whose names are used to vilify. Unfortunately there is no space here to investigate whether a similar process takes place in societies in which values of vegetarianism or non-violence toward animals have been influential (for example, whether, during Partition violence in the Indian subcontinent, Hindu perpetrators named their victims as animals). In such circumstances, the applicability of my model may be judged on an individual basis; but I have included enough culturally and geographically diverse cases here to indicate that these cases may be considered exceptional, and to demonstrate the wide applicability of my argument concerning the functions of animal naming.

## V. Animalisation

### Va. Sub-humans, Lesser Humans, and Non-people

The category of 'sub-human' does not directly 'animalise' the victim group as such. However, it is worth noting the episodes of genocide in which this representation of victims has taken place hand in hand with animalisation, and the way in which (as we have seen) it legitimises killing. After all, what is a 'sub-human' if not an inferior living creature to which lesser or no obligation is owed?

We have already mentioned – and will see in the various sections below – that biological racism, as well as concepts around hierarchies of 'civilisation,' very often defined colonised peoples as somehow less 'human' than the colonisers. Indeed, the reasons for collectives

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<sup>72</sup> On the cultural comparison of metaphorical systems, see Lakoff & Johnson, pp. 154-155.

being depicted as 'not-true-people' or 'less-than-true-people' vary widely, from biology, to culture, to technology, to the concept of property. As Cocker observes,

[s]ometimes the sum of Europe's greater achievement was the opportunity to treat tribal societies as animals without masters, or as a worthless species to be eliminated like vermin ... Technological and cultural progress was seen as a measure of the distance between man and his simian origins. It separated him from the apes of the forest. It was his triumph over the limitations of nature and time, and carried implications of moral and spiritual improvement ... Europe's ingrained perception of human culture as a linear development had deeply sinister implications for those who seemed not to be making the same progressive journey ... white colonial officials even in this century believed the Aborigines had failed to achieve full humanity.<sup>73</sup>

However, this type of utterance is not confined to episodes of colonial killing. It is well known that the National Socialists called conquered Slavic peoples *Untermenschen*, sub-humans, but not so well known that in Democratic Kampuchea the captive urban populations were given a similar moniker (*anoupacheachun*).<sup>74</sup> American attitudes toward the Japanese during the Second World War also demonstrate this type of rhetoric:

Asked in a postwar Army survey how he had regarded Japanese troops, a former sergeant of the 132nd Infantry curtly replied: 'Our hatred for the Japanese increased. We thought of them as the lowest form of life. So what did I think of them as people? They were not people.' ... 'If the Japs were not like animals,' a sailor, frustrated by the prolonged battle for Saipan, noted in his diary in June 1944, 'they would have given up a long time ago because their cause is hopeless.'<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Cocker, p 362.

<sup>74</sup> B. Kiernan, 'Twentieth-Century Genocides: Underlying Ideological Themes from Armenia to East Timor', in R. Gellately & B. Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 33.

<sup>75</sup> Schrijvers, p. 218.

Norman Cigar has documented in detail the way in which this process took place in the former Yugoslavia, particularly through the agency of Serbian Orientalist scholars specialising in the study of Islam:

Overall, Muslims, as well as Croats, were depicted routinely as virtually non-people, essentially being labelled – with little historical basis – as Serbs who had converted to Islam or Catholicism, respectively, but who were lacking consciousness of their very roots and identity ... Some Serbian intellectuals went even further and interjected a clear tinge of racism into their arguments. One of them, Dragoš Kalajić, dismissed Bosnia's Muslims as 'not belonging to the European family of nations' ... Yugoslavia's ['semi-Arab'] Muslims allegedly exhibit a long list of inherited character flaws... 'simply put, the semi-Arab is not capable of understanding the essence of one of the most basic traits of the European, namely the uniqueness of personal freedom which is fundamentally above any collectivity' ...

In general, Serbian scholars taxed Islam and Muslims with being retrograde and a threat to modern civilization, both in general terms and to Serbia specifically. Miroljub Jevtić, a political scientist and specialist on Islam at Belgrade University, was perhaps the most active proponent of such ideas. He claimed that Islamic 'fundamentalists,' a label he applied freely to any Muslim, are little more than a reflection of the 'darkness of the past.' They understand 'slavery and equality, not the way a civilized person does, but rather the way their God understands it' ... Behind every action by the Muslims lay an alleged master plan to undermine Serbia.<sup>76</sup>

The attempt to redefine the Serbian self-image from the 1980s resulted in the drawing of

a Manichaeian contrast between Serbs and others – a lopsided philosophy of dualism in which the Serbs monopolized all such positive virtues as bravery, tolerance, long-suffering patience,

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<sup>76</sup> N. Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of 'Ethnic Cleansing'*, Texas A & M University Press, Texas, 1995, pp. 26-28.

superior morality, culture, and even intelligence ... For yet another nationalist leader, Šešelj, the Serbs are 'a historical people in the true sense of the word, unlike the Slovenes and the Croatians. When I say that, I am following good old Hegel, to the effect that a people is historical if it knows how to build its own state, and how to defend it.'<sup>77</sup>

Sources of authority constantly reiterated the message that these outgroups 'represented all that is base, undesirable, and naturally subordinate.'<sup>78</sup>

In the former Yugoslavia, these types of utterances continued during the genocidal period, providing 'added scholarly explanation and vindication for war crimes ... Another Serbian academic, Nada Todorov, even purported to see the Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina as motivated by their "Islamic way of life, which has nothing in common with European civilization."<sup>79</sup> Like others, Todorov used the pseudo-medical terminology of psychoanalysis to explain Muslim 'barbarism' (in a classic example of the function of the type of medicalised rhetoric we have explored in the previous chapter).

In all of these episodes and others, however, the general naming of victims as a different and inferior form of humanity tends to be accompanied by representations which represent them as specific types of animals.

## Vb. Vermin

*In A Common Humanity I say that no human being, no matter how foul their actions might be, can rightly be killed in the spirit of ridding the world of vermin. A student responded by saying that*

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<sup>77</sup> Cigar, pp. 73-75.

<sup>78</sup> Cigar, pp. 73-75.

<sup>79</sup> Cigar p. 70.

perhaps 'vermin' should never be killed in the spirit of ridding the world of vermin. Perhaps he was right.

—Raimond Gaita<sup>80</sup>

The categories of disease organisms and 'vermin' cannot always be discretely separated.<sup>81</sup> Each category calls for the cleansing of dirt. In Rwanda, for example, Tutsi 'cockroaches' required 'a big clean up.'<sup>82</sup> Sometimes the link is directly drawn in perpetrator discourse. Herbert Hirsch and Roger W. Smith cite the testimony of a Jewish smuggler who escaped from the Warsaw Ghetto: 'When I was in Aryan Warsaw, I sometimes tried, in spite of the danger, to tear down the large posters showing a hideous Jew with a louse-ridden beard. 'Jew-louse-typhoid,' it said. We were germ carriers, vermin.'<sup>83</sup> According to Jean Hatzfeld, in Rwanda

[t]he elements of anti-Tutsi propaganda are strangely similar to those of anti-Semitic propaganda – in singling out physical characteristics (low or high foreheads, hooked or straight noses, crooked or slender fingers); psychological qualifiers relating to cowardice, slyness and treachery; and allusions to greed and arrogance. Equivalent terms sum up this correspondence: parasites and cockroaches.<sup>84</sup>

After the medicalised type we explored in the previous chapter, the category of 'vermin' can be considered the next most extreme characterisation of a target group as unworthy of life. As Singer observes, '[n]o consideration at all is given to the interests of the 'pests'— the very word 'pest' seems to exclude any concern for the animals themselves.'<sup>85</sup>

<sup>80</sup> R. Gaita, *The Philosopher's Dog*, Text, Melbourne, 2002, p. 205.

<sup>81</sup> See, for example, Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 39.

<sup>82</sup> Kiernan, 'Twentieth-Century Genocides', p. 33.

<sup>83</sup> H. Hirsch & R. W. Smith, 'The Language of Extermination in Genocide', in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Genocide: A Critical Bibliographic Review*, vol. 2, Mansell, London, 1991, p. 389.

<sup>84</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 209.

<sup>85</sup> Singer, p. 233.

At times the term 'vermin' or 'pests' is used in general. According to George Steiner, in occupied Warsaw during the Second World War '[t]he men who poured quicklime down the openings of the sewers ... to kill the living and stifle the stink of the dead wrote home about it. They spoke of having to "liquidate vermin."'86 Hirsch argues that the Aryan myth, with accompanying propaganda, 'effectively functioned to dehumanize the potential victims and justify their extermination. It is legitimate to kill vermin. In essence, this was the key to the creation of a target population for which extermination was justifiable.'87

In Democratic Kampuchea victims were referred to as 'pests buried within' and traitors 'boring in.'88 During the Second World War, General Sir Thomas Blamey, in a 1943 speech to his troops, after comparing the Japanese to apes went on to say that '[y]ou know that we have to exterminate these vermin if we and our families are to live ... We must go on to the end if civilization is to survive. We must exterminate the Japanese.'89 In Queensland in colonial Australia, white colonists considered indigenous people 'vermin,' 'loathsome' and 'scarcely human.'90 In 1883 Arthur Hamilton Gordon, the British High Commissioner, wrote privately to William Gladstone, the English Prime Minister, that

[t]he habit of regarding the natives as vermin, to be cleared off the face of the earth, has given the average Queenslander a tone of brutality and cruelty in dealing with 'blacks' which it is very difficult to anyone who does not *know* it, as I do, to realise ... I have heard men of culture and refinement, of the greatest humanity and kindness to their fellow whites ... talk, not only of the *wholesale* butchery ... but of the *individual* murder of natives, exactly as they would talk of a day's sport, or having to kill some troublesome animal.<sup>91</sup>

<sup>86</sup> G. Steiner, *Language and Silence: Essays 1958-1966*, Penguin, Middlesex, 1969, p. 141.

<sup>87</sup> H. Hirsch, 'Why People Kill: Conditions for Participation in Mass Murder', in H. Hirsch & J. D. Spiro (eds), *Persistent Prejudice: Perspectives on Anti-Semitism*, George Mason University Press, Virginia, 1988, p. 45.

<sup>88</sup> Kiernan, 'Twentieth-Century Genocides', p. 33.

<sup>89</sup> Dower, p. 71.

<sup>90</sup> C. Tatz, *With Intent To Destroy: Reflecting on Genocide*, Verso, London, 2003, p. 79.

<sup>91</sup> In Tatz, *With Intent To Destroy*, p. 79; original italics.



While these instances give examples where the term 'vermin' is used as a *general* description, in other instances, reference to *specific* verminous animals is made.

### Vermin: Rodents

To call a human a rat is a familiar and a well-established metaphor.<sup>92</sup> Perhaps the most infamous instance of Nazi verminisation of Jews is the 'documentary' film *Der ewige Jude*, made between 1939 and 1940. This film showed images of swarming rats, with the following narration (which also demonstrates the link between victims depicted as animals and as disease organisms):

Wherever rats appear they bring ruin, by destroying mankind's goods and foodstuffs. They spread disease and plague such as leprosy, typhoid fever, cholera and dysentery. They are cunning, cowardly and cruel, and are found mostly in large packs. They represent craftiness and subterranean destruction— just like the Jews among other human beings.<sup>93</sup>

Unlike *Jud Süß*, the fictional antisemitic film of the same period, *Der ewige Jude* was a commercial failure, although it was required viewing for many Nazi institutional organisations. However, as we have seen elsewhere, the purposiveness of this work was not so much to instil antisemitism in the German public, as to suggest a solution to a problem which, it had already been accepted, existed in fact. Stig Hornshøj-Møller writes

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<sup>92</sup> See Goatly, p. 151, for a list of metaphorical-linguistic associations with the rodent. See also C. Tileagă, 'Ideologies of moral exclusion: A critical discursive reframing of depersonalization, delegitimization and dehumanisation', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 46, 2007, pp. 730-731.

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in S. Hornshøj-Møller, 'Propaganda and Produced Reality in the Holocaust', in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ABC-CLIO, California, 1999, p. 473.

that this film, along with *Jud Süß*, 'was used to legitimize the annihilation of European Jewry to the German public.'<sup>94</sup>

During the Second World War, the Japanese were also characterised as rodent vermin, not only in wartime propaganda, but by officials and military leaders. This image by no means applied only to combatants: during the internment of Japanese-Americans the governor of Idaho, opposed to having evacuees brought to his state, declared, 'a good solution to the Jap problem would be to send them all back to Japan, then sink the island. They live like rats, breed like rats and act like rats.'<sup>95</sup>

#### Vermin: Insects<sup>96</sup>

*IGNACE: We called them 'cockroaches,' an insect that chews up clothing and nests in it, so you have to squash hard to get rid of them. We didn't want any more Tutsis on our land. We imagined an existence without them. At first, we favored getting rid of them without actually killing them. If they had agreed to leave – for Burundi or other likely destinations – they could have gone and saved their lives. And we wouldn't have piled up the fatalities of the massacres. But they couldn't imagine living there without their ancient traditions and their herds of cows. That pushed us toward the machetes.'*<sup>97</sup>

The most extreme example of the 'insectisation' of victims occurred during the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda. Rwandan Tutsi were the victims of periodic massacres throughout the second half of the twentieth century, culminating in the genocide of the mid-1990s. The

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<sup>94</sup> Hornshøj-Møller, p. 472.

<sup>95</sup> Dower, p. 92.

<sup>96</sup> See Goatly, p. 151, for a list of English negative metaphorical-linguistic associations with the insect.

<sup>97</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 231. Note that here, as in the colonial context, the aim is to clear the victims from the land one way or another; however, since they're not considered human equals, killing is one acceptable means. For more examples of 'crushing' Tutsi 'cockroaches' see Hatzfeld, pp. 15, 100, 113, 219.

term *inyenzi*, cockroaches, was originally used as a self-description by guerrilla Tutsi groups who invaded the country in the 1960s, and by the predominantly Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) rebels. However, the word came to be used as perhaps the foremost pejorative term of abuse for any Tutsi, and for Tutsi as a group.<sup>98</sup> As a term used to mean both 'Tutsi' in general and 'insurgent' specifically, it served to characterise all Tutsi as a literal threat. In 1992, Leon Mugesera, an anti-Tutsi propagandist, made a speech to members of the then-ruling MRND party, in which he insisted that the RPF (and thus, according to the meaning implicit in anti-Tutsi propaganda, Tutsi in general) must be called *Inyenzi*, never the more respectful *Inkotanyi* (a term the rebel groups had chosen to call themselves, but one which would also be used to label all Tutsi as dangerous traitors), and labelled the opponent 'vermin' that must be 'liquidated.'<sup>99</sup> Genocidal anti-Tutsi propaganda was distributed through newspapers and radio stations, in particular Radio Television Libres des Mille Collines (RTLM) which began broadcasting in 1993.<sup>100</sup> *Kangura*, a prominent anti-Tutsi propaganda newspaper, published an article in March 1993 entitled 'A cockroach cannot give birth to a butterfly.' The article read, in part:

We began by saying that a cockroach cannot give birth to a butterfly. It is true. A cockroach gives birth to another cockroach ... The history of Rwanda shows us clearly that

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<sup>98</sup> R. Melson, 'Modern Genocide in Rwanda: Ideology, Revolution, War, and Mass Murder in an African State', in R. Gellately & B. Kiernan (eds), *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2003, p. 333; P. Gourevitch, *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda*, Farrar Straus & Giroux, New York, 1998, p. 32.

<sup>99</sup> Des Forges, pp. 84-86. The MRND (Movement Révolutionnaire pour le Développement, later Mouvement Républicain national pour la démocratie et de développement) under President Juvenál Habyarimana ruled Rwanda as a single-party state from 1973 until 1991, and continued to rule in a multiparty state until 1994, when Habyarimana was killed when his plane was shot down. Responsibility for this crime has never been established, but it allowed the Hutu Power movement to seize power and implement the genocide. Hutu Power was, however, closely intertwined with the MRND; the MRND militia, the *Interahamwe*, were to play an important role in the killings. Thus, while Habyarimana himself did not implement the genocide, the actions of the MRND in the years before 1994 created the preconditions for genocide. For a detailed account of the historical conditions for genocide in Rwanda see A. Des Forges, "Leave None To Tell The Story": *Genocide in Rwanda*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1999, pp. 3-178.

<sup>100</sup> Gourevitch, p. 99.

a Tutsi stays always exactly the same, that he has never changed. The malice, the evil are just as we knew them in the history of our country. We are not wrong in saying that a cockroach gives birth to another cockroach. Who could tell the difference between the Inyenzi who attacked in October 1990 and those of the 1960s. They are all linked ... their evilness is the same.<sup>101</sup>

According to Rwandan military sources, an operation designed to strike behind RPF lines was code-named 'Operation Insecticide,' 'meaning an operation to exterminate the inyenzi or "cockroaches."' <sup>102</sup> Philip Gourevitch quotes one RTLM broadcast in 1994 in which the broadcaster stated '[y]ou cockroaches must know you are made of flesh ... We won't let you kill. We will kill you.'<sup>103</sup> When James Orbinski, a Canadian physician, attempted to evacuate an orphanage, he met a Rwandan officer who said '[t]hese people are POWs, and as far as I'm concerned they're insects, and they'll be crushed like insects.'<sup>104</sup>

Insect imagery has been used in other episodes of genocide. In 1864 at Sand Creek in Indiana, troops commanded by Colonel John Chivington 'slaughtered 100 to 500 unarmed women and children and scalped nearly all of them.'<sup>105</sup> Chivington campaigned to 'kill and scalp all, little and big,' because 'Nits make lice'; 'the phrase became a rallying cry of his troops.'<sup>106</sup> As David E. Stannard writes, '[c]learly, Colonel Chivington was a man ahead of his time. It would be more than half a century, after all, before Heinrich Himmler would think to describe the extermination of another people as "the same thing as delousing."<sup>107</sup> Jews were often described as 'lice' in National Socialist Germany: in the words of Joseph

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted in Des Forges, pp. 73-74.

<sup>102</sup> Des Forges, p. 666.

<sup>103</sup> Gourevitch, p. 114.

<sup>104</sup> In Gourevitch, p. 134.

<sup>105</sup> D. E. Stannard, *American Holocaust: The Conquest of the New World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 131.

<sup>106</sup> Stannard, p. 131.

<sup>107</sup> Stannard, p. 131.

Goebbels, '[t]hey have to be exterminated somehow; otherwise they will again play their tormenting and annoying role. Only if one proceeds against them with the necessary brutality will we be finished with them. When you spare them, you subsequently become their victim.'<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, this rhetoric was not restricted to Jews, but also applied to other peoples such as Poles.<sup>109</sup> Julius Streicher's infamous, influential and much-imitated propaganda paper, *Der Stürmer*, depicted Jews as insects and also as spiders, not only vermin, but morally offensive in their use of poison and cunning entrapment.<sup>110</sup> Ernst Hiemer, a contributor to *Der Stürmer*, wrote a book of children's stories, *The Poodlepugdachshundpinscher* (the title refers to the dangers of 'race mixing'), in which Jews were compared to (among other things) locusts, bedbugs and drones.<sup>111</sup>

The insect image was also prominent in the case of Allied characterisations of the Japanese. Robert Sherrod quotes a veteran marine en route to Tarawa as saying that getting the enemy out of his holes would be 'like pulling a tick out of a rug.'<sup>112</sup> When, in the early stages of the Guadalcanal campaign, the men of the 1st Marine Division met not the ferocious Japanese troops they had been led to expect, but only Korean laborers (themselves subject to Japanese imperialism), they unleashed their pent-up hatred against these harmless workers instead. 'Contact with termites were also witnessed,' one intelligence report mentioned, 'and more of these laborers might have been taken alive if eager marines had not shot them as soon as spotted.'<sup>113</sup>

According to Dower, '[e]specially during the last few years of the war, "exterminationist" figures of speech did become a stock way of referring to the killing of the Japanese, not only

<sup>108</sup> Herf, p. 121; see also, for example, Hirsch, 'Why People Kill', p. 45; Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide*, pp. 276-277; on Jews as 'insects' and 'grasshoppers' see also Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide*, p. 71.

<sup>109</sup> See for example Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide*, pp. 272-273.

<sup>110</sup> R. L. Bytwerk, *Julius Streicher*, Stein & Day, New York, 1983, pl. 25.

<sup>111</sup> Bytwerk, p. 105.

<sup>112</sup> In Schrijvers, p. 218.

<sup>113</sup> Schrijvers, p. 219.

in battle but also in the cities of Japan's home islands,' by political and military leaders as well as in popular usage.<sup>114</sup> Dower cites, among other examples, a cartoon in the military paper *Leatherneck* which 'depicted common afflictions suffered by the Marines in the Pacific and concluded with "Louseous Japonicus," a grotesque insect with slanted eyes and protruding teeth ...' It was explained that the Marines had been given 'the giant task of extermination ... Flamethrowers, mortars, grenades and bayonets have proven to be an effective remedy. But before a complete cure may be effected the origin of the plague, the breeding grounds around the Tokyo area, must be completely annihilated.'<sup>115</sup>

#### Vermin: Birds

At first glance, birds may not seem particularly threatening to humans.<sup>116</sup> In certain circumstances, however, they are not only wild, but fall into the category of pests and vermin. Indigenous Australians were notably characterised as sparrows, birds considered pests and a threat to crops, and particularly as crows, birds which were both pests and black in colour. In Tasmania in the nineteenth century, European settlers often referred to Aborigines as "crows" or "black crows" or "black vermin";<sup>117</sup> and 'crow' hunting was sometimes combined with a country picnic *en famille*.<sup>118</sup> In an unexpected parallel, Cigar cites a slogan used in Serbian nationalist rallies organized by Slobodan Milošević in the late 1980s which used the same image: 'Oh Muslims, you black crows, Tito is no longer around to protect you!'<sup>119</sup> (Cathie Carmichael comments that '[b]lack crows are a symbol of bad

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<sup>114</sup> Dower, p. 90-91.

<sup>115</sup> Dower, p. 91.

<sup>116</sup> See Goatly, p. 151, for a list of English negative metaphorical-linguistic associations with the avian.

<sup>117</sup> Cocker, p. 127.

<sup>118</sup> Cocker, p. 148.

<sup>119</sup> Cigar, p. 34.

luck in South Slavonic culture, somewhat similar to magpies in Western Europe'<sup>120</sup>). Victims have even been compared to birds considered morally offensive: Jews were depicted in *Der Stürmer* as vultures, and in *The Poodlepugdachshundpinscher* as cuckoos as well as sparrows.<sup>121</sup>

Victims may be depicted as various different forms of animal parasites, pests, or vermin. As all of the examples given above demonstrate, however, in every case this imagery serves to present the victim group not only as repulsive, but as threatening; and a dual purpose is served both by using threat to construct killing as legitimate, and by creating a connection of identity between victims and animals which are commonly killed (because of the threat they pose to human activities) as part of everyday experience.

### Vc. Morally Offensive Animals

#### Morally Offensive Animals: Pigs

The naming of victims as pigs occurs most prominently in a period, not of genocide, but of genocidal killing, that enacted upon Jews in medieval Europe, in which they were periodically the target of pogroms and murderous crusades. A Christian tradition of animal abuse towards Jews has a long history; such abuse is prevalent, for example, in the writings of John Chrysostom, who had this to say about Jews: 'beasts unfit for work, they are fit for killing ... fit for slaughter.'<sup>122</sup> Porcine vilification of Jews found expression in the medieval *Judensau* image, found commonly in German-speaking areas of Europe. This was a pictorial motif of Jews suckling from a sow's udders and eating and drinking pig excrement, which was

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<sup>120</sup> Carmichael, p. 123n5.

<sup>121</sup> Bytwerk, p. 105.

<sup>122</sup> For this as well as other examples see M. Lazar, 'The Lamb and the Scapegoat: The Dehumanization of the Jews in Medieval Propaganda Imagery', in S. L. Gilman & S. T. Katz (eds), *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, New York University Press, New York, 1991, pp. 47-48.

depicted in architecture and painting at places of worship, on public structures such as bridges, and in printed material.

The association of Jews with pigs was one tailored to offend in light of kosher laws which regard the pig as unclean; yet there was more to the image than this. The *Judensau* does not literally represent Jews as pigs, but a very clear association is made.

The attitude expressed in the *Judensau* towards the Jews is not just scurrilous. There was a further element or sub-motif present in all its representations: the Jews belong to the sow, the sow to the Jews. These people, in other words, belong to another and abominable category of beings; they are the sow's offspring and turn to their mother for their proper nourishment ... The Jews are, by this association with the animal, implicitly but clearly labelled as not being human 'like us': not, as the German would put it, *unsereiner* ... it seems that in the intimate association of Jews and sow there is an element similar to such verbal animal-abuse as 'son of a bitch'. Both essentially transfer hated persons to a distinctly different and loathsome natural category – by implication sanctioning aggression, and then in itself expressing an aggressive attitude ... It seems clear that the *Judensau* – honouring the Jews more or sometimes less humorously with a porcine ancestry – had been contributing toward a transfer of the Jews to a totally different, non-human, category ... The appeal of the *Judensau* lay in its obscenity; its effect was to help in fixing the idea of Jews being absolutely 'not of us.'<sup>123</sup>

Isaiah Schachar cautions that this image, '[a]lthough uninhibited in its abuse ... was not originally conceived as a polemic image, nor was it intended or used to insult Jews throughout its early development,' but took on defamatory features in the period of the Reformation, and that individual examples did not necessarily indicate local conflict with Jews;<sup>124</sup> but this is hard to reconcile with the views he expresses in the passage quoted

<sup>123</sup> I. Schachar. *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and its History*, The Warburg Institute, London, 1974, p. 3.

<sup>124</sup> Schachar, p. 2.



above. In this period Jews were also associated with pigs in other ways. Joshua Trachtenberg describes a catalogue of secret Jewish ailments and disabilities, published by the converted Jew Franciscus of Piacenza in 1602, which were alleged to differ between each of the twelve tribes of Israel:

Naphtali, according to this imaginative account, hid their children in pigpens, with instructions to grunt and squeal when Jesus passed by, and when they asked him what these were, and he replied 'They are your children,' they denied it, insisting these were pigs; whereupon Jesus said, 'If they are swine, then swine let them be, and swine let them remain,' and thus the tribe of Naphtali have four large pig teeth, pigs' ears, and stink like swine.<sup>125</sup>

Trachtenberg concludes by noting that 'it can readily be seen ... that Johann Fischart's illustrated *Wunderzeitung* of the year 1575, announcing the birth to a Jewish woman of Binzwangen, near Aubsburg, of two little pigs, need not have unduly strained Christian credulity. Nothing was too monstrous to be told about the Jew.'<sup>126</sup>

The pig comparison also occurred in other episodes of genocidal killing. According to Iris Chang, 'both before and during the [Second World] war, members of the Japanese military at all levels frequently compared the Chinese to pigs. For example, a Japanese general told a correspondent: "To be frank, your view of Chinese is totally different from mine. You regard the Chinese as human beings while I regard the Chinese as pigs."<sup>127</sup> Another animal reference occurs in the testimony of a Japanese private named Tajimura: '[o]ne day Second Lieutenant Ono said to us, "You have never killed anyone yet, so today we shall have some killing practice. You must not consider the Chinese as a human being, but only as something

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<sup>125</sup> J. Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation To Modern Antisemitism*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1943, pp. 51-52.

<sup>126</sup> Trachtenberg, p. 52.

<sup>127</sup> I. Chang, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, Penguin, London, 1998, p. 218.

of rather less value than a dog or a cat.”<sup>128</sup> On the other side of the Second World War, American soldiers would use such rhetoric as ‘Japan and the swines that are her sons,’<sup>129</sup> while practises showed attitudes toward the Japanese that did not exist for the Germans:

Racial scorn easily combined with cultural and religious disdain to form a poisonous brew. In his review of thousands of censored military photographs taken during World War II, for example, historian George Roeder, in sharp contrast with what he found on the war against Japan, never encountered any evidence of GIs taking body parts of European soldiers as trophies.<sup>130</sup>

Evidence also exists of the use of porcine abuse in more clear-cut episodes of genocide. Although it should be recalled that ‘swine’ was a generalised term of abuse in Germany, Charles Patterson notes particularly that during the National Socialist genocide Germans would call Jews called *Saujuden*.<sup>131</sup> Patterson reports an incident in which an Austrian squad leader, preparing for the arrival of a group of Hungarian Jews, told his men to get ready to kill them: ‘[t]hese dogs and pigs all deserve to be beaten to death together.’<sup>132</sup> Randall L. Bytwerk cites a letter in *Der Stürmer* in which a Jew who allegedly tortured a cat is berated thus: ‘[s]hame on you, you cold-blooded miserable pig-Jew – there is nothing else to call you ... You should croak like a worm.’<sup>133</sup> At least two cases taking place during the Cambodian genocide are also mentioned by Alexander Laban Hinton: ‘[a] soldier told one “new” person that it was better that her mother had died “than a cow ... [cows] help us a lot and do not

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<sup>128</sup> Chang, p. 56.

<sup>129</sup> Schrijvers, p. 216.

<sup>130</sup> Schrijvers, p. 216.

<sup>131</sup> C. Patterson, *Eternal Treblinka: Our Treatment of Animals and the Holocaust*, Lantern Books, New York, 2002, p. 47. In a personal testimony to the widespread antisemitic use of this language, Victor Klemperer’s *The Language of the Third Reich* gives many examples of his common experience of being abused through ‘pig’ and ‘dog’ language (V. Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist’s Notebook* [trans. M. Brady, 3rd edn], The Athlone Press, London & New Brunswick [New Jersey], 2000 [original German date of publication 1957]).

<sup>132</sup> Patterson, p. 47.

<sup>133</sup> Bytwerk, p. 179.

eat rice. They are much better than you pigs.” Another victim testified that “[m]any times we heard soldiers shout, “Prisoners of war, you are pigs.”<sup>134</sup>

### Morally Offensive Animals: Dogs

Native American peoples, both Southern and Northern, were often depicted as dogs. In colonial South America in the sixteenth century, Christopher Columbus implemented the murderous *repartimiento* (later referred to as *encomiendas*) system of ‘Indian grants.’<sup>135</sup> The Dominican priest Bartolomé de Las Casas reported that under this system, in which entire peoples and communities were granted to Spanish masters as slave labour, overseers ‘treated the Indians with such rigor and inhumanity that they seemed the very ministers of Hell, driving them day and night with beatings, kicks, lashes and blows and calling them no sweeter names than dogs,’ while those who became too ill to work were called ‘lazy dogs.’<sup>136</sup> Stannard also quotes the Spanish magistrate Juan de Matienzo, a member of the governing *Audiencia*, who in his 1567 treatise *Gobierno del Peru* (‘Government of Peru’) justified the system, in which native people were worked to death or killed them outright if they proved reluctant or rebellious, by characterising them as ‘animals who do not even feel reason, but are ruled by their passions.’<sup>137</sup> In 1890, just before the infamous massacre at Wounded Knee in South Dakota, L. Frank Baum, the editor of that state’s *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer* (and remembered today as the author of the *Land of Oz* children’s books), wrote:

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<sup>134</sup> A. L. Hinton, ‘Comrade Ox Did Not Object When His Family Was Killed’, in I. W. Charny (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, ABC-CLIO, California, 1999, p. 135.

<sup>135</sup> It should be noted that this was not a system equivalent to the type of slavery in which life has some value as a means of production. Las Casas estimated that perhaps ten per cent of the people subjugated within this system survived until they became too sick to work and were dismissed, while Stannard comments, ‘so enormous was the reservoir of native muscle and flesh that no rational slave driver would spend good money on caring for these beasts (and beasts they were, and natural slaves, so the wisest of wise men had come to agree); it was more efficient simply to use them up and then replace them’ (p. 221).

<sup>136</sup> In Stannard, pp. 73-74.

<sup>137</sup> Stannard, p. 220.

The nobility of the Redskin is extinguished, and what few are left are a pack of whining curs who lick the hand that smites them. The Whites, by law of conquest, by justice of civilization, are masters of the American continent, and the best safety of the frontier settlements will be secured by the total annihilation of the few remaining Indians. Why not annihilation? ... better that they should die than live the miserable wretches that they are.<sup>138</sup>

A similarly contemptuous characterisation was expressed of indigenous Australians by a clergyman in the 1870s: 'If our instincts are true we must loathe the Aborigines as they are now, less estimable than the mongrels that prowl like them in the offal of a station ...'<sup>139</sup> In all these episodes, the utterances which have been used are clear demonstrations in themselves of the connection between the way in which people were characterised, and the justification of cruel and murderous treatment.

#### Vd. Animalised Supernatural Creatures

In a classic example of the anthropomorphisation of human 'sinfulness,' certain animals have historically been associated with supernatural evil. 'What,' asks Thomas, 'were religion and morality, if not attempts to curb the supposedly animal aspects of human nature? ... It was no accident that the symbol of Anti-Christ was the Beast, or that the Devil was regularly portrayed as a mixture of man and animal.'<sup>140</sup> Judeophobic material has commonly portrayed Jews as devils or demons. For the purposes of this investigation, however, the salient point is that the features which identified Jews as demons (or sometimes monsters) were *animal* characteristics: horns, cloven hooves, beards and tails. Such motifs were

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<sup>138</sup> Stannard, p. 126.

<sup>139</sup> Quoted in C. Tatz, *Genocide in Australia*, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Research Discussion Papers #8, Canberra, 1999, p. 18.

<sup>140</sup> Thomas, pp. 36-37.

common in medieval Judeophobic images; they later appeared in National Socialist material such as *Der Stürmer*.<sup>141</sup> These particular animal characteristics are those of the goat, which, like the snake, has long been associated with Satan in Christian tradition. Trachtenberg observes that '[t]he Bock, or billy goat, as the Middle Ages knew full well, is the devil's favorite animal, frequently represented as symbolic of satanic lechery.'<sup>142</sup> The *Judensau* was sometimes combined with the animalistic demon motif, as in the famous Frankfurt *Judensau*, sculpted in the fifteenth century (which also includes the image of Simon of Trent, the fifteenth-century subject of a well-known ritual murder or 'blood libel' allegation, thus emphasising the identification of Jews as a murderous threat).

In some cases Jews were forced to wear horns as distinguishing marks: 'in 1267 the Vienna Council decreed that Jews must wear a 'horned hat' (*pileum cornutum*) ... and Philip III required the Jews of France to attach a horn-shaped figure to the customary Jew badge.'<sup>143</sup> Another goatlike characteristic attributed to Jews in medieval prints and in folk tales was the *Ziegenbart* (goat's beard). As Trachtenberg notes, it was common to represent the Jew with the he-goat as either his favourite domestic animal or favourite mount; 'perhaps the *Ziegenbart* emphasis is intended to identify the Jew as the human goat.'<sup>144</sup> Trachtenberg cites a *Judensau* carved in relief on a Frankfurt bridge which 'included the figure of a Jew with two unmistakable goat's horns on his head. To make certain the origin of those horns was not missed, the artist cut a billy goat with identical horns into the stone, interestedly watching the proceedings.'<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Bytwerk, p. 105.

<sup>142</sup> Trachtenberg, p. 47.

<sup>143</sup> Trachtenberg, pp. 44-46.

<sup>144</sup> Trachtenberg, pp. 46-47.

<sup>145</sup> Trachtenberg, p. 47.

Another animal related to the supernatural and often used in Judeophobic propaganda is the vampire bat. Many cartoons in *Der Stürmer* pictured the Jew as a vampire bat.<sup>146</sup> The association, of course, was of the Jew as a bloodsucking parasite or leech upon the body of the people, phrases which occur and re-occur in *Mein Kampf* itself, as well as very commonly in Nazi rhetoric and propaganda.<sup>147</sup>

Indeed, the discursive relationship between killing, religious symbolism and animality is complex and often deeply intertwined. Carmichael quotes John Allcock on the language of the Croatian *Ustaša* during the Second World War, noting 'the conjunction of the words for the slaughter of animals (*klanje*) and sacrifice (*žrtvovanje*).' He argues that 'killing of this kind is more than mere killing: it is the offering of the slain as if they are sacrificial animals. It is atrocity raised to the level of sacrament.'<sup>148</sup>

## Ve. Predators: Morally Offensive and Wild

Some animals threaten both because of their predatory wildness and their anthropomorphic immorality.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Bytwerk, p. 105; pl. 9.

<sup>147</sup> For example, A. Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (trans. R. Manheim), Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1971, pp. 309-310, 313. For an encyclopedic empirical analysis of metaphors used in *Mein Kampf*, see F. Rash, *A Database of Metaphors in Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf*, 2005, retrieved 10 September 2008, <[http://webspaces.qmul.ac.uk/fjrash/metaphors\\_mein\\_kampf.pdf](http://webspaces.qmul.ac.uk/fjrash/metaphors_mein_kampf.pdf)>.

<sup>148</sup> Carmichael, p. 90.

<sup>149</sup> See Goatly, p. 150, for the negative English metaphorical-linguistic association in the terminology of predation.

## Predators: Wolves

A common image of the predator as an immoral wild animal is that of the wolf. Peter Coates writes that '[n]atural histories of the wolf from the Renaissance onwards were on a par with the crassest racism, focusing on their murderous savagery, cannibalism, cunning, deceit, cowardliness, perversity, depravity, exponential reproduction, and stench.' In North America, the wolf was 'beyond the moral pale.'<sup>150</sup> Again, religious associations arise: Lopez comments that, for medieval Christians, the Biblical principle of retributory justice found in the Old Testament was seen to preserve cosmic order; an unexpiated act of killing risked divine wrath. There was thus not only a right, but a moral obligation to kill wolves and other predatory murderers of humans and of livestock.<sup>151</sup> The wolf, like the goat and the snake, has also been a symbol of Satan in Christian discourse (related to the metaphor of Jesus as 'lamb,' the congregation as a 'flock' and the religious leader as a 'shepherd'). As Lopez observes, there is a deeply-held belief that 'the wolf is "wrong" in the scheme of things, like cancer, and has to be rooted out.'<sup>152</sup>

The wolf image has been prevalent in a number of different contexts. In *Mein Kampf*, Adolf Hitler compared Jews to wolves:

In the Jewish people the will to self-sacrifice does not go beyond the individuals' naked instinct of self-preservation. Their apparently great sense of solidarity is based on the primitive herd instinct that is seen in many other living creatures in this world. It is a noteworthy fact that the herd instinct leads to mutual support only as long as a common danger makes this seem useful or inevitable. The same pack of wolves which has just fallen on its prey together disintegrates when hunger abates into its individual beasts.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> Coates, p. 168.

<sup>151</sup> Lopez, pp. 145-146.

<sup>152</sup> Lopez, p. 165.

<sup>153</sup> Hitler, p. 301.

In one case, that of a Jew found guilty of 'racial defilement' under the Nuremberg Laws, a *Stürmer* article asserted that 'the people will not be able to understand how the Jew Wolf ... received only four months.'<sup>154</sup>

Indigenous Americans were often compared to wolves, as well as other predators. George Washington described the Indians as 'beasts of prey,' similar to the wolf 'tho' they differ in shape,' who deserved nothing but 'total ruin.'<sup>155</sup> Andrew Jackson recommended 'that American troops specifically seek out and systematically kill Indian women and children who were hiding, in order to complete their extermination; to do otherwise, he wrote, was equivalent to pursuing "a wolf in the hammocks without knowing first where her den and whelps were."<sup>156</sup> In 1703 one of New England's most esteemed religious leaders, the Reverend Solomon Stoddard, 'formally proposed to the Massachusetts Governor that the colonists be given the financial wherewithal to purchase and train large packs of dogs "to hunt the Indians as they do bears ... if the Indians were as other people ... it might be looked upon as inhumane to pursue them in such a manner," but, in fact, the Indians were wolves, he said, 'and are to be dealt withal as wolves.'<sup>157</sup> The treatment of native peoples during this era would come to be a model for other acts of killing, as in the Second World War: '[w]e were fighting no civilized, knightly war ... We were back in the primitive days of fighting Indians on the American frontier.'<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> In Bytwerk, p. 156.

<sup>155</sup> Dower, p. 150; Stannard, pp. 119, 240-241.

<sup>156</sup> Stannard, pp. 121-122.

<sup>157</sup> Stannard, 241; Thomas, 47.

<sup>158</sup> Schrijvers, p. 217.



## Predators: Snakes

*FULGENCE: When we saw Tutsis wriggling like snakes in the marshes, it made the guys laugh. Some let them crawl awhile longer for more fun. But that was not the case for everybody. Some didn't care one way or another and didn't bother with that mockery. If it was easier to catch them crawling, that was better, and that was all.*<sup>159</sup>

Snakes, dangerous wild animals, are often considered immoral both for their 'treachery' ('a snake in the grass'), for their poisonousness, and, in cultures influenced by Christianity, their association with Satan. Martin Luther himself described Jews as 'venomous serpents.' In *The Poodlepugdachshundpinscher* Jews are compared to poisonous snakes, while cartoons in *Der Stürmer* bore titles such as 'The Satanic Serpent Judah.'<sup>160</sup> In the Americas, Edward Waterhouse, the secretary of the Virginia Company, in an early document on the company's progress in the New World called indigenous people a 'Viperous brood ... of Pagan Infidels' and called for their extermination.<sup>161</sup> In the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide, with the exodus of both Tutsi fleeing the genocide and Hutu fleeing justice, 'ethnic cleansing' began to take place in neighbouring countries such as Zaire, where the government was also anti-Tutsi: there, Gourevitch reported, officials began to refer to the Banyamulenge, Zairean Tutsi, as 'snakes.'<sup>162</sup> According to an eyewitness report of a massacre of 400 civilians in East Timor in 1981, an Indonesian soldier uttered a remark 'which was considered to be part of the wisdom of Java. He said: "When you clean your field, don't you kill all the snakes, the small and large alike?"'<sup>163</sup> An American marine general who served during the Second World War recalled that 'Killing a Japanese was like killing a rattlesnake.'<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 132.

<sup>160</sup> Bytwerk, pp. 105-107.

<sup>161</sup> Stannard, p. 228.

<sup>162</sup> Gourevitch, p. 295.

<sup>163</sup> Kiernan, 'Twentieth-Century Genocides', p. 50.

<sup>164</sup> Schrijvers, p. 218.

In each of these cases, it is evident that the classification of an animal as ‘predatory’ – like that of ‘vermin’ – inherently refers to a threat which that animal poses, and is related to perceptions of immorality. In the utterances documented in this section, representing victims in this way has clearly served the dual purpose of constructing them as threatening, and (thus) justifying the treatment which is to be meted out, even when in other contexts it might seem illegitimate. We now turn from the categories of predatory animals to language which more generally associates victim peoples with the characteristic of ‘wildness’ and its associated negative qualities.

#### Vf. Wild Animals

##### Wild Animals: Brutes and Beasts

In Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, Kurtz, the murderous colonial overseer, has written an eloquent and benevolent pamphlet for the International Society for the Suppression of Savage Customs. At the foot of the last page, however, is scrawled a final addendum: ‘Exterminate all the brutes!’ Marlow, the narrator, regards this phrase as ‘the exposition of a method.’ Kurtz and his fellows have been in the process of suppressing not so much the savage customs as the savages themselves.

In a linguistic sense, the term ‘brute’ has been a convenient one for the characterisation of others as sub-human (and is related to the section above on the construction of collectivities as lesser humans, sub-humans and ‘not-humans’); it is a noun which can refer both to humans and to animals, and thus, applied to humans, is already partway to animalising them. Sven Lindqvist, author of a profound meditation on the significance of Conrad’s phrase – and

of colonialism itself – to genocide, writes that, in colonial Tasmania, “[t]he natives did not have to be treated like humans, they were “brutes” or “brute beasts.””<sup>165</sup> Massacre of Aborigines was carried out by settlers, soldiers and Native Police, and an eliminationist mentality was evident in popular settler rhetoric. In the 1820s the local press demanded that the government should ‘move’ the natives, or, if not, they should be ‘hunted down like wild beasts and destroyed.’<sup>166</sup> In 1883, a columnist in the *Queensland Figaro* wrote, “[t]he blackfellow is a “brute” and must be put out of the way.’<sup>167</sup> ‘North Gregory,’ a correspondent to the *Queenslander*, explained that “[i]f the whites are to settle and occupy their country, then a certain amount of cruelty and severity is unavoidable. You say we treat them like wild animals. Well, to a certain extent their attributes are the same, and must be met in the same manner.’<sup>168</sup> Aborigines were also compared to other wild animals: ‘A. W. Stirling drew “a curious likeness between the ways of the Kangaroo and the habits of the blackfellow who inhabits the same country.” He then went on to talk ominously of the destruction of the “hated marsupial.”’<sup>169</sup>

The characterisation of victims as ‘beasts’ has been particularly prevalent in episodes of colonial genocide. The words of one Father Domingo de Betanzos, a Spanish missionary in South America in the sixteenth century, explicitly reveal the connection between the ‘beasting’ of victim peoples and the genocidal mentality: ‘the Indians were beasts and ... God had condemned the whole race to perish for the horrible sins that they had committed in their paganism.’<sup>170</sup> The very first English-language book on America, published in 1511,

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<sup>165</sup> S. Lindqvist, ‘Exterminate All the Brutes’, Granta, London, 2002, p. 118.

<sup>166</sup> Lindqvist, p. 118.

<sup>167</sup> R. Evans “The Nigger Shall Disappear. . .’: Aborigines and Europeans in colonial Queensland’, in R. Evans, K. Saunders & K. Cronin (eds), *Exclusion Exploitation and Extermination: Race Relations In Colonial Queensland*, Australia and New Zealand Book Company, Sydney, 1975, p. 77.

<sup>168</sup> Quoted in H. Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain?: The question of genocide in Australia’s history*, Viking, Ringwood, Victoria, 2001, p. 115.

<sup>169</sup> Evans, “The Nigger Shall Disappear”, 76.

<sup>170</sup> Stannard, p. 218.

described the native people as 'lyke bestes without any resonablenes.'<sup>171</sup> Indigenous Americans in Virginia were described by a settler around the end of the sixteenth century as 'cruel beasts' with 'a more unnatural brutishness than beasts,' and as 'more brutish than the beasts they hunt.'<sup>172</sup> In the 1700s Hugh Brackenridge, a jurist and novelist, 'wrote that extermination would be most fitting for "the animals vulgarly called Indians."<sup>173</sup> A German perpetrator of the genocide of the Herero asked, 'can one hope that a Negro people [Negervolk] can have developed so far in fifty years that beasts have become civilized people?'<sup>174</sup> In the context of colonisation (and the now-well-established connections between Nazi genocide and colonial discourse), Tony Barta notes the way in which Hitler and the Nazis considered the Slavic peoples – who, as colonised subjects, were to be subjugated for their labour and destroyed as independent cultures – 'dirty' 'brutes' and (honorary) 'blacks.'<sup>175</sup>

The term 'beasts' also refers, implicitly or explicitly, to the danger allegedly posed by victim groups. Robert Gellately quotes the mayor of a German town who wanted to have a Soviet prisoner of war camp opened to the public, so that they could 'see for themselves "these animals in human form" and imagine what would have happened if "these beasts" had conquered Germany.'<sup>176</sup> Cigar cites 'an academic work published in 1989 on the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo [which] applauded and justified the policy of massacre by which Danilo Njegoš, the eighteenth century ruler and Orthodox bishop of Montenegro, had eliminated the Muslims from Montenegro.' The book's author wrote that

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<sup>171</sup> Stannard, pp. 225-226.

<sup>172</sup> In Patterson, p. 33; in Thomas, p. 42.

<sup>173</sup> In Patterson, p. 34.

<sup>174</sup> D. Stone, 'White men with low moral standards? German anthropology and the Herero Genocide,' *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, p. 35.

<sup>175</sup> T. Barta, 'Discourses of Genocide in Germany and Australia: a linked history', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 25, 2001, p. 54, 54n41.

<sup>176</sup> R. Gellately, 'The Third Reich, the Holocaust, and Visions of Serial Genocide', in Gellately & Kiernan, p. 260.

Turks [local Muslims] had been the very symbol of all that is evil in this world, Satan's seed ... one can and one must struggle against evil, and that that is the greatest Christian and human duty. To struggle against evil was Njegoš's duty toward God. He sought revenge, revenge without mercy ... For Njegoš, revenge was a holy, divine, act! Yes, he was in favor of peace and love among people, but only among people; that did not apply to beasts with human faces.<sup>177</sup>

### Wild Animals: Apes and Monkeys

Dower calls the monkey image 'perhaps the most basic of all metaphors traditionally employed by white supremacists to demean nonwhite peoples.'<sup>178</sup> Those 'nonwhites' have included the Japanese and Jews, as well as African peoples who are the more common targets of simian abuse. The ape or monkey may either be perceived as lesser but unthreatening, or as a threatening animal, depending upon the context of the purpose of action taken toward the collectivity thus characterised.

According to Jon Bridgman and Leslie J. Worley, white settlers in German Africa 'normally referred to black Africans as "baboons" and treated them accordingly.' One missionary reported that 'the average German looks down upon the natives as being about on the same level as the higher primates ('baboon' being their favourite term for the natives) and treats them like animals. The settler holds that the native has a right to exist only in so far as he is useful to the white man.'<sup>179</sup> In 1900 a petition of 75 signatures was sent to the German Colonial Department from Windhoek, seat of the colonial authority, which stated in part

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<sup>177</sup> Cigar, pp. 41-42.

<sup>178</sup> Dower, p. 86. See Goatly, p. 150, for a list of English negative metaphorical-linguistic associations with monkey terminology.

<sup>179</sup> J. Bridgman & L. J. Worley, 'Genocide of the Hereros', in S. Totten, W. S. Parsons & I. W. Charny (eds), *Century of Genocide: Eyewitness Accounts and Critical Views*, Garland, New York/London, 1997, p. 9.

that '[a]ny white man who has lived amongst natives finds it impossible to regard them as human beings at all in any European sense.'<sup>180</sup> This attitude would be a factor in the attempted extermination of the Herero and Nama peoples in 1904-1905 in a response to their rebellion against the increasingly oppressive German colonial regime. General Lothar von Trotha, commander of the exterminating forces, stated publicly that 'no war may be conducted humanely against nonhumans.'<sup>181</sup>

In Australia, the majority view in the scientific community held that Aborigines were the most debased specimens of humanity, rather than non-humans.<sup>182</sup> This was not an opinion universally accepted, however. 'Polygenist' thought, proposing the different races as several separate creations, provided 'a rationale for treating some human groups like animals of another species.'<sup>183</sup> 'The Aborigine,' it was suggested, might be 'the connecting link between the human and the brute creation,' and the link between 'man and monkey tribe.'<sup>184</sup> In colonial New South Wales, 'some of the more educated residents referred to the Aborigines as ... "monkies."<sup>185</sup> As late as 1896 the Australasian Anthropological Journal 'drew a direct relationship between Aborigines, "the orang-otang and the other apes."<sup>186</sup> The conviction that Aborigines were not fully human resulted in such unedifying episodes as the gruesome conflict which took place in 1869 between representatives of London's Royal College of Surgeons and the Royal Society of Tasmania over the remains of William Lanney, the 'last' 'pure-bred' Tasmanian Aboriginal man, partly because of 'the belief that he represented a last living link between man and ape.'<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> A. Palmer, *Colonial Genocide*, Crawford House Publishing, Adelaide, 2000, p. 167.

<sup>181</sup> Quoted in I. V. Hull, 'Military Culture and "Final Solutions"', in Gellately & Kiernan, p. 154.

<sup>182</sup> See Evans, 1975, p. 70.

<sup>183</sup> Marvin Harris in Evans, p. 74. See also Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution*, pp. 32-34.

<sup>184</sup> Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", p. 75.

<sup>185</sup> M. Sturma, 'Myall Creek and the Psychology of Mass Murder', *Journal of Australian Studies*, no. 16, 1985, p. 67.

<sup>186</sup> Sturma, p. 67.

<sup>187</sup> Cocker, pp. 116, 127; L. Ryan, *The Aboriginal Tasmanians* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1996, p. 214.

The monkey image would also occur in National Socialist imagery. In 1881, Theodor Fritsch had claimed (in George Mosse's words) that 'God had created the Jew as a buffer between man and ape,' and by 1931 a Nazi speaker could assert that 'the non-Nordic was not a whole man, for he still share traits with the apes.'<sup>188</sup> *Der Stürmer* compared a fisheye shot of Jimmy Durante (who was mistakenly thought to be Jewish) with an adjacent picture of a long-nosed monkey.<sup>189</sup> *The Poodlepugdachshundpinscher* contained material comparing Jews to monkeys: '[t]heir sneaky gait and posture suggest the apes. Many Jews have a small, receding hairline and a forehead like a gorilla.'<sup>190</sup> In *Mein Kampf* Hitler wrote, 'To what extent the Jew takes over foreign culture, imitating or rather ruining it, can be seen from the fact that he is mostly found in the art which seems to require least original invention, the art of acting. But even here, in reality, he is only a "juggler," or rather an ape ...'<sup>191</sup> In 1942, during the period of killing, Gendarmerie chief Fritz Jacob wrote of Polish Jews, 'These were not human beings but ape people.'<sup>192</sup>

### Wild Animals: Wild and Tame

The discursive distinction between 'wild' and 'tame' characterisations demonstrates the purposive and strategic nature of genocidal dehumanisation inasmuch as it can be seen to directly relate to the nature of physical practice enacted upon its object. The very positing of such a distinction might be a justification in itself: Cigar quotes Vojislav Lubarda, a leading Serb literary figure from Montenegro:

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<sup>188</sup> G. L. Mosse, *The Crisis of German Ideology: Intellectual Origins of the Third Reich*, Howard Fertig, New York, 1981 (1st edn 1964), p. 143.

<sup>189</sup> Bytwerk, p. 105.

<sup>190</sup> Bytwerk, p. 106.

<sup>191</sup> Hitler, p.303.

<sup>192</sup> In Patterson, p. 46.

[Lubarda] stressed that Muslims allegedly only understood force. In late 1993, he said: 'Let me mention just two personal characteristics that are true of the majority of Muslims: when faced by that which is stronger (such as a stronger man or a stronger force), they become as docile as lambs and submissive beyond words. However, their nature changes as soon as they sense that they are the stronger ones, and that power is in their hands, whereupon they become insatiably ruthless.'<sup>193</sup>

In the former Yugoslavia, the Serbian press called the building of new mosques without a permit 'wild' (as opposed to 'illegal').<sup>194</sup>

However, this distinction – this type of utterance – has more usually been drawn in episodes of colonial genocide, between 'wild' and 'tame' colonised peoples. Michael Sturma, commenting on the 1838 Myall Creek massacre in New South Wales, maintains that '[n]o doubt [Aborigines] were widely spoken of in animalistic terms as if part of the natural fauna. George Anderson for example, an assigned servant at Myall Creek who seems to have been sympathetic to the blacks, described one of those spared death as "completely domesticated."<sup>195</sup> According to Raymond Evans (as well as Sturma), the distinction drawn between 'tame' and 'wild blacks' was common.<sup>196</sup> Responding to the killing of settlers by indigenous people, the Gayndah correspondent of the *Moreton Bay Courier* wrote, 'when such terrible proof is given of the impossibility of peace, treat them as they deserve; [if] it is useless trying to tame them, then destroy them, as you would any other savage beast, men they do not deserve to be called.'<sup>197</sup> According to J. G. Wood, writing in 1870, the severity

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<sup>193</sup> Cigar, p. 71.

<sup>194</sup> Cigar, p. 36.

<sup>195</sup> Sturma, p. 68.

<sup>196</sup> Sturma, p. 68; Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", pp. 88-89.

<sup>197</sup> Quoted in Reynolds, p. 122; Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", p. 77.



of the Native Police was caused by 'the singular antipathy which invariably exists between wild and tamed animals, whether human or otherwise.'<sup>198</sup>

This classification has generally represented the nature of practice to be enacted upon particular (subcategories of) outgroups: the 'wild' are to be killed, the 'tame' to be exploited or ignored. Evans observes that 'Aborigines who were no longer regarded as a dangerous threat were usually spoken of as "tame blacks" – a further reference to their basic "animality."'<sup>199</sup> In North America, after the massacre at Wounded Knee, L. Frank Baum wrote, 'we had better, in order to protect our civilization, follow it up and wipe these untamed and untamable creatures from the face of the earth.'<sup>200</sup> Before genocide had been committed upon them, the African Herero people were described as 'wild animals' in successful war; in the official German military history of the genocide, which frankly celebrated their 'end,' they were described as having an 'innate wildness' which, it was alleged, along with other putative unpleasant characteristics led to the 1904 revolt which triggered the genocidal German response.<sup>201</sup> These examples demonstrate the argument concerning the dual functionality of animalisation as a discursive strategy: the killing of animalised victims is necessary while they are compared to animals which pose a threat. Once tamed, killing, while very possibly morally legitimate, is no longer necessary.

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<sup>198</sup> Quoted in Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", p. 76.

<sup>199</sup> Evans, pp. 88-89.

<sup>200</sup> Quoted in Stannard, p. 127.

<sup>201</sup> Stone, 'White men with low moral standards', p. 41.

## Wild Animals: Sport and Game

PANCRACE: ...*But at the end only the strong and sly ones were left, and it got too hard. They gathered in little groups, very well hidden. They were picking up all the tricks of the marsh game creatures.*<sup>202</sup>

For present-day Westerners, the hunting of animals for sport has become a minority interest. But this does not mean that such rhetoric has not played a role in modern killing, as we see in the above example from Rwanda. The view of indigenous people as 'fair game' is documented well into the 20th century: 'as late as 1972 in southern Colombia, a party of hunters were acquitted of gunning down Amerindians when they pleaded in their defence that it was a sport and not a punishable offence.'<sup>203</sup>

Once again, in this rhetoric we see that a particular set of utterances is directly related to a particular type of non-verbal practice toward an outgroup. John P. Synott notes that, in the murder of Australian indigenous peoples, there was a "play" or "sport" element created as an avenue for indulging in mass murder.'<sup>204</sup> Metaphors could be necessary, as the killing of Aborigines was legally murder, although few prosecutions were brought. Thus talk of killing was couched in animalised terms: one common practice was to report 'the hunting and shooting of "kangaroos" instead of ... the hunting and shooting of Aboriginal men.'<sup>205</sup>

Charles Heydon, a witness to killings in the Endeavour River area in Queensland, protested in 1874 that '[p]rivate persons go out to kill blacks and call it "snipe-shooting."' The use of metaphorical language in murder was not lost on Heydon, who continued,

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<sup>202</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 61; for other examples of 'hunting' in Rwanda see Hatzfeld, pp. 72, 73, 219.

<sup>203</sup> Cocker, p. 149.

<sup>204</sup> J. P. Synott, 'Genocide of Aborigines', in Charny, p. 112.

<sup>205</sup> R. Kimber, 'Genocide or Not? The situation in Central Australia, 1860-1895', in C. Tatz (ed.), *Genocide Perspectives I*, Centre for Comparative Genocide Studies, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1997, pp. 43-44; see also, for example, J. Critchett, 'Encounters in the Western District', in B. Attwood & S. G. Foster (eds), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p. 60.

[a]wkward words are always avoided you will notice. 'Shooting a snipe' sounds better than 'murdering a man'. But the blacks are never called men and women and children; 'myalls' and 'niggers' and 'gins' and 'picaninnies' seem further removed from humanity ... What right have 'myalls' to exist at all – mischievous vermin with their ignorance, and their barbarism, and their degradation and their black skins?<sup>206</sup>

The commonness of the representation of killing as sport is evidenced by newspaper reports such as one quoted by Evans, in the *Boomerang* in 1891, which 'greeted the news of the shooting of an Aboriginal with mock impatience: "Why bother us at such critical national time with everyday commonplaces like this? Has it come to this in Australia that the taking off of a solitary blackfellow is to be wired all over this island-continent? *Have coloured persons ceased to be a national game?*"<sup>207</sup> Evans mentions the case of A. C. Bicknell, who, 'stranded overnight in the bush near Herberton, wrote, "I had with me a five shooter and twenty rounds of ammunition ... quite expected to get a brace or two of black game before the morning ..."<sup>208</sup> Victims have also been classified as game in other episodes of colonial genocide. One example, cited by Stannard, was a law of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of the 1630s which made it illegal to 'shoot off a gun on any unnecessary occasion, or at any game except an Indian or a wolf.'<sup>209</sup> This connection would seem to inhere also in non-English terms such as the German *Wild*, which can refer to 'game' and also to 'savages,' and was in public use around the time of the Herero genocide.<sup>210</sup> The narrative of 'sport,' then, in conjunction with a discourse of identity concerning 'wild' and 'tame' victims, is another

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<sup>206</sup> In R. Evans, 'Across the Queensland frontier', in B. Attwood & S. G. Foster (eds), *Frontier Conflict: The Australian Experience*, National Museum of Australia, Canberra, 2003, pp. 64-65.

<sup>207</sup> Quoted in Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", p. 50; my italics.

<sup>208</sup> Quoted in Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", p. 77.

<sup>209</sup> Stannard, p. 241.

<sup>210</sup> See Stone, 'White men with low moral standards', p. 37. Stone notes that at least one anthropologist argued that there could be no definitive distinction between *Kulturvölkern* (civilized people) and *Wilden* (savages), but this does not mean that the term and similar 'non-biological' characterisations have no role to play in genocide, as Stone's article demonstrates.

way in which killing may be associated with a morally legitimate activity, and hence both normalised and justified.

### Wild Animals: Fauna

In more than one colonial episode indigenous people have been characterised or classified, more often implicitly than explicitly, as fauna, a classification which, like 'beasts' and 'monkeys,' may either legitimise, or may motivate.

In Australia a clear parallel was drawn on numerous occasions between the disappearance of Aborigines and of Australian animals, one which, though not explicitly identifying these two groups as identical, placed them by inference in a similar category. In 1876 the ethnologist Oscar Peschel wrote, in 'The struggle for Existence in Australia,' that '[i]t was inevitable that the last surviving and superceded forms of past ages should succumb ... and the kangaroo hunter disappear with the kangaroo.'<sup>211</sup> Herbert Spencer, in his 1850 *Social Statics*, argued that imperialism had served civilization by removing the inferior races from the earth: '[t]he forces which are working out the great scheme of human happiness, taking no account of incidental suffering, exterminate such sections of mankind as stand in their way ... Be he human or be he brute – the hindrance must be got rid of.' Lindqvist, in discussing this passage, comments that 'the human being was expressly placed on equal footing with the animal as an object for extermination.'<sup>212</sup> In similar fashion, the killing of indigenous Australians was sometime framed as 'put[ting them] out of their misery,' 'more mercy than a crime.'<sup>213</sup> A similar attitude has appeared in North America, where, for example, in 1812 Thomas Jefferson wrote that white Americans were 'obliged' to drive the

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<sup>211</sup> Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", p. 81.

<sup>212</sup> Lindqvist, pp. 8-9.

<sup>213</sup> Barta, p. 41.

'backward' Indians 'with the beasts of the forests into the Stony Mountains.'<sup>214</sup> It has been noted both by contemporary observers and by historians that the type of exterminating war conducted against indigenous peoples in North America bore a great similarity to that conducted against the wolf.<sup>215</sup> Meanwhile, official statements made in Australia with regard to the 'breeding out' of indigenous people referred to the 'mating' of Aborigines.<sup>216</sup>

Discourse which implicitly represented indigenous peoples as fauna explicitly defined them out of existence as humans, a process which (like the American example mentioned in the previous section on wolves) took place in the field of the enactment of judicial power as well as in more general verbal discourse. Alan Atkinson cites speeches made in the Supreme Court in Sydney in 1827 in which the barrister William Charles Wentworth and his partner Robert Wardell 'defended the white murderer of a black man named Jackey Jackey by arguing that the indigenous people had no existence in law. The colonists must deal with them as they found them, they said, within in [sic] a Hobbesian state of nature, and, given their evil propensities as a people, "an exterminating war" against them might be perfectly justified.'<sup>217</sup>

A philosophically-based definition which saw the concept of 'private property' as essential to humanity was also used to define colonial victims beyond the pale of humanity. Thinkers such as Luther, and later John Locke, pointed to the possession of private property as characteristic of true humanity.<sup>218</sup> For those who followed this convenient logic, not only were peoples deemed not to possess their land considered not to be human equals, but they could be cleared from the land as any other non-human 'hindrance' would be. In 1622 one

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<sup>214</sup> Stannard, p. 120.

<sup>215</sup> See for example Coates, pp. 167-169; Stannard, p. 145.

<sup>216</sup> P. Bartrop, 'The relationship between war and genocide in the twentieth century: a consideration', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2002, pp. 75-76.

<sup>217</sup> Quoted in A. Atkinson, 'Historians and moral disgust', in Attwood & Foster, p. 117.

<sup>218</sup> Stannard, pp. 233-234.

of the first formal justifications for the expropriation of land in North America was published by a British colonist, who wrote, in part, '[t]his then is a sufficient reason to prove our going thither to live lawful; their land is spacious and void, and they are few and do but run over the grass, as do also the foxes and wild beasts.'<sup>219</sup> In Australia, the existence of Aborigines as people who had rights over the land they lived on was written out, in the first place, by declaring the country legally *terra nullius*, empty land (while in New England the legal principle of *vacuum domicilium* was used to justify the seizure of land <sup>220</sup>).

In Australia, the chief contemporary metaphor used to describe the killing of Aborigines, employed by both colonial officials and settlers, was 'dispersal.'<sup>221</sup> According to Richard Kimber, this word 'can be viewed universally as a euphemism.'<sup>222</sup> 'Dispersal' is a term which, though not exclusively referring to animals, certainly has overtones of the animal in much the same way as 'extermination.' Lindqvist observes that

[t]he Latin *extermino* means 'drive over the border,' *terminus*, 'exile, banish, exclude.'

Hence the English *exterminate*, which means, 'drive over the border to death, banish from life' ... the object of the action is seldom a single individual, but usually whole groups, such as quitchgrass, rats, or people. *Brutes*, of course, reduces the object to its mere animal status.<sup>223</sup>

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The types outlined above constitute the major forms of animalising identity construction which take place in genocide and genocidal killing. Before leaving the topic of examples of

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<sup>219</sup> Quoted in Stannard, p. 235.

<sup>220</sup> Stannard, pp. 234-235.

<sup>221</sup> For example, Evans, "The Nigger Shall Disappear", pp. 60-61.

<sup>222</sup> Kimber, p. 43.

<sup>223</sup> Lindqvist, p. 8.

animalising utterance, however, there are three further aspects which should be mentioned: positive animal associations; the connection between bestialisation, domestic animals, and non-genocidal mistreatment; and the nature of killing methods. The second of these, in particular, casts light upon the construction of dehumanisation as a continuum containing differentiated functions.

## VI. Killers' Self-Identification as Beasts

Victims of genocide and genocidal killing are not the only group ever to have been animalised in perpetrator discourse. Killers have also sometimes presented themselves as becoming animal-like in their actions. For instance, the notorious Serbian paramilitary leader Arkan (Željko Ražnatović) called his paramilitary force 'Arkan's Tigers.' There are numerous examples from Rwanda:

IGNACE: Some [perpetrators] hunted like grazing goats, others like wild beasts.<sup>224</sup>

PIO: We no longer saw a human being when we turned up a Tutsi in the swamps. I mean a person like us, sharing similar thoughts and feelings. The hunt was savage, the hunters were savage, the prey was savage – savagery took over the mind.

Not only had we become criminals, we had become a ferocious species in a barbarous world.<sup>225</sup>

ALPHONSE: Man can get used to killing, if he kills on and on. He can even become a beast without noticing it.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 39.

<sup>225</sup> Hatzfeld, pp. 47-48.

<sup>226</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 49.

PANCRAE: Killings of that kind are hungry for death, not for life, as with wild animals.<sup>227</sup>

Similar utterances can also be found in other episodes. As these examples show, such discourse may be related to positive values associated with certain types of animal, or they may relate in less positive, though often exculpatory, ways to killers' understanding of their own participation.

In regard to this phenomenon, a number of hypotheses may be mentioned. Firstly, there is often a relationship between dehumanisation undergone by perpetrators (in such contexts as the dehumanisation of military training and systems of command; or of initial forced participation in perpetration, as in Rwanda and elsewhere), and the dehumanisation which the same perpetrators direct toward their victims.

Furthermore, in the genocidal circumstance of the changed nature of legitimate violence, and particularly in genocidal situations (such as Rwanda) where perpetrators may have a certain degree of freedom of implementation rather than being 'micromanaged' by central authorities, there may be a perception that the entire situation has returned to a (supposed) uncivilised 'state of nature' where the killing of the weak by the strong is the norm. This construction may, in post-hoc explanations of events, then be used as a justification both internally, in terms of perpetrators' self-understanding, and externally, in recounting perpetrators' participation in events and explaining, not only why they behaved in the way they did, but why those who were not present cannot understand this or would be likely to behave in a similar fashion under the same circumstances – and therefore cannot pass judgement.

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<sup>227</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 227.



Finally, this perception may also symbolise the cultural ambivalence around animality in representations of powerful predators (and perhaps other prestigious animals) as admirable symbols of strength and dominance. This demonstrates the difference in meaning that specific animal names (as opposed to the general category of ‘animal,’ ‘brute’ or ‘beast’ conceived in opposition to the ‘human’) used in particular human narratives about animals construct; while such positive associations are beyond our purview, their existence as differentiated forms of animalisation points to the functional nature of the specific discourse employed by perpetrators about their victims.

## VII. Domestic Animal Names in Slavery and Apartheid

It is apposite now to turn briefly to the subject of certain non-genocidal episodes, in a discussion of tropes around domestic animals. In the course of my research into episodes of genocide and genocidal killing, a few references to victims as *domestic* animals – specifically labouring animals rather than ‘pets’ – occur. For example:

In Rogatica during the Second World War, the ‘Ustaša shoed an Orthodox priest; they nailed horseshoes to his palms and knees and then climbed on his back and rode him into town’ in a grotesque attempt to dehumanize their victim and to turn him into a beast of burden.<sup>228</sup>

ALPHONSE: In the evenings old folks would ask quietly, ‘Why don’t we simply kill the trampling cows, take some prime fields, and still leave plenty of Tutsis alive?’ The leader would reply, ‘No. Their tradition is too ancient. Tutsis have been trailing after their cattle

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<sup>228</sup> Carmichael, p. 87.

for too long, they will start over again with new cows. Slaughtering cows and Tutsis, it's the same task.<sup>229</sup>

PIO: ...And then we must remember a remarkable thing that encouraged us. Many Tutsis showed a dreadful fear of being killed, even before we started to hit them. They would stop their disturbing agitation. They would cower or stand stock still. So this terror helped us to strike them. It is more tempting to kill a trembling and bleating goat than a spirited and frisky one, put it that way.<sup>230</sup>

These examples, however, are not hugely numerous, and they seem to exist in episodes in which there is in the society or community in question widespread experience of the treatment of domestic animals in such a way (whether, as in the first example, in terms of shoeing and riding a horse, or, as in the second, in terms of individual slaughter). In a general sense, however, such naming is not common in genocide and genocidal killing, particularly in relation to the prevalence of the forms of animal naming outlined above.

Employing the model I present here, I would predict that, given the relationship of the construction of collectivities to the purposiveness directed toward them, investigation would be likely to find that, in cases of organised subjugation and exploitation, outgroups would be named as domestic animals, that is, animals whose chief purpose was to be enslaved and managed for productivity, rather than killed outright. Marjorie Spiegel has devoted an entire book to demonstrating this connection (*The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery*).<sup>231</sup> It should also be noted that there may be historical overlap between situations of

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<sup>229</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 190.

<sup>230</sup> Hatzfeld, pp. 37-38. This quote gives an example of the way dehumanisation is a self-perpetuating cycle wherein victims are forced to live under conditions which reinforce their dehumanisation in the eyes of the killers, and thus the killers' feeling that they deserve to die – compare also Hatzfeld, pp. 61, 144.

<sup>231</sup> M. Spiegel, *The Dreaded Comparison: Human and Animal Slavery* (revised and expanded edn), New York, Mirror Books, 1996. See also S. Plous, 'Psychological Mechanisms in the Human Use of Animals', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 49, 1993, pp. 30-31.

genocide and of mass subjugation, particularly in the pre-modern period where groups such as Armenians (who were sometimes termed *raja*, sheep to be fleeced) or Jews were tolerated as a presence within a hierarchical social framework, but could also be subject to periodic massacre.

My preliminary research into this area indicates that this pattern of naming is, in fact, the case, as for example in South Africa, where Afrikaners have historically described educated black people as *nageapte Blankes*, 'apes who ape white men.' Another example of animalising language in South Africa is found in the rationale for the Afrikaners' Great Trek north, which was begun after the British abolished slavery in 1833. Anna Steenkamp, the daughter of the Boer leader Piet Retief, explained that '[i]t is not so much their [Africans'] freedom that drove us to such lengths as their being placed on equal footing with Christians.' According to Steenkamp, Africans were *schepsels*, creatures, other than human, and therefore incapable of being placed on the same footing as humans.<sup>232</sup>

In other words, while animal naming certainly plays a role in non-genocidal forms of mass violence and organised subjugation, the forms it takes are by no means identical to those in genocide and genocidal killing; rather, they are discursively appropriate to the function that they perform. These examples thus provide further evidence for the argument that the form in which dehumanisation manifests has a predictable functional relationship to the type of action which is taken toward the group whom it is used to characterise.

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<sup>232</sup> Tatz, *With Intent To Destroy*, p. 108.

## VIII. Methods of Killing

*ELIE: The club is more crushing, but the machete is more natural. The Rwandan is accustomed to the machete from childhood. Grab a machete – that is what we do every morning. We cut sorghum, we prune banana trees, we hack out vines, we kill chickens... The blade, when you use it to cut branch, animal or man, it has nothing to say.*

*In the end, a man is like an animal: you give him a whack on the head or the neck, and down he goes. In the first days someone who had already slaughtered chickens – and especially goats – had an advantage, understandably. Later, everybody grew accustomed to the new activity, and the laggards caught up.<sup>233</sup>*

The issue mentioned in the previous section, concerning the *familiarity* of perpetrators with violence against particular non-human animals, may also relate to a possible connection between the name of the animal used, and the method by which the victim is killed. As we have seen, one functional aspect of legitimisation is to discursively shift a collectivity into a category (such as animals) toward which there is already in existence both an ideology of killing and harmful treatment as legitimate, and the physical practice of such killing and harmful treatment.

In the first place, we might bear in mind that the entire ‘science’ of eugenics, motivating and justifying killing and violence in many different socio-geographical contexts, emerged from the practices of animal husbandry and pedigree animal breeding.<sup>234</sup> In Australia, the genocidal removal of ‘mixed blood’ children was done explicitly in order to ‘breed out the

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<sup>233</sup> Hatzfeld, p. 37.

<sup>234</sup> C. Tatz, ‘The “Doctorhood” of Genocide’, in C. Tatz, P. Arnold & S. Tatz (eds), *Genocide Perspectives III: Essays on the Holocaust and Other Genocides*, Brandl & Schlesinger, Blackheath, 2006, p. 85. See also D. Szybel, ‘Can the treatment of animals be compared to the Holocaust?’, *Ethics & The Environment*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2006, pp. 106-107; for specific examples, see P. Weindling, *Health, race and German politics between national unification and Nazism, 1870-1945*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, pp. 474-476, 554-563.

color.’<sup>235</sup> In some episodes, however, there seems to be an even more direct connection; for example, in the gassing of ‘verminous’ Jews, the ‘crushing’ of Tutsi with clubs or the ‘cutting down’ of Tutsi ‘tall trees’ with machetes, the ‘dispersal’ of indigenous Australians along with the distribution of poisoned food, or (as we have seen) the hunting of ‘wild’ indigenous peoples.<sup>236</sup> Numerous scholars, including Charles Patterson and David Sztybel, also draw a connection of similarity between, firstly, the practices of modern ‘rational’ science (in particular, I would add, experimentation on living subjects whose wellbeing is considered worthless);<sup>237</sup> secondly, the Nazi use of Zyklon B as an insecticide (under which auspices it was sent to the death camps) as well as the substance used for the mass killing of humans;<sup>238</sup> and thirdly, the assembly-line (or rather, disassembly-line) industrialisation of death in modern slaughterhouses and the industrialisation of death in Nazi death camps – another link both to the practices of modernity and to the killing of domestic animals.<sup>239</sup> Indeed, Sztybel lays out a detailed, thirty-nine point comparison of ways in which the treatment of animals and of Nazi victims may be compared, many of which (such as ‘vermin,’ ‘hunting,’ ‘namelessness’ and ‘bureaucratization,’ as well as the ways in which moral responsibility is disowned or rejected by perpetrators) are relevant to the discursive concerns of this and the following typological chapters.

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<sup>235</sup> Bartrop, p. 75. As regards justificatory dehumanisation, the evidence would suggest that many involved in this program believed that, since indigenous Australians were not at the level of ‘true [that is, white] humans,’ they did not grieve for their children in the same way that white people would; as C. F. Gale, the Chief Protector of Aborigines in Western Australia, said in 1909, while the ‘momentary grief’ of a mother might be ‘frantic,’ ‘they soon forget their offspring’ (in Bartrop, p. 79).

<sup>236</sup> For Australia, see Barta, p.41n12.

<sup>237</sup> Michael Mann notes a telling comment by a Nazi physician that there is no difference ‘between Jews and guinea pigs’ (M. Mann, ‘Were the Perpetrators of Genocide “Ordinary Men” or “Real Nazis”? Results from Fifteen Hundred Biographies’, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3, 2000, p. 352).

<sup>238</sup> Musolff, p. 24. For the history of Zyklon and the use of poison gas for ‘disinfestation,’ see Weindling, *Epidemics and Genocide*, pp. 118-136.

<sup>239</sup> Patterson, p. 109-122; Sztybel. In his article, Sztybel also demonstrates with some thoroughness why it is not unethical to draw comparisons between the treatment of animals and the treatment of Jews in the Holocaust.

This question, however, is relevant to the present work only inasmuch as it strengthens the argument that discursive changes in identity construction are directly related to particular practices to be enacted upon certain objects. Discourse may refer not only to the nature of the object and the treatment which must be, or which may be, enacted upon that object, but also to the specific method which is used to carry out that practice. Names tell perpetrators not only why they *may* kill and why they *should* kill, but even *how* they should kill.

## IX. Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen the way in which the discursive construction, either metaphorical or literal, of collectivities as subhumans or as animals may reshape the moral order in such a way as to either motivate or legitimate the destruction of that collectivity. The question as to which of these functions is being performed is, as I have outlined in Chapter Four, related to the concept of threat; in animalisation, the presence or absence of threat is related to the specific animal name which is used to characterise the collectivity. This type of terminology is found in the context of multifarious motivations for genocide; the threat thus implied may be a metaphorical representation, or it may be inherent in the characterisation itself. As documentary examples demonstrate, specific names will vary both geo-culturally, and temporally; however, there is a common pattern regarding the use and functions of this discursive strategy, and the forms in which it manifests.

We have considered here the ideological construction of 'the animal' in human society, animal naming in episodes of genocide and genocidal killing, and some examples of the way in which this kind of naming is used outside of genocidal situations. This has provided, firstly, a demonstration of commonalities of presence and function of animalisation in genocide and

genocidal killing; and secondly, some idea as to how the functional use of animal names fits into what can be considered a continuum of dehumanisation. With regard to our primary subject – the range of that continuum which relates to genocide and genocidal killing – animal naming may perform either the less extreme function of legitimisation, or the more extreme function of motivation (which is inherently inclusive of legitimisation). However, an acknowledgment of the different kinds of animal naming which take place in episodes of subjugation, exploitation and oppression – and also of the use of animal naming in ‘everyday’ discourse – is an indication of the existence of dehumanisation as a differentiated continuum. Within this continuum, a thematic of content (in this case, animal naming) exists across a range of different functionalities or purposivenesses, where this range can be understood in terms of the extremity of the negative attitude toward the object. While animalising language is thus not specific to genocide and genocidal killing, in such episodes it may play a very specific role (one which is different from that which it plays in other types of event) – and it is the nature of that role which has been demonstrated in this chapter.

Thus far in a three-part typology of genocidal dehumanisation, I have examined two types of discursive formation which name victim groups as living organisms, and I have exposed the ways in which these types have emerged in the historical-discursive context of the modern era. In the final typological chapter I consider the discourse of bureaucracy – a type that is also closely associated with the discourses and conditions of modernity – and in doing so I explore the ways in which bureaucratic systems impose reified instrumental, mechanistic and euphemistic characterisations upon their objects.

## Chapter 7.

### **'With scorn and bias': Genocidal Dehumanisation in Bureaucratic and Euphemistic Discourse**

*The quantification of nature, which led to its explication in terms of mathematical structures, separated reality from all inherent ends and, consequently, separated the true from the good, science from ethics.*

– Herbert Marcuse<sup>1</sup>

*[T]o use bureaucratic planning and procedures and regulation for a massive operation of systematic murder throughout a whole continent speaks of almost inconceivably profound dehumanisation.*

– Leo Kuper<sup>2</sup>

*... political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them.*

– George Orwell<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> H. Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, Abacus, London, 1972, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in D. Szybel, 'Can the treatment of animals be compared to the Holocaust?', *Ethics & The Environment*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2006, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> G. Orwell, 'Politics and the English Language', in G. Orwell, *Collected Essays*, Mercury, London, 1961, p. 347.



Orwell is, of course, the dean of investigations into the political (in the broadest sense) use of bureaucratic and euphemistic language to conceal the reality to which it refers, and which it constructs. This chapter investigates this set of utterances in episodes of genocide and mass killing: it is an analysis of the 'regimes of practices' (to use Michel Foucault's term) contingent upon the emergence of modernity, of the rise of what Philip Zimbardo terms 'administrative evil.'<sup>4</sup> These regimes spawned a discursive strategy of bureaucratic dehumanisation that legitimised the mass killing of collectivities categorised according to demography, and dealt with these collectivities (that is, oppressed and killed them) in rational-instrumental fashion.

My intent in this chapter is both simple, and specific: to examine the role of bureaucracy as a form of dehumanisation in genocide and genocidal killing. I do not intend to mount a general critique of bureaucratic centralisation as a system of power, though I will draw upon such critiques to inform my argument. Nor will I present a more general case concerning bureaucracy as a functional aspect of national governance which makes genocide possible, though many aspects of such an argument have points of relevance for the subject matter at hand. Both of these arguments – that is, general critiques of bureaucracy as a system of domination, and a claim concerning the centrality of bureaucracy *in toto* as an aspect of modernity which is deeply implicated in the practice of genocide – have been well outlined in the apposite literature. My purpose in this chapter is not to re-cover this ground, but rather to use it as a point of departure to examine bureaucratic dehumanisation as a discursive strategy within the framework of genocidal dehumanisation laid out in Chapter Four. I do so by looking at the way in which this strategy came to be constituted, how it is internalised and enacted by perpetrators within bureaucratic systems, and how it may discursively construct its objects in ways which legitimise genocidal action toward them.

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<sup>4</sup> P. Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding how good people turn evil*, Random House, New York, 2007, p. 381; as I have mentioned elsewhere, Zimbardo's analysis is useful despite my major misgivings about the use of the term and concept 'evil.'

How are we to define 'bureaucracy'? While both bureaucratic practice and modern society has changed a great deal since the time of his writing, Max Weber's definition of bureaucracy is still a good 'shorthand' to identify what is meant when referring to this system (it should be emphasised, however, that Weber's bureaucracy is an 'ideal type,' one which is not fully manifest in any given situation). That is, bureaucracy is understood in principle as a system of domination which is centralised, hierarchical, governed by a set of general, rational(ised) rules and based upon written documents, in which authority is graded in levels, particular bodies have fixed jurisdiction, and the (appointed) office of the individual is separate from her or his person (in terms of private life and domicile).<sup>5</sup> In analysing bureaucracy, it is important to distinguish between its aspect as a delegated structure of responsibility, and as a record-keeping exercise. Both of these aspects, however, have roles to play in dehumanisation, roles which will become clear over the course of this chapter. The critiques of bureaucracy which we will encounter here will show, firstly, how, *contra* Weber, the necessity, neutrality, and rationality of modern bureaucracy as a system have been challenged; and secondly, the way in which this system, as a system, is deeply implicated in the enactment of death and destruction.

Bureaucratic management can be considered both a technique, and a technology. Kathy E. Ferguson writes that "[t]he term "bureaucratization" refers to the invasion of disciplinary technique into both the discursive and the institutional practices of a particular realm of human relations ... reshaping both the roles and the events available to people, and the language commonly used to describe those events, along bureaucratic lines."<sup>6</sup> With regard to the human, it has been argued – most notably by Weber – that bureaucracy's 'specific nature ... develops the more perfectly the more [it] is "dehumanized,"' that is (according to this logic) the more it operates under the principle of *sine ira ac studio*, 'without scorn or

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<sup>5</sup> M. Weber, *From Max Weber: Essays In Sociology* (ed. & trans. H. H. Gerth & C. Wright Mills), Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1948, pp. 196-200.

<sup>6</sup> K. E. Ferguson, *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1984, p. 37.

bias.’<sup>7</sup> The material presented in this chapter will not analyse this claim as regards the function of bureaucracies in completing tasks, but it will be shown to be utterly false in the relationship it posits between dehumanisation and equal or respectful treatment.

In the following discussion, then, I deal with the ‘realm of human relations’ which pertains to bureaucratic mass killing. I examine, firstly, the inherently dehumanising tendencies of bureaucracy as a system, and their specific implication in mass killing; and secondly, bureaucratic and euphemistic language which names victims as non-sentient objects. This most often occurs in bureaucratic utterances in which individuals are referred to as ‘pieces,’ ‘units’ and so forth, but it may also occur in more direct metaphors in which victims are thought of or referred to as, for example, ‘logs.’ The salient feature of this type of utterance is that victims are ‘de-biologised’; they are entirely denied agency and individuality; they are removed from the question of the moral order in regard to their status as objects of action; and they are turned into units of production (though ‘destruction’ might be the more appropriate term). In the course of this investigation it will become apparent that even non-bureaucratic de-biologising utterances tends to follow and emerge from the patterns created by modern bureaucratic discourse, and that such utterances are intimately connected with overtly bureaucratic dehumanisation.

I begin by outlining the historical developments which created the system and the discourse of bureaucratic management, and the inherent ideological tendencies which were ‘built in’ to this system from its inception. I trace the ways in which the dehumanisation with which this chapter is concerned emerges, firstly, from the centralising project of modernity and the nation-state; secondly, from the mass scale on which ideology became able to be realistically conceived and action logistically executed; and thirdly, from the tendency, not to ignore the existence of the individual as such, but to perceive, categorise and act upon the individual as

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<sup>7</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, pp. 215-216.

an idealised type, and only as a representative of that idealised type. I go on to demonstrate the way in which bureaucratic and euphemistic construction creates social, moral, physical and psychological distance, which 'invisible-ises' victims' humanity and the meaning or reality of involvement in action taken against them. I then examine the way in which the logic of bureaucratic discourse and practice is weighted against the humanisation of victims, before turning to the differences between the nature and use of bureaucratic and euphemistic discourse on the part of bureaucratic 'middlemen' in the killing process, and on the part of direct killers.

### **I. Bureaucratic Discourse, Bureaucratic Euphemism, Non-bureaucratic Euphemism**

The purported nature of the ideal bureaucratic-rational system is that it is free from affect, and that its very purpose is to deal with and to make comprehensible processes concerning concrete physical reality. However, in contrast to this aspect of its own ideological self-representation, the bureaucratic style tends to be heavily euphemistic in its reduction of every item to a unit of production which is interchangeable with other units in the same category, the specific nature of which is not important to the process. Bureaucratic discourse therefore produces euphemistic language such as (as we will see) the classification of humans as 'units.' Bureaucratic management also produces non-verbal dehumanisation – for instance, the tattooing of numbers onto Nazi camp prisoners. As well as these forms of strictly bureaucratic dehumanisation, in this chapter (as I have mentioned) I also deal with non-bureaucratic euphemistic language (which may nonetheless relate to production, the better to associate killing with activities which do not produce equal psychic or cognitive dissonance), which names victims as inanimate objects. As noted above, the connections between these forms, which at times seem unrelated, should become clear over the course

of the chapter. At this point, it will suffice to say that bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic euphemism often work hand-in-hand, as in the Nazi case, where euphemisms which were not strictly bureaucratic, such as *Endlösung* (final solution) were used within official circles (indeed, euphemistic language, or lying, was itself specifically known as the 'language rule') along with strictly bureaucratic euphemisms relating to units, numbers, and so forth. As we will see, these two related types of utterance, while not always present in the same situation, are mutually reinforcing.

## II. Modernity, Bureaucracy and the Nation-State: The Creation of Distance

'I am not a number, I am a free man!' ran the memorable catchphrase from the 1960s television series *The Prisoner*. While most people accept, grudgingly or otherwise, that modern mass society must be run on centralised bureaucratic principles in which statistics are the method by which policy decisions affecting individuals are made, this does not mean that being treated as a statistic does not cause fear and resentment, as in the case of 'Number Six'; and rightly so, given that this discursive strategy objectifies the individual and denies her/him agency in the construction of the nature of his/her own identity. As well as this, the conceptualisation of the individual as one 'unit' among other identical units of the same kind (whatever the category chosen) allows the making of decisions which impact on individuals, without reference to their humanity – as Weber puts it, '[t]he "objective" discharge of business primarily means a discharge of business ... "without regard for persons"'<sup>8</sup> – and therefore without reference to the human impact of such decisions. In modern bureaucratic society, emotional distance is created between the decision-maker or facilitator in a centralised position of power, and the object of her or his decision. In the

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<sup>8</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, p. 215.

words of James Waller, '[r]educed to data, dehumanised victims lose their moral standing and become objects requiring disposal.'<sup>9</sup>

The most famous example of the murderous bureaucrat who manages to disavow connection with the consequence of his or her actions is, of course, Adolf Eichmann; but *Schreibtischtäter* ('desk murderers') are not confined to Nazi genocide. According to Zygmunt Bauman, 'the essence of bureaucratic structure and process' is the sole focus on instrumental-rational criteria for means, and the consequent dissociation of ends from moral evaluation.<sup>10</sup> This occurs through 'the meticulous functional division of labour,' and 'the substitution of technical for a moral responsibility.'<sup>11</sup>

How has this discursive formation emerged? We can begin to answer the question through the examination of a number of characteristics of the modern bureaucratic society – namely, the physical size and internal distances of units of governance, along with new technologies of communication; the psychological distance which accompanied its physical counterpart; the assumption of ethical authority by the state; and discourse emerging from Enlightenment ideology valorising 'reason' and 'rationality' as ends and as moral good in themselves.

In the modern era the nation-state model, along with the rise of mass society, involved the centralisation of power and the implementation of demographic techniques of population

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<sup>9</sup> J. Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (2<sup>nd</sup> revised edn), Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2007, p. 208. On bureaucratic distance and psychological impact, see also D. Bloxham, 'Organized Mass Murder: Structure, Participation, and Motivation in Comparative Perspective', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2008, p. 218.

<sup>10</sup> Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca (New York), 1989, p. 98. See also S. Opatow, 'Deterring Moral Exclusion,' *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no.1, 1990, p. 175.

<sup>11</sup> As well as Bauman, see J. Betton & T. J. Hench "'Any color as long as it's black": Henry Ford and the ethics of business', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2000, p. 539, on technical responsibility. See also M. K. Huggins, M. Haritos-Fatouros & P. G. Zimbardo, *Violence Workers: Police Torturers and Murderers Reconstruct Brazilian Atrocities*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 2002, pp. 170-172.

conceived and enacted from the centre (and made possible by modern technologies of speedy communication over long distances, technologies Weber calls 'the pacemakers of bureaucratization'<sup>12</sup>), as the standard method of governance.<sup>13</sup> The physically-distanced nature of modern society in itself has repercussions; as Bauman observes, 'responsibility is silenced once proximity is eroded; it may eventually be replaced with resentment once the fellow human subject is transformed into an Other,' a process which may be all the easier considering the lack of intimate knowledge of the other occasioned by physical distance.<sup>14</sup> In this society, 'the distance at which human action may be effective and consequential ... grow[s] rapidly'; but the capacity of the moral drive remains limited to the proximity of the individual.<sup>15</sup>

The distance created by modern bureaucratic systems, however, is not only physical, but also psychological. Bureaucratic organisation creates a class of 'middlemen' (bureaucrats) who are vital to the enacting of power, but who do not feel a connection with these actions inasmuch as they neither order action (in the sense of deciding what action will be taken), nor physically carry it out.<sup>16</sup> Bauman writes that, as opposed to the conditions inhering in the pre-modern order, in the bureaucratic division of labour 'most functionaries of the bureaucratic hierarchy may give commands without full knowledge of their effects.'<sup>17</sup> It thus becomes possible for action to be disavowed by every party involved: '[f]or the person on whose behalf they are done, they exist verbally or in the imagination ... The man who has actually done them, on the other hand, will always view them as someone else's and himself

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<sup>12</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, p. 213.

<sup>13</sup> On the techniques of population in the context of mass killing, see Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, pp. 338-339.

<sup>14</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 193. This is not to say that familiar proximity always inhibits violence, as we see in episodes such as the Rwandan genocide.

<sup>15</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 193.

<sup>16</sup> A. Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1999, p. 199.

<sup>17</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 99; Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 249.

as but the blameless instrument of an alien will...'<sup>18</sup> The division of any action into minute, functional, separate tasks spreads responsibility so thinly that no individual need feel it in regard to the final action:<sup>19</sup> 'the organization as a whole is an instrument to obliterate responsibility.'<sup>20</sup> As Waller notes, the larger the group is, the less responsibility is felt by any individual.<sup>21</sup> The acceptance of personal responsibility is also inhibited by the fact that '[t]he bureaucratic division of labor ... creates an ethos in which refusing to kill would only alienate – in a condemnatory fashion – one's friends and colleagues and, in the end, not deter in the least bit the killing operations' (a subject to which we will return).<sup>22</sup> Ultimately, responsibility is both displaced onto the agency of others, and diffused to the point of non-existence.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, bureaucratic language (similar to that often used by perpetrators reporting their own participation in brutality) can be characterised as an 'agentless, passive style' which serves as a linguistic tool to create the appearance that action (in this case, action which might on other interpretations appear immoral) is 'the work of nameless forces rather than people':<sup>24</sup> Stanley Milgram calls this 'counteranthropomorphism,' the attribution of an impersonal quality to forces which are human in origin and maintenance.<sup>25</sup> Bureaucratic

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<sup>18</sup> In Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 25; see also S. Milgram, *Obedience To Authority: An Experimental View*, Pinter & Martin, London, 2005 (1st edn 1974), pp. 9-10; A. Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency', *Journal of Moral Education*, vol. 31, no. 2, 2002, pp. 106-108.

<sup>19</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 100; see also Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 247-250; Milgram pp. 12-13; A. Bandura, C. Barbaranelli, G. V. Caprara, & C. Pastorelli, 'Mechanisms of Moral Disengagement in the Exercise of Moral Agency', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 71, no. 2, 1996, p. 365.

<sup>20</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 163.

<sup>21</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 248.

<sup>22</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 250.

<sup>23</sup> Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, p. 365; Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', pp. 196-198; A. Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement of Moral Control', *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 40, no. 1, 1990, pp. 34-37.

<sup>24</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 12; see also Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 105; Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 195; Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement', p. 32.

<sup>25</sup> Milgram, p. 10.



processes thereby not only allow the evasion of responsibility, but create their own momentum, both actual and psychological, and, as we will see, ultimately *become their own end*.

Another aspect of the rational, centralised and bureaucratic nation-state (and nationalist) model of governance is the usurpation of supreme ethical authority by state powers on behalf of the societies which they rule.<sup>26</sup> ‘The good of the nation-state’ (or, as Weber put it, ‘reasons of state’) become the ultimate ethical authority, and technical experts are in turn employed to advise on action which in itself becomes a foregone, unquestionable conclusion. Following from this, Milgram notes that a specific characteristic of modern society is the way in which it teaches individuals to respond to *impersonal* authorities.<sup>27</sup> In Rwanda, according to Alison Des Forges, the claim by perpetrators that they killed because authorities told them to kill reflects not a predisposition to obey orders, but a recognition that the moral authority of ‘the state’ made the unthinkable both thinkable and do-able.<sup>28</sup>

The rise of the distance society, operating in the framework of the model of the nation-state, was necessarily accompanied by a massive expansion both of the techniques and discourse of bureaucracy, and of the bureaucratic classes. Bureaucratic demography was intimately informed by Enlightenment ideals which made ‘rationality,’ placed in opposition to a devalued ‘emotionality,’ a guiding principle and ideology of management and governance – the ideal, as Weber puts it, is ‘[t]he “objective” discharge of business ... according to *calculable rules* and “without regard for persons.”’<sup>29</sup> Ideology that depicts bureaucracy as a rational and pragmatic system dealing with concrete reality also conceals the value-laden metaphorical nature of the language which it employs. Herbert Marcuse calls this ideology

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<sup>26</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 199.

<sup>27</sup> Milgram, p. 139.

<sup>28</sup> A. Des Forges, “*Leave None To Tell The Story*”: *Genocide in Rwanda*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1999, p. 12.

<sup>29</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, p. 215; original italics.

'technical rationality,' and views it (at least in the Nazi case) as the 'legalized terror of bureaucratisation,' an all-embracing instrument and apparatus of mass domination.<sup>30</sup> Logic, in Marcuse's view, emerges from and must pay tribute to systems of domination; rationality, expressed as an hypothetical system of forms and functions, is dependent on a pre-established universe of ends (ends which, as part of this process, conceal their pre-established nature); and rationality develops not only in, but *for* this system of ends.<sup>31</sup>

Within this discursive-ideational system, the individual is literally reified: turned into a *res*, a thing, whose only pertinent qualities are those which are quantifiable.<sup>32</sup> Ultimately, then, in modern society the 'rational' is inherently political, and (rather than the irrational, as in some commonly held theories about oppressive social domination) it becomes the most effective vehicle of mystification.<sup>33</sup> In this process, 'the object world (including the subjects) is experienced as a world of *instrumentalities*' in which '[t]he technological context predefines the form in which objects appear'<sup>34</sup> (incidentally, we might also be reminded here of the way in which 'rationality' or 'reason' has been used as a justification for the oppression and destruction of humans who were claimed not to possess these qualities, and therefore to be in a 'lower,' 'subhuman,' or 'animal' condition<sup>35</sup>). Ultimately, 'rationality' (a means) comes to be seen as an end in itself, and as such conceals the actual purpose, or end, for which action is taken (as, for example, genocidal killing).

We have examined, then, the characteristics of modern bureaucracy and their relationship to dehumanisation; what, we must now ask, is the relationship between the system itself, and the individual within this system?

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<sup>30</sup> H. Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, (vol. 1, ed. Douglas Kellner), Routledge, London and New York, 1998, pp. 77-78.

<sup>31</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 137.

<sup>32</sup> See Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 138.

<sup>33</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 153.

<sup>34</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 173; original italics.

<sup>35</sup> See Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 186.

### III. The Individual within the Bureaucratic System

How are individuals subsumed into a bureaucratic system? The characteristics of bureaucracy outlined in the introduction to this chapter tell us something about the way in which this process occurs. As Marcuse puts it,

bureaucracy ... emerges on an apparently objective and impersonal ground, provided by the rational specialization of functions, and this rationality in turn serves to increase the rationality of submission. For, the more the individual functions are divided, fixated and synchronized according to objective and impersonal patterns, the less reasonable it is for the individual to withdraw or withstand ... The rationality embodied in the giant enterprises makes it appear as if men, in obeying them, obey the dictum of an objective rationality ... Private power relationships appear not only as relationships between objective things but also as the rule of rationality itself.<sup>36</sup>

This ideological representation of harmony between the special and the common interest is, however, delusive.<sup>37</sup> Marcuse also suggests that the creation or expansion of an ideologised bureaucracy (as in Nazi Germany) offers numerous novel opportunities and creates a new elite, factors which in themselves bind individuals to bureaucracies and to the organisations which created them.<sup>38</sup> As we have seen, the end to which the apparatus of bureaucracy works is its own maintenance on an increasingly efficient scale;<sup>39</sup> therefore, every individual within the apparatus has an incentive to work toward this end. In Marcuse's words, 'morale has become a part of technology.'<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, pp. 57-58. Marcuse draws a value-distinction between private bureaucracy, and effectively democratic public bureaucracy which the argument of this chapter would challenge; however, his insights into the functions of private bureaucracy may be generalised.

<sup>37</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 57.

<sup>38</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, pp. 75-76.

<sup>39</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 78.

<sup>40</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 161.

As well as this, in the mass group which is a bureaucracy (a group which is large enough that the individual is not personalised or known to all other members, but is small enough to maintain the characteristic of being a group), the moral obligation of individuals comes to be owed to the organisation to which they belong, and to individuals within that organisation, not to the objects on which they act.<sup>41</sup> That is, moral concerns do not relate to the action one performs, but rather to how well one lives up to the expectations of authority, and/or to those of one's (organisational) peers.<sup>42</sup> This, furthermore, is a self-reinforcing process: individual bureaucrats, observes Weber, have 'a common interest in seeing that the mechanism continues its functions and that the societally exercised authority carries on.'<sup>43</sup> In the bureaucratic situation, that is, a group identification occurs on the part of the individual which 'carries with it a *repression of conscience* where "outside values" are excluded and locally generated values dominate.'<sup>44</sup>

#### IV. Bureaucracy and Individual Morality

What *are* these 'locally generated values,' exactly? Bureaucratic language charts the progress of work, best expressed in statistics, which 'say nothing about the nature of the operation or its objects.'<sup>45</sup> In other words, bureaucratic discourse diverts any question of morality from the object, while concealing its human nature. What occurs as a result of these processes is, in Bauman's words, a state in which every action is *multifinal*: it 'can be

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<sup>41</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 99, 195; Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 196.

<sup>42</sup> Milgram, pp. 10, 147-8; this phenomenon has also been documented in detail by Zygmunt Bauman (*Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 159-166), by Hannah Arendt in her study of Adolf Eichmann (*Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* [revised and enlarged edn], Penguin, New York, 1983, pp. 22, 92), and, in regard to the expectations and judgements of one's equals rather than one's superiors, by Christopher Browning (*Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the final solution in Poland*, Penguin, London, 2001, pp. 174-175).

<sup>43</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, pp. 228-9.

<sup>44</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 243, original italics; see also Milgram, pp. 10-11.

<sup>45</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 99.

combined and integrated into more than one meaning-determining totality. By itself, the function is devoid of meaning, and the meaning which will be eventually bestowed on it is in no way pre-empted by the actions of its perpetrators.<sup>46</sup> In other words, 'technical responsibility ... forgets that the action is a means to something other than itself.'<sup>47</sup> It is only the *performance* of the act which is in question: Milgram calls this process a 'narrowing of moral concern.'<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the euphemistic language of modern bureaucracy, which over time seeps increasingly into everyday language, in itself distorts meaning regarding action. Marcuse identifies this as 'functional language,' 'the language of one-dimensional thought,' which identifies *things* and their *functions* (we may more specifically state here that, in terms of people, the individual is identified, firstly, with the collective, and secondly, with the effect that collective is said to have on 'society'). Such language, by its internally constructed terms of reference, validates itself and grants itself immunity against contradiction, and denies possibilities of distinction and complexity.<sup>49</sup> This characterisation holds even (or perhaps particularly) when language 'does not transmit orders but information.'<sup>50</sup>

In itself, this aspect of bureaucracy may not seem directly related to dehumanisation. However, it is the dehumanising discursive strategy which constructs humans as objects that allows calculation to take place with the least possibility of 'moral calculus' (regarding ends) intruding: 'the language in which things that happen to [humans] (or are done to them) are [sic] narrated, safeguards its referents from ethical evaluation.'<sup>51</sup> This discourse of technical *expertise* assures the psychological distance of both 'desk-murders' and 'hands-on'

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<sup>46</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 100.

<sup>47</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 101.

<sup>48</sup> Milgram, p. 9.

<sup>49</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, pp. 80-88.

<sup>50</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 91.

<sup>51</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 103.

perpetrators from their victims.<sup>52</sup> Bauman gives the example of Willy Just, a German technical expert who gave advice on improvements to Nazi gas vans so that 'fluids' would flow to the middle, allowing 'thin fluids' to exit the van and 'thicker fluids' to be hosed out afterwards.<sup>53</sup> The 'personality type of the technical expert,' writes Weber, is strongly furthered by the bureaucratisation of all domination.<sup>54</sup> The fact that feelings of moral responsibility continue to exist (oriented toward fulfilling a technical role, rather than toward the ends or consequences of action) means that, in perpetrators' own eyes, their essential goodness is endorsed, allowing them to feel more 'human' and to return to society after the commission of their deeds.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, this situation, in which a perpetrator has entered into the realm of authority of their own free will, and recognises the justifying ideology of the actions demanded, secures not only obedience, but *willing* obedience, 'accompanied by a strong sense of doing the right thing.'<sup>56</sup> Finally, a bureaucratic structure which rewards loyalty and performance creates a situation in which professional self-interest can play a role in perpetrator attitudes to the task to which they have been assigned;<sup>57</sup> this includes their understanding of the meaning of victims' existence and of their actions toward victims.

Numerous examples of the way in which the system outlined above binds willing perpetrators to systems of mass killing can be found. Hannah Arendt argues that the 'horribly painstaking thoroughness' of Nazi genocide could be traced to the notion (very common in Germany, she adds) that to be law-abiding is not only to obey laws, but to

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<sup>52</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 196.

<sup>53</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 197. See also E. Katz, 'On the neutrality of technology: the Holocaust death camps as a counter-example', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2005, pp. 414-417, for further examples of the role of technicians.

<sup>54</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, p. 240.

<sup>55</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 250.

<sup>56</sup> Milgram, pp. 143-144.

<sup>57</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 253-254; see also Milgram, pp. 139-140.

identify one's own will with the principle behind the laws.<sup>58</sup> In pre-colonial Rwanda, there was a well-developed system of hierarchical organisation and structure of authority, a fact that the Belgian colonisers considered 'a major factor for progress.'<sup>59</sup> Also well-developed were institutions of labour mobilisation and requisition, a practice which would continue in colonial, and postcolonial, systems such as the *umuganda* (obligatory communal work).<sup>60</sup> It is worth noting here that Rwandan genocide was often characterised as 'community work' – that is, both as familiar and morally unambiguous 'work' rather than 'killing' as such, and as an activity authorised by, ordered by, and for the good of the community – meaning that rejecting such work was to betray the community.<sup>61</sup> Indeed, Philip Verwimp proposes as a representative example of this narrative the similarity between a 1979 exhortation of President Juvénal Habyarimana's to communal work in order to 'attack' the problem and 'destroy the forces of evil,' and the language used in 1994 to refer to the killing of Tutsi.<sup>62</sup> Many perpetrators explained their actions (after the genocide) by reference to the importance of obeying 'the law' (*igeteko*) or 'the authorities.'<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Arendt, pp. 136-137; it should be noted, however, that characterisations of cultures as more or less inherently 'law-abiding' are highly problematic, and are often self-comforting rationalisations on the part of external bystanders, rather than theoretically-considered explanations.

<sup>59</sup> S. Straus, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power, and War in Rwanda*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca & London, 2006, p. 209-211.

<sup>60</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, p. 211-214, 217-218. The literal meaning of *umuganda* is the wood used to construct a house (P. Verwimp, 'Development ideology, the peasantry and genocide: Rwanda represented in Habyarimana's speeches', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2000, p. 344); an interesting connection may be seen here with the genocidal exhortation, mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, to 'cut the tall trees' (kill Tutsi).

<sup>61</sup> Philip Verwimp suggests (in a controversial and somewhat eccentric article) that the ideology of development, combined with a valorisation of agricultural work (which was discursively constructed as excluding Tutsi) was the chief ideological motivating factor in the Rwandan genocide; an argument concerning the importance of this factor in discourse is put in D. Li, 'Echoes of violence: considerations on radio and genocide in Rwanda', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 6, no. 1, 2004, p. 15. Li suggests that as well as *umuganda*, '[t]he value of work was also tied to the virtues espoused by the Catholic Church (Prunier, 1995, p 77; Verwimp, 2000, p 338) and to the dignity of being associated with the activities of the state (Taylor, 1999, p 141).'

<sup>62</sup> Verwimp, p. 350.

<sup>63</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, pp. 137, 159-160, 173, 219-221.

We can conclude with Marcuse, then, that in the modern society, domination and administration have ceased to be separate and independent functions.<sup>64</sup> The system is designed such that the individual comes to self-identify with that system; if not on all levels, certainly to the extent that the incentive to perform binds her/him to the system and seriously obstructs not only possibilities, but also the conceivability, of meaningful resistance.

In speaking of tendencies which support oppressive domination, two other properties of modern bureaucracy must also be noted. Firstly, Weber argues that the chief influence on 'the bureaucratic tendency' was the need created by standing armies and by the connection of public finance with the military establishment, developments of the modern era;<sup>65</sup> this should also tell us something about the nature of bureaucracy. Indeed, as we have seen previously, the military metaphor is frequently seen in genocide (all the more so given that genocide is often carried out in periods of warfare). In Rwanda, for example, Tutsi were often depicted in an essentialised fashion as 'accomplices' of the rebel RPF, or as the generalised 'Tutsi enemy' or *Inkotanyi*: Scott Straus concludes that 'killing Tutsis was inseparable from the language of war.'<sup>66</sup> Secondly, bureaucracy innately lends itself to concealment and (public) euphemism. As Weber notes, for those within the system superiority is enhanced by keeping secret their knowledge and intentions, meaning that this tendency is built into the system: '[t]he concept of the "official secret" is the specific invention of bureaucracy, and nothing is so fanatically defended by the bureaucracy as this attitude, which cannot be substantially justified beyond these specifically qualified areas.'<sup>67</sup>

The fact that some of the psychological states mentioned above are not innovations of the modern age (for example, the displacement of moral responsibility of those 'acting on

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<sup>64</sup> Marcuse, *One Dimensional Man*, p. 92.

<sup>65</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, p. 212.

<sup>66</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, pp. 29, 50, 58.

<sup>67</sup> Weber, *From Max Weber*, p. 233.



orders') should not blind us to the fact that in the modern system these common psychological processes were employed in the creation of a new model of governance, and a new society, in which physical, psychological, emotional and moral distance was created between those who enacted or supported power, and the objects of such action. Modern bureaucratic management was not and is not a neutral tool which can be put to any ends; it contains various propensities and tendencies, outlined above, which in some circumstances may be considered to be offset by other benefits, but in other contexts contribute immeasurably to the existence and operation of systems of destruction.<sup>68</sup>

## V. Genocidal and Non-Genocidal Bureaucracy

We have seen the way in which the rise of the modern, bureaucratic state allowed the removal of 'moral calculus' from the enactment of violence, and the way in which this process takes place both on the level of executive or collective decision-making, and at the individual level. From this premise, however, it may be objected that there is nothing uncommon about the fact that genocidal states use this kind of language about their subjects; that this fact has nothing specific to tell us about *genocide*, and that bureaucratic centralisation and its impact on society has already been exhaustively explored. Bauman acknowledges this objection when he writes that 'the adverse impact of dehumanisation is much more common than the habit to identify it almost totally with its genocidal effects would suggest.'<sup>69</sup> Taking this train of thought a step further, Donald Bloxham critiques Bauman's reading thus:

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<sup>68</sup> As mentioned in the introduction, we may consider 'bureaucracy' in itself to be a technology; in this sense, Eric Katz's argument regarding the misconception of a perception of technology as 'value-neutral' is highly relevant. As Katz observes, 'technologies determine the forms of human life, and thus the values that humans live by' (p. 413).

<sup>69</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 103.

To some degree genocidal structures inevitably will resemble the political systems in which they are embedded, and so Zygmunt Bauman, who locates the character of the Holocaust within the bureaucratic mindset that he sees as central to its perpetration, may be saying only that Nazi Germany was a modern state, which is self-evident.<sup>70</sup>

Bauman has indeed located the murderous social reorganisation of the Holocaust (and, by extension, other genocides) within the realm of the massive, rational, *ordering* process of modernity in which 'everyone will be transported from their present, contingent site to the place where reason orders them to be' (including nowhere).<sup>71</sup> And it is, of course, true that a bureaucratic system is the practice of the modern capitalist nation-state, no matter what substance it is dealing in (oil, sugar or people) and, furthermore, that it *always* deals with people in this way. An example can be found in the fact that every modern, Western human society already, on a massive scale, treats biological beings (namely, animals and plants) in exactly this fashion: as interchangeable items representing a class, and as units of production. Far from being a counter-example, this demonstrates that the fact that this is the standard system of organisation in such societies is intimately involved in the expression of dominance over particular groups, and that one aspect of the enactment of such dominance upon humans is that it is discursively related to other forms of the enactment of dominance which are conceived as less morally problematic. As Bauman writes, 'the civilizing process is, among other things, a process of divesting the use and deployment of violence from moral calculus, and of emancipating the desiderata of rationality from interference of [sic] ethical

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<sup>70</sup> Bloxham, p. 206. Bloxham makes more detailed criticisms of Bauman's argument regarding modernity, but, given that they relate to the specificities of the German situation, they will not be addressed here. In a comparative sense, Bloxham's argument is directed not at the conditions of modernity *in toto*, but at the argument that genocide is normatively carried out by modern methods. Indeed, Bloxham's argument for a comparative approach, for the importance of ideology as a motivating factor, and for an understanding of bureaucracy as a common modern characteristic rather than a specific aspect of the Holocaust, can be read as supporting the argument that I present here.

<sup>71</sup> Z. Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember, – But What?', in James Kaye and Bo Stråth (eds), *Enlightenment and Genocide, Contradictions of Modernity* (Series philosophy & politics; No. 5), P.I.E. – Peter Lang, Brussels, 2000, p. 50.

norms or moral inhibitions.<sup>72</sup> The infliction of genocide involves prejudice (in the sense of an emotional feeling of the lesser worth or danger of another collective), but also 'the routine and unemotional function of modern society.'<sup>73</sup> And both of these practices involve dehumanisation.

Given that genocide and mass killing are the extremes of the expression of violent dominance, it becomes clear that the fact that such discourse functions at a lower-key register constantly on an everyday level (to allow one not to think about the rise in levels of domestic violence or homelessness, the treatment of refugees and minority groups, or the fate of the dead animal on one's plate) means that it can be used as a model to create similar psychological-emotional states toward other circumstances, ones to which there has been less time to become habituated, which have not yet socialised as norms, or which are periodical or circumstantial rather than ongoing. That is, the very fact that decisions regarding action in mass society are, at least in principle, always made on the basis of statistical research and demography (whether they involve cuts in tax or cuts in welfare) means that the use of such language can normalise the activity of mass murder (which, although it should not be considered societally dysfunctional within a benign normative model, tends to be periodical, taking place, as it does in the vast majority of cases, in periods of instability); it makes genocidal action into just another task among many in the running of a well-ordered society, rather than an unprecedented, extraordinary or qualitatively different event from the perspective of the perpetrator and his or her universe of meaning and morality. As Bauman puts it, '[t]his mode can be put to the service of a genocidal objective without major revision of its structure, mechanisms and behavioural norms.'<sup>74</sup> In Rwanda, according to Alison Des Forges,

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<sup>72</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 28.

<sup>73</sup> Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', p. 52.

<sup>74</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 104.

[a]dministrators broke the genocide down into a series of discrete tasks which they executed without consideration of the ultimate objective of the work. Cultivators turned out for the long-standing practice of communal labor although they knew that they were to cut down people as well as the brush in which they found them. Priests announced public meetings without consideration of the message to be delivered there. Businessmen contributed money to the 'self-defense' fund established by the government as they had contributed to similar collections in the past, even though the money was to buy 'refreshments' for the militia and fuel to transport them to their places of 'work.'<sup>75</sup>

Such a process is self-sustaining, and contains its own momentum. Once individuals have been transformed into units, their very humanity 'slows down the smooth flow of bureaucratic routine,' creating a 'nuisance factor' which means that individuals are considered not only with indifference, but with disapprobation and censure.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, Bauman maintains that bureaucracy is not merely a tool, which can be used for good or bad ends; rather, 'the dice are loaded,' inasmuch as bureaucracy 'has a logic and momentum of its own'; it is 'programmed to seek the optimal solution', and to measure that solution in a way which does 'not distinguish between one human object and another, or between human and inhuman objects.'<sup>77</sup> In genocide and genocidal killing, the rational sequence of the destruction of victims (as outlined by Raul Hilberg), beginning with definition and ending with annihilation, is arranged, according to the logic of bureaucratic discourse, precisely to evict the object from the realm of moral obligation, with each step putting further distance between the victim, and perpetrators and bystanders.<sup>78</sup> We may also consider Wolfgang Sofsky's comment on categorisation in the Nazi camps: *in itself*, the system of categorisation 'created distances, intensified antagonisms and drew lines of social demarcation that none

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<sup>75</sup> Des Forges, p. 12.

<sup>76</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>77</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 104.

<sup>78</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 190-192.

could cross ... [it] guided social judgement by intensifying the perception of differences.<sup>79</sup> In the following section, I outline the way in which such categorisation dehumanises its objects and legitimises mistreatment and killing.

## VI. Bureacracy, Categorisation and Dominance

In the introduction to this chapter, I mentioned the way in which, in the modern age, individuals are categorised as representative of an ideal type. This type is chosen from among a pre-constructed taxonomy of types which is itself in turn chosen from other taxonomies as relevant to the situation at hand:<sup>80</sup> that is, a situational ideological framework is created through which circumstance is comprehended and action taken. Paul Chilton, drawing on research in the cognitive sciences, argues that language which categorises in this way blends the cognitive domains or 'modes' of social intelligence, with those of intuitive essentialism and technicality (tool-making). A naturalisation of the categories which are used takes place (categories which, though they may belong only to humans, do not in themselves remind one of the humanity of their objects), and humans thus come to be classified as non-human things which can be instrumentally manipulated.<sup>81</sup> In the discursive terms of modern technologies of population, in any given situation, one property is taken to be the defining characteristic of the individual (as a woman, Jew, Communist, *et cetera*), and that individual as such is synecdochal, is only a representative of the group of people who (and who are a

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<sup>79</sup> W. Sofsky, *The Order of Terror: The Concentration Camp* (trans. W. Templer), Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1999, p. 123.

<sup>80</sup> On categorisation in the context of arguments regarding genocidal and non-genocidal prejudice, see M. Billig, 'Henri Tajfel's "Cognitive aspects of prejudice" and psychology of bigotry', *The British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 41, 2002, p. 175.

<sup>81</sup> P. Chilton, 'Manipulation, memes and metaphors: The case of *Mein Kampf*' in L. de Saussure & P. Schulz (eds), *Manipulation and Ideologies in the Twentieth Century: Discourse, language, mind*, John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2005, p. 40.

group only because they) have that property.<sup>82</sup> Bauman suggests that this kind of categorical abstraction 'is one of modernity's principal powers ... genocide differs from other murders in having a category for its object.'<sup>83</sup> Finally, in a possible endgame, the individual becomes representative *only* of that property itself (as we have seen, Jews come to be understood not just as likely to bear or spread disease, not just as a metaphorical disease which makes up part of a figure of speech, but as 'disease incarnate'). In Rwanda, Straus notes the way in which 'over and over again' Tutsis were spoken of by perpetrators as a unit, 'a single entity with identical – and permanent – intentions': the category 'the Tutsi' came to substitute for the individual.<sup>84</sup> For many perpetrators, the central phrase of the genocide was recalled as '*Umwanzi ni umwe ni umututsi*' (The enemy is one; it is the Tutsi).<sup>85</sup>

Many scholars have noted the paradoxical nature of modernity, the way in which it contains its own contradictions. Thus, often-claimed dehumanising characteristics of modern society have been associated both with the group (mass culture, bureaucracy, centralisation, standardisation, homogenisation) and with the individual (in the claim that social groups and the moral and social benefits they create, whatever they may be claimed to

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<sup>82</sup> See C. F. Graumann, 'Verbal Discrimination: a Neglected Chapter in the Social Psychology of Aggression', *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1998, p. 48. On 'the Jew' as 'one political actor' in Nazi propaganda see J. Herf, *The Jewish Enemy: Nazi Propaganda During World War II and the Holocaust*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.) & London, 2006, pp. 37-38. Herf also provides numerous examples of the way in which the singular term *Juda* was used to characterise the alleged actions of Jews. On the way in which the process of quantifiable efficiency removes the possibility of 'the intangibles of life' and of lives, see Betton & Hench, pp. 538-539. We might also consider such characterisation to be a particular aspect of metonymy, 'the part for the whole'; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue that, like metaphor, metonymy is deeply grounded in human thought and action, to the point that we are not necessarily conscious that it occurs (G. Lakoff & M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 1980, pp. 35-40). Finally, Victor Klemperer has noted the way in which, under the Third Reich, categorical identity came to be a defining characteristic, such that he was always referred to officially as 'Jud Klemperer' ([the] Jew Klemperer) (V. Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich: LTI – Lingua Tertii Imperii: A Philologist's Notebook* [trans. M. Brady, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn], The Athlone Press, London & New Brunswick [New Jersey], 2000 [original German date of publication 1957], p. 78; and see also pp. 176-177 on the universe of meaning contained within the adjective *jüdisch* [Jewish]).

<sup>83</sup> Bauman, 'The Duty To Remember', p. 36.

<sup>84</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, p. 173.

<sup>85</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, p. 225.

be, are being destroyed due to capitalist-consumerist individualism). But these positions are not necessarily as contradictory as they might seem, and the contradiction may be resolved by asking to what use a process is put: what is this process of production in fact producing, and at whose behest? The human individual *must be* conceptualised by the State *both* as a demographic, *and* as a (single) unit of production (this concept can be seen as similar to Foucault's definition of the two poles of development of modern bio-power: the anatomopolitics of the human body, and that of the 'species body'<sup>86</sup>). Therefore, the fact of the individual's existence as an individual is the locus of a process which, in conception, execution and aim, determines that the individual remain within the relevant category, and represent that category through her/his actions (and this applies to all modern citizens, not only to victims but to their persecutors – though it should be affirmed that these categories are highly malleable according to time and circumstance: they are determined and produced by the question which is asked). In Bauman's words, '[d]ehumanization starts at the point when, thanks to the distantiation, the objects at which the bureaucratic action is aimed can [sic], and are, reduced to a set of quantitative measures.'<sup>87</sup> The definition of victims in this way 'sets them apart as a *different* category, so that whatever applies to it does *not* apply to all the rest' – individuals become exemplars of a type, and that type 'seep[s] into their individualized image.'<sup>88</sup>

Groups of people may often be divided, on paper, into various categories; but this is not usually done (that is, openly, in most societies, most of the time) in order to physically *destroy* one group. The fact that, as we have seen, language already exists in which is inherent a certain categorisation of the object (to be dealt with as inanimate), accompanied by a certain moral-emotional state (apathy) with regard to that object, together with the fact

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<sup>86</sup> M. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I: An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley), Pantheon Books, New York, 1978, p. 139

<sup>87</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 102.

<sup>88</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 191; original italics.

that the use of such language is standard practice in mass situations, allows the employer of such language to deny the fact of the victims as living individual humans who, under previous normativities, would be owed at least some consideration and/or obligation as to the way in which they were treated. This language, then, is also a self-fulfilling prophecy of genocide, one in which victims are named as inanimate matter before they are transformed into that state.

The example of the genocide of Tutsi in Rwanda in the mid-1990s casts some light on these processes. At first glance, discussion of this case in terms of modernity and the nation-state may seem counter-intuitive. The genocide took place during a period of civil war and administrative chaos, in which the official Rwandan government had collapsed after the assassinations of the President, Juvénal Habyarimana, and the Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana.<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, Rwandan society was anything but highly modernised or industrialised; Rwanda was chiefly a subsistence agriculture economy, and the genocide itself can be characterised as 'low-tech' (in comparison to, for example, Nazi genocide). Given this, what role can bureaucracy and bureaucratic discourse have played? In the first instance, Rwanda is a prime example of the way in which bureaucratic techniques of demography and population management create the preconditions for genocide by creating and shaping identity categories. While 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' were certainly identity categories in pre-colonial Rwandan society, they were categories which were both flexible and permeable. Between 1927 and 1936, however, the colonising Belgians – employing a divide-and-rule strategy typical of colonialism – (re)organised administration in the areas of education, state administration, taxation, and Church around these identities, took a census classifying every

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<sup>89</sup> The history of the lead-up to the genocide, the connection between the assassinations of Habyarimana and the commission and outbreak of genocide, and the role of politicians in the genocide, are complex topics which are not relevant to the subject at hand. See Chap. 6, n99.



Rwandan as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa, and issued identity cards bearing this information.<sup>90</sup>

Identity cards continued to be used in the postcolonial period, and were employed during the genocide as a primary (though by no means the sole) marker of identity, and hence as a method of identifying victims.

As Mahmood Mamdani has observed, colonial rule (and the transition from direct to indirect colonial rule) came to be premised upon the necessity for hierarchical structures of domination, not only between colonisers and colonised, but also between different colonised collectivities. Legally- and politically-constructed hierarchies were organised by essentialised identity categorisation.<sup>91</sup> The centralised and hierarchical system of domination which the Belgians instituted in Rwanda was premised upon rule through the Tutsi, who, according to racial-religious 'Hamitic' theories current at the time, were racially superior, considered to be taller, lighter-skinned, and more fine-featured than the Hutu.<sup>92</sup> Indeed, in 1902 the Church described Tutsis as 'supreme humans' (leaving an obvious inference to be drawn as to the 'human nature' of Hutus).<sup>93</sup> In the postcolonial period, however, the power dynamic was reversed, leaving the Tutsi a minority subject to institutionalised oppression, massacre, and (ultimately) genocide in the context of civil war. This demography played itself out in the periodic massacres of Tutsi which took place in the period between independence and the genocide: in the 1973 violence, which began with purges of Tutsi, 'officials and government supporters called the actions [purges] "ethnic rebalancing," "clearing off" (*déguerpir*) and removing a Tutsi "surplus." The issue to which they referred was "ethnic proportionality."<sup>94</sup> 'Ethnic balancing' was carried out by 'Public Safety Committees.'<sup>95</sup> The

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<sup>90</sup> M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Princeton University Press, Princeton & Oxford, 2002, p. 88.

<sup>91</sup> Mamdani, pp. 24-28.

<sup>92</sup> The 'Hamitic' thesis is the Biblically-based concept that Tutsis originated in Northern Africa and were therefore, firstly, not 'black' in the same way as the 'Bantu' Hutu, and secondly, not indigenous to Rwanda.

<sup>93</sup> Mamdani, p. 88.

<sup>94</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, p. 190.

<sup>95</sup> Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, p. 191.

role of bureaucratic discourse in genocide, mass killing and mass violence in Rwanda, then, is evident both in general terms, and in the specific use of language by perpetrators.

I do not claim that we can draw a straight line between bureaucratic colonial governance in Rwanda, and genocide. However, we may say that this governance, and in particular the characteristically bureaucratic features which it imposed on Rwandan society in terms of hierarchy and the categorisation of essentialised identity, were necessary conditions for the genocide which occurred there. Mamdani argues that the origin of violence in Rwanda is found not in the realms of biology and culture, but rather, in state constructions of political identity.<sup>96</sup> It was not only the creation of a race-mythology regarding Rwandan peoples which led to violent ongoing conflict; similar mythologies were applied elsewhere without this consequence. Rather, in Rwanda this notion became a rationale for a set of *institutions* inspired by, embedded in, and reproduced by this ideology.<sup>97</sup> That is, the ideology was incorporated into a *system* organised along bureaucratic lines: an institutional construct.<sup>98</sup> Ultimately, the bureaucratic dehumanisation of Hutu (under the colonial regime) and Tutsi (in the postcolonial period) was a vital factor in the Rwandan genocide. The role of bureaucracy and bureaucratic discourse in this and other genocides, then, goes beyond the fact that bureaucratic organisation is necessary to attempt genocide in the age of the mass society; although present in varying degrees in different cases, this discursive strategy is intimately involved with dehumanisation in general, and, specifically, genocidal dehumanisation.

In bureaucracies, however, it is not only victims, but also perpetrators, who undergo a process of de-individuation: in a group situation, there is a decreased focus on personal identity, which becomes submerged in the nature of the group, and general social norms

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<sup>96</sup> Mamdani, p. 34.

<sup>97</sup> Mamdani, p. 87.

<sup>98</sup> Mamdani, p. 87.

have their place taken by situation-specific group norms.<sup>99</sup> This process also takes place in 'hands-on' situations, in which a perpetrator group (for example, a particular military unit or militia group) who identify as such (a process which generally involves some kind of visual signifier, such as a uniform) are more likely to behave cruelly and aggressively.<sup>100</sup> This brings us to the question of the different psychological states of those indirectly and directly involved in killing, and the different psychological desires and needs which euphemistic and bureaucratic language fulfils in each case.

### **VII. *Schreibtischtäter* and Direct Perpetrators: Bureaucratic and Non-bureaucratic Euphemism**

While some have spoken of 'primeval moral drives' against killing, I have argued that this is an overstatement of the case.<sup>101</sup> It should not be assumed that individuals have an innate propensity not to act violently, which must be overcome by external influences. Milgram writes that, '[t]hough such prescriptions as "Thou shalt not kill" occupy a pre-eminent place in the moral order, they do not occupy a correspondingly intractable position in the human psychic structure.'<sup>102</sup> However, as Milgram's experiments have demonstrated, the commonsense understanding that it is more difficult to harm someone directly, than to order harm done – that the closer the victim, the harder it is to act against them – is borne out in fact.<sup>103</sup>

The literal distance between bureaucratic perpetrators and victims, as we have seen, plays a part in legitimising their actions; but how does bureaucratic discourse relate to direct or

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<sup>99</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 251.

<sup>100</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, pp. 251-252.

<sup>101</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 188.

<sup>102</sup> Milgram, p. 8.

<sup>103</sup> Milgram, pp. 33-44.

'hands-on' perpetrators, the men and women 'on the ground,' who cannot ignore the physical consequences of their actions? The answer is that, for the direct perpetrator, killing, when constructed as the processing of objects, can be understood as a (generally) unpleasant task, but one identical in kind to other unpleasant tasks which must be carried out for the functioning (or even the survival) of society. Their actions, just like those of the 'desk-murderer,' are 'nothing personal,' and hence may be disconnected or compartmentalized from their self-conception.<sup>104</sup> Furthermore, the language, discourses and practice of industrialisation, or, in less modernised societies, of everyday work, can be applied to the killing process.<sup>105</sup> In each case, euphemistic language provides a discursive strategy in which, despite the fact that terminology is not literally believed to be factual, the meaning of acts can be altered to produce less cognitive dissonance: 'as they live within their euphemistic labels, and use them with each other, perpetrators become bound to a psychologically safe realm of dissociation, disavowal, and emotional distance.'<sup>106</sup> Albert Bandura, whose work has consistently provided empirical demonstrations of the disinhibitory power of euphemistic language, comments that:

[e]uphemistic language ... provides a convenient tool for masking reprehensible activities or even conferring a respectable status upon them (Bolinger, 1982; Lutz, 1987). Through sanitized and convoluted verbiage, destructive conduct is made benign and those who engage in it are relieved of a sense of personal agency.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Huggins, Haritos-Fatouros & Zimbardo, pp. 59-60.

<sup>105</sup> Betton and Hench draw a connection between the Enlightenment discourse of 'value-neutrality,' adopted by business from the realm of science, with the 'physical manifestations of Taylorism' such as the assembly-line (pp. 537-538). A similar argument regarding discourse around technology, made with regard to Nazi death camps, can be found in Katz, p. 411.

<sup>106</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 212.

<sup>107</sup> Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, p. 365; see also Bandura, 'Selective Activation and Disengagement', pp. 31-32. In relation to our last chapter, we might note here the telling term 'sanitized' language; on this subject see also Bandura, 'Moral Disengagement in the Perpetration of Inhumanities', p. 195; 'Selective Activation and Disengagement', p. 32.

Furthermore, the bureaucratic routinization of actions, their division into separate tasks which are performed identically each time they occur, desensitises the direct perpetrator to her or his own actions, and, '[o]nce habituated, the prevailing mind-set becomes how to do it better, not whether to do it at all.'<sup>108</sup> It may seem on the surface that an important difference is that strictly bureaucratic euphemism does not deal directly with motivational questions of morality, with the issue of 'should,' while non-bureaucratic euphemistic language often does so in regard to the terms with which it creates meaning, inasmuch as the terms used themselves imply and thus call for the 'correct' action in response. Nonetheless, this difference may be considered superficial, as, in each case, action is premised on similar discursive thinking; in bureaucratic discourse, action is premised on (moral) responsibility to the bureaucracy and one's fellows, while in the case of non-bureaucratic discourse action is determined both by the previous factors, by direct exhortation, and by the way in which 'reality' is thus constructed. According to Bandura, euphemistic language, either as 'sanitisation' or as the 'agentless passive voice' (both of which are in evidence in documentary material presented here and elsewhere in this thesis), can be seen as an 'injurious weapon' (indeed, Bandura cites evidence that 'people behave much more cruelly when assaultive actions are given a sanitised label than when they are called aggression').<sup>109</sup> The following examples provide elucidating evidence of the existence and function of euphemism at bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic registers.

The paradigmatic case of bureaucratic euphemistic language is, of course, the Nazi destruction of the Jews. To take a few examples from a list which could be multiplied virtually *ad infinitum*: in terms of euphemistic language, we see such phrases as the prefix *Sonder-*, that is, 'special', which was widely used to indicate killing, as, for example, in *Sonderbehandlung* ('special treatment', that is, killing), or *Sonderkommando* (the Jewish units which disposed of corpses); strictly-maintained linguistic reference to camp inmates as

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<sup>108</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 244-245, 248.

<sup>109</sup> Bandura, 'Selective Moral Disengagement', p. 104.

*Häftlinge* (prisoners);<sup>110</sup> the listing by statisticians and public health authorities of corpses as *Figuren* (figures or pieces); and memo references to victims as ‘the load,’ ‘number of pieces,’ and ‘merchandise.’<sup>111</sup> Another notorious example is found in the tattooing of numbers on camp prisoners. This highly bureaucratic and centralised genocide provides perhaps the most extensive use of such discourse, and the clearest demonstration of its purposes; in the fact, for example, that victims in the camps were identified (if they had not been selected for immediate killing) both by a number, and by a coloured symbol indicating to which group they belonged (and hence their place in a hierarchy of power and value defined by the perpetrators, a place which defined the way in which the individual would be treated within the camps). As Sofsky puts it,

absolute power is the absolute power to label ... defining a taxonomy of categories into which every prisoner was pigeonholed ... the use of the class hierarchy was a strategy of graded discrimination, persecution, and annihilation. The ultimate value in this pecking order was the worth a person’s life was accorded. This value sign was sewn to an individual’s clothing, visible for all to see, a stigmatic patch ... [w]ith the aid of categories, power implemented its model of society.<sup>112</sup>

However, as well as the German case, euphemistic utterance, and language which transforms victims into objects without subjectivity can be found in many other episodes of genocide and mass killing; the resemblance to the better-known Nazi language is often striking. In planning the Srebrenica massacre, ‘Bosnian Serb political and military leaders used a code to communicate among themselves, referring to the groups of men to be executed as “parcels” to be ‘delivered.’<sup>113</sup> In occupied China, Japanese army personnel conducting cruel and lethal medical experiments referred to the civilian Chinese who were

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<sup>110</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 208.

<sup>111</sup> Waller, *Becoming Evil*, p. 208.

<sup>112</sup> Sofsky, *The Order of Terror*, p. 19.

<sup>113</sup> In Semelin, *Purify and Destroy*, p. 254.

their victims as *maruta* ('logs').<sup>114</sup> These prisoners were identified only by a number and a card describing their biomedical particulars:<sup>115</sup> as one perpetrator recalled, '[a]lthough, when [prisoners] arrived, they each had cards with their name, birthplace, reason for arrest and age, we simply gave them a number. A *maruta* was just a number, a piece of experimental material.'<sup>116</sup> Biomedical records gave a prisoner's case number only, along with textbook-style, identical full-body illustrations.<sup>117</sup> People to be shipped to Pingfan, headquarters of the notorious Japanese Biological Warfare Unit 731, were called 'special consignments' (*Tokui-Atsukai*), while Japanese forces responsible for rounding up Chinese victims were known as the 'Special Handling Forces' (we might compare the aforementioned Nazi term *Sonderbehandlung*), and the activity of spreading disease among the populace in person (generally through the distribution of contaminated food) was called 'field strategy' (here we might think of another common vegetable metaphor in the concept of 'root and branch' extermination, where the killing of civilians, or genocide as opposed to oppression, is justified by the need to remove the 'roots' of the 'problem'<sup>118</sup>).<sup>119</sup>

As we see from these examples, euphemistic (but not always strictly bureaucratic) utterances employing the language of officialdom and production, and containing the moral and ideological imperatives of these domains, are available for use by both direct and indirect perpetrators of mass killing. The non-bureaucratic naming of victims as inanimate objects is not as common as either bureaucratic discourse which de-biologises victims, or utterances which name them as threatening animals and disease organisms; however, it should not be ignored. Non-bureaucratic objectifying language could be seen as a kind of halfway point between these two (or, more strictly, three) types (debiologisation, and biologisation); in

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<sup>114</sup> D. Barenblatt, *A Plague Upon Humanity: The Hidden History of Japan's Biological Warfare Program*, HarperCollins Perennial, New York, 2004, p. 49, 126.

<sup>115</sup> Barenblatt, p. xix.

<sup>116</sup> Barenblatt, p. 63.

<sup>117</sup> Barenblatt, p. 118.

<sup>118</sup> See for example Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, p. 193.

<sup>119</sup> Barenblatt, p. 58, 62-3, 146.

this case, while victims are named as metaphors for other things, rather than completely written out of existence except as units, they nonetheless continue to be placed within the framework of units of production, as in the case of *maruta*, or of the Hutu Power call to 'cut down the tall trees,' that is, to kill Tutsi (it is also interesting that the two chief examples here both relate victims to plant life – that is, to an object envisaged as somewhere between animals and inanimate objects). Such a discursive strategy is not intimately related to modernity in itself in the same way that bureaucratic discourse is, though the systematic logic of production is undoubtedly a modern innovation. However, it is related to episodes which could only have taken place under the auspices of modernity.

In Rwanda, a highly agriculturalised economy where the machete was a near-ubiquitous tool, the naming of Tutsi as 'tall trees' to be 'chopped down' performed a number of functions. Firstly, as with all dehumanisation, it functioned strategically to remove the sanctions otherwise attaching to the killing of fellow human beings, and to remove empathy which might otherwise be felt, by naming victims as non-human. Secondly, this language equated the killing of Tutsis with communal agricultural work, thereby framing genocide both as a familiar and morally impeccable activity and as a duty to the community. Thirdly, it made physical reference to the supposed height of Tutsis in comparison to Hutus, pointing out and stigmatising their difference from the ingroup (and, in a metaphor within a metaphor, referring to the 'high' roles of power and prestige they were alleged to unfairly occupy within Rwandan society). Fourthly and finally, it referred to the manner in which they could or should be killed, that is, with machetes.

Euphemistic language which names victims as inanimate objects and units of production, then, is not solely the confine of bureaucrats who do not 'get their hands dirty' in the actual business of torture, theft and killing; it is also used by those who are personally involved with such actions on a day-to-day basis, and is not limited to killing in highly modernised,



bureaucratised and industrialised societies such as Nazi Germany. While a distinction should be drawn between, for example, Nazi paperwork in which Jews are considered ‘units,’ and Hutu Power radio announcers calling for Hutu to ‘chop down the tall trees,’ in each case this language objectifies victims, categorises them in a way which denies them individuality, defines their inclusion in the victim group as their only salient characteristic, and allows the invisible-ising of the human consequences of action taken toward them, thus allowing in turn the full or attempted suppression of any moral or emotional response on the part of perpetrators – that is, in Hannah Arendt’s (perhaps over-universal) phrase, the overcoming of ‘the animal pity by which all normal men are affected in the presence of physical suffering.’<sup>120</sup>

In his analysis of National Socialism, Marcuse provides a further insight into the connection between bureaucratic and non-bureaucratic discourse in violent oppression, and, indeed, into the subject at the core of this thesis, the practical instrumentality of dehumanising discourse. It may seem from outward appearances that the ‘irrational’ or ‘idealistic’ language embodied in philosophy, ideology and propaganda is opposed to technical-rational discourse ‘pertaining to the realm of administration organization and daily communication’; however, Marcuse argues, each type is *technical*, that is, ‘its concepts aim at a definite pragmatic goal, and fixate all things, relations and institutions in their operational function within the National Socialist system.’<sup>121</sup> In genocide, the value of supra-technical mythological and metaphysical language becomes exclusively operational, as they are made parts of the technique of domination.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Quoted in Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 20. See also Chap. 4, n68. As elsewhere, my quotation of this phrase is not intended to imply that a normative human position is to refuse to participate, directly or indirectly, in killing.

<sup>121</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, pp. 148-149.

<sup>122</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 149. More recent socio-cultural analysis has focussed on the fact that *all* political forms of domination employ these ‘supra-technical’ discourses for their own purposes; but this does not detract from Marcuse’s valuable insight into the workings of the genocidal state.

Having demonstrated both the role played by bureaucratic, and euphemistic, language in genocide, and the intimate connection between these two forms, in concluding we must return to a final question relating to the individual psyche – and to the argument of this thesis – that is, a determination as to whether the role played by this discourse is legitimatory, motivational, or both. Answering this question will enable us to locate this particular discourse within the overall typology and functionality of dehumanising discourses posited in this thesis.

### VIII. Conclusion

While the biological determinism of modern racism is rooted in Enlightenment rationalism, the logistics of modern genocide and mass killing are no less the fruit of the huge modern projects of population, reliant on centralised, bureaucratic technologies of surveillance and action; and both legitimise the mass killing of individual human beings. Unlike characterisation of victims as diseases or as threatening animals, however, the bureaucratic-euphemistic strategic discursive type is purely legitimatory. It does not provide a motivation for killing, except inasmuch as the bureaucratic process creates its own objects and is self-perpetuating, as every individual is motivated to excel at their assigned task;<sup>123</sup> in overall terms, however, we may consider this a secondary motivation. But this language functions to conceal the human nature of the objects of power, and the human consequences of action, as well as displacing responsibility from the individual perpetrator, whether a bureaucratic functionary or a 'hands-on' killer. Thus, as a discursive strategy, it helps to achieve what Bauman argues was *necessary* for the perpetration of the Holocaust (and, we might add, many other genocides): not the mobilisation of attitudes toward victim peoples,

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<sup>123</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, pp. 101-102.

but merely their neutralisation.<sup>124</sup> Language itself enacts 'a transformation of personal relations into impersonal things and events.'<sup>125</sup> Further, the more such language *depersonalises* victims, the more possible it becomes to construct motivational characterisations around violence toward the victim.<sup>126</sup>

The language of bureaucratic euphemism and production, then, is intimately related to the other types of dehumanisation examined in this thesis, in that it allows the depersonalisation of victims, the distancing of the victim from perpetrators and bystanders, and an erasure of individuality which makes of the victim a 'blank slate' onto which can be written motivational characterisations. In *itself*, however, it dehumanises victims by presenting them as non-human objects in a process of production – or rather, destruction – in which (moral) responsibility lies with the process (the means), rather than the ends. As the different examples presented in this chapter demonstrate, this set of utterances appears in extremely diverse episodes, from those in which both the other types of dehumanisation are present (Nazi genocide of the Jews), to cases of genocidal killing in which there is no intent for the complete disappearance of the entire victim people (Japanese mass killing in China), as well as episodes in which the most extreme and overtly hostile form of dehumanisation, the biologised representation of victims as disease organisms, is not in evidence (genocide in Rwanda).

In terms of a model, then, bureaucratic and euphemistic discourse may be considered, firstly, to be chiefly legitimatory. Secondly – particularly given the permeability with which it is applied to both non-genocidal and genocidal situations, and the fact that it seems universally to appear in concert with other, more overt and overtly hostile forms of dehumanisation – it may be considered a 'constant' which is necessary for the legitimisation

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<sup>124</sup> Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 185.

<sup>125</sup> Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism*, p. 150.

<sup>126</sup> Kershaw quoted in Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, p. 189.

of modern genocide and mass killing, but is not sufficient, either as a motivation (for, as I have argued, dehumanisation or demonisation in itself is never a sufficient or sole source of motivation for genocide), or as a form of dehumanisation in itself. Both in its relationship to non-genocidal practice, and in the lack of any motivational aspect, it can be considered the least extreme of the three genocidal types of dehumanisation presented in this thesis. However, given that legitimisation is a universal function of genocidal dehumanisation, despite these qualifiers this type has a vitally important role to play in the commission and enactment of genocide in the modern social context.

## Chapter 8.

### Conclusion

In recent decades, certain fields of inquiry have opened up concerning the study of genocide. At the same time, controversies over the causation of genocide, and specific problematics around perpetrator narratives and perpetrator psychology, have thrown these issues into the spotlight.<sup>1</sup> Collective cultural and psychological insights about genocide have emerged from outside of the field of macro-level traditional historiography, and these insights have problematised earlier conceptions which would treat genocide as an irrational aberration from the 'normal' course of the 'progress of civilisation.' In contrast to this earlier view, scholarship from Zygmunt Bauman to Christopher Browning, as well as evidence emerging from non-Western genocidal episodes, has demonstrated that processes of genocide draw deeply upon pre-existing socio-cultural narratives and their relationship to methods of social organization and paths of practice.

This thesis has built upon insights taken, on the one hand, from scholarly developments which see genocide as intimately linked to the socio-cultural conditions of the modern age, rather than as atavism; and, on the other, from research into the way in which psychological knowledge can be applied to genocide even though it is, practically, impossible to produce during genocidal episodes the kind of micro-managed empirical data on which psychology is traditionally reliant. The work which has been produced in both these fields suggests that the analysis of texts and utterances produced by genocidal perpetrators, or within their societies, has something vital to tell us about the nature of genocide and genocidal killing.

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<sup>1</sup> See n3.

Such texts are narratives which we can read to understand the way in which individuals conceive their own acts, in contrast to a reading in which it is the role of the scholar to impose her or his understanding upon the object of inquiry. But a further necessary insight, in this process, is that neither individual nor collective narratives are produced in a void. Cultural conditions make available the materials from which they are constructed, and these conditions in turn both produce, and are a product of, non-verbal practice. Given this, my own analysis has taken place both at the psychological level of the individual, with the understanding that individual utterances are shaped by cultural conditions and resources; and at the collective register, in terms of cultural narratives, institutions and practices.

New possibilities for inquiry have been opened up by the emergence of the type of approach I have aimed to employ – an approach which develops the complexity of our understanding of the way in which ‘human nature’ (both individual and collective) plays itself out in genocidal events. Such readings have thrown a stark relief upon aspects of genocide which were previously taken for granted or considered to be relatively unimportant. Dehumanisation is one of these. In this thesis I have aimed to use the avenues provided by this approach – including social, cultural, historical and psychological analysis, as well as application of the insights of the ‘cultural turn’ in the humanities – not only to explain the importance of dehumanisation in genocide, or to throw light upon problematics in previous work treating the issue, but to employ frameworks recognising the relevance of cultural-discursive factors in order to expose the way in which genocidal dehumanisation *works*, and to demonstrate this through empirical documentation. In doing so, I have identified a lacuna in the field of genocide studies, the very existence of which has gone for the most part unnoticed. In addressing this lacuna in terms of a subject, and in employing the methods which, I have argued, are necessary to do so, I have created an original conceptual model of genocidal dehumanisation. This model provides a framework within which to use the

concept of 'dehumanisation' as one revealing something new about the way in which genocide and genocidal killing can occur.

At the outset of this thesis, I posed the question: 'what role does dehumanising discourse which names an outgroup as lesser humans, less than human or nonhuman play in the elimination of that outgroup?' It is in the process of answering this question that I have developed a new model of the role of genocidal dehumanisation – a model which emphasises dehumanisation as a *functional process*. Employing this model in historical and contemporary genocidal situations provides precise information about the specific part being played by dehumanising discourse.

Genocidal dehumanisation has become necessary in the modern era because it functions to address the psychological dissonance which occurs for the perpetrator when involvement in genocidal action is combined with modern moral normativities around the mass destruction of civilians. Because it is functional, and because it operates both on and through meaning-creating bodies of text and utterance, such dehumanisation is best conceived as a *discursive strategy*. My analysis reveals that this strategy has two functions, three types, and manifests across a specific range of extremity on a broader continuum of general dehumanisation.

In terms of function, dehumanisation may *legitimise* genocide, or it may *motivate* genocide (where motivation is inherently legitimatory). The distinction between these two types consists in the presence or absence of the element of threat in characterisations of a collectivity: if the collectivity is constructed as threatening, dehumanisation is motivational, whereas without this element it is solely legitimatory. There is a stable relationship between the two functions and the three types of genocidal dehumanisation (medicalisation, animalisation, and bureaucratic-euphemistic reification). Medicalisation is always motivational, animalisation is sometimes motivational and sometimes solely legitimatory, and bureaucratic

and euphemistic discourse is always solely legitimacy. At least one of these types (and often more) seems to be present in all episodes of modern genocide. Finally, dehumanisation can (at least provisionally) be considered to be a *continuum*. While legitimisation may exist throughout this continuum, motivational genocidal dehumanisation represents the range of greatest extremity (a range which would then descend through dehumanisation encountered in episodes such as slavery and apartheid, and conclude at the level of 'everyday' dehumanisation at the pole of least extremity).

This, then, is the anatomy of genocidal dehumanisation which I have revealed in answering the question as to the role of dehumanising discourse in the elimination of outgroups.<sup>2</sup> In light of these findings, dehumanisation can no longer be considered, as it has often been, as nothing more than an accompaniment to genocide (or, alternatively, as the sole motivating factor). In any given episode, the function and type of dehumanisation – and therefore its role in the commission and enactment of genocide – can be identified. In the contemporary setting, the purposiveness of particular types of rhetoric (types which might otherwise conceal their true nature) may be revealed as indicative of a genocidal mentality, and responses to such statements formulated in terms of likely developments. Fruitful avenues of inquiry are also revealed concerning the nature of dehumanisation in a more general sense, pursuit of which may produce insight into the vital importance of dehumanisation in creating conditions for discrimination and repression in many different kinds of society.

All of this gives some idea as to why this question was worth asking. How have I gone about arriving at these conclusions, and how has the material which I have used to do so demonstrated the validity of the model outlined above?

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<sup>2</sup> On the use of the term 'anatomy' in this context see Chap. 2, n1.



Firstly, I examined what other scholars have had to say on the topic of 'dehumanisation.'<sup>3</sup> I found that in the field of comparative genocide studies, although 'dehumanisation' was frequently mentioned as an important aspect of genocide and mass killing, this concept was significantly undertheorised, in that it had not been addressed as a primary subject of inquiry in a way which gave a thorough and detailed analysis to the role, or, more precisely, the function, it played in such events. Thus, scholars such as Helen Fein, James Waller and others had both clearly recognised the importance of dehumanisation as a subject of inquiry, and produced some important work on some of its features considered in isolation; however, in the absence of a general analysis, it had and has been difficult to use the concept as a precise tool to tell us something about the way in which genocide and genocidal killing occurs. As I have already mentioned, then, this issue presented as a significant lacuna in this field, particularly as more recent scholarship has seen the question of how it is possible for genocide to occur, in regard to the attitude of perpetrators to victims, come to be a subject of widespread and heated debate.<sup>4</sup> I therefore set myself the task of researching this subject as a primary area of inquiry, in order to provide both a dissection of what genocidal dehumanisation is, and to show how it functions in the practice of genocide and genocidal killing.

In speaking of functionality, the issue of causation is of primary importance. The causation of genocide, however, is a subject which has caused considerable controversy. While I have not argued that dehumanisation is necessarily causatory *per se*, it has been my argument that

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<sup>3</sup> In particular, the work of Leo Kuper, Helen Fein, James Waller, Daniel Bar-Tal, Israel Charny, and Philip Zimbardo.

<sup>4</sup> In particular, in the widespread academic and popular controversy aroused by Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, and the most well-known alternative position, that put by Christopher Browning. Academic papers which have been written on this controversy are numerous: for edited book-length discussions of the subject see D. J. Goldhagen et al, *The 'Willing executioners'/'Ordinary men' debate: Selections From The Symposium (April 8, 1996)*, United States Holocaust Research Institute, Washington D.C., 1996; G. Eley (ed), *The 'Goldhagen Effect': History, Memory, Nazism: Facing the German Past*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2000; R. R. Shandley, *Unwilling Germans? The Goldhagen Debate* (trans. J. Riemer), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1998; F. H. Littell (ed), *Hyping the Holocaust: Scholars Answer Goldhagen*, Cummings & Hathaway, New York, 1997.

dehumanisation is a vital aspect of a larger, multifaceted process which allows genocidal killing to occur. In order to explain how the analysis of dehumanisation could provide a new perspective within a broader field of questions regarding causation and motivation, in Chapter Two I examined the various different existing models dealing with these aspects of genocide.<sup>5</sup>

Dehumanisation is a phenomenon which occurs both on the level of the individual, as a psychological process, the existence of which is manifest in texts and utterances produced by individuals; and at the level of the collective, where it is manifest in texts and utterances which are oriented toward public reception and which indicate acceptable public opinion. The *common* factor between the realms in which dehumanisation manifests – that is, between its existence as an object of analysis at the levels of individual psychology, the individual utterance, and the public and political narrative – is that it is a *discursive* process. Given that dehumanisation may be thus considered, in Chapter Three I outlined the methods through which a research object of this kind might best be approached – specifically, the employment of interdisciplinary methods to trace the history and confluences of clusters of ideas and utterances considered as discourses, in the context of comparative textuality. In the field of comparative genocide studies, one which is still in its infancy, there has not yet developed any programmatic approach to the employment of the insights of the ‘cultural turn’ to the subject; and indeed, if the field itself is in its infancy, the employment of these insights is even more so. In light of this, rather than following an accepted methodology for employing a ‘discourse’ approach to the subject of the comparative study of genocide, I examined the general practices of methodologies around ‘discourse’ in order to develop my own approach to the subject. In so doing, I have

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding causation, theorists of particular importance for my analysis are Adam Jones, Michael Mann, Albert Bandura, Philip Zimbardo, James Waller, Ervin Staub, Israel W. Charny, Zygmunt Bauman, Leo Kuper, and Irving L. Horowitz; in terms of motivation, as well as the aforementioned I consider the work of Stanley Cohen and Peter Du Preez.

emphasised the concepts of 'discourse' and 'ideology,' and methodologies which have emerged around these two terms, with a particular emphasis on the work of Michel Foucault and Norman Fairclough.<sup>6</sup> This examination also explained how it was possible to use this methodology to make demonstrable claims about my subject matter based on documentary evidence, revealing the way in which the analysis of such documentation in context could substantiate an argument concerning both the nature and the function of genocidal dehumanisation.

The nature of dehumanisation, and the relationship between the perpetrator and genocidal action as constituted through text and language, were the subject of Chapter Four. Here it was necessary to formulate a definition of dehumanisation – as occurring when a collectivity as a collectivity is defined as unworthy of the moral consideration afforded to members of the ingroup. In examining situations in which this dehumanisation co-existed with genocidal action, I rejected the previous normative theoretical model which would see participation in genocide as an aberrant act which is somehow induced by overcoming a previous 'goodness' or 'ordinariness.' In looking at the question of the psychology of perpetration, two issues have emerged as vitally important: the application of psychological analysis, and that of the conditions of the modern era. These must be addressed in concert: *certain psychological necessities are created by the nature of the modern construction of moral legitimacy in the enactment of mass killing.*

At this point, the major features of the model of dehumanisation outlined above had been established. The remaining task was to apply this model, employing the appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (trans. A. M. S. Smith), Routledge, London & New York, 2002; 'The Order of Discourse' (trans. I. McLeod), in R. Young (ed.), *Untying the Text: A Post-Structuralist Reader*. Routledge & Kegan Paul, Boston/London/Henley, 1981, pp. 48-78.

N. Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 1992; *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*, Longman, London & New York, 1995; *Language and Power* (2<sup>nd</sup> edn), Longman, Essex, 2001; *Analysing Discourse: Textual analysis for social research*, Routledge, London & New York, 2003.

theoretical tools, to analyse the three major types of genocidal dehumanisation. Thus, Chapters Five, Six and Seven examined medicalisation, animalisation and reification, respectively. In each case, the historical context which gave rise to this form of dehumanisation as *genocidal* dehumanisation was demonstrated, along with documentation giving evidence of its widespread existence and attesting to the functions performed by the specific type in question.

In developing this model over the course of the thesis, a number of problematics have been dealt with. Here, I return to some of the most important. In doing so, it is my intent not only to emphasise the inapplicability of certain possible objections, but to take this task merely as a point of departure in fulfilling the more important goal of giving a final clarification of the nature of my project in terms of the insights that it provides, as well as suggesting productive future uses for those insights. At the risk of repetition, then, I re-emphasise that *dehumanisation allows genocide to occur*. It is by no means the only factor which does so, but in my research I have found no cases of genocide without dehumanisation (even when we put aside the consideration, alluded to in Chapter Four, that on certain interpretations mass killing in itself inevitably involves dehumanisation). If, then, we are interested in the question of how genocide can occur – which is the fundamental question of genocide studies – we need to take dehumanisation into account, and to take it into account as a mechanism with a function.

From here, we may ask whether dehumanisation has anything special to tell us about genocide, given that it also occurs in non-genocidal situations. There are, however, important differences between genocidal and non-genocidal dehumanisation. Firstly, 'genocidal' dehumanisation is a particular type of dehumanisation which not only characterises its object in a certain way, but constructs the types of action which may be legitimately taken against that object, and in some cases implicitly or explicitly names a need

for exterminatory action to be taken against that object. This is by no means the case in all forms of dehumanisation. Genocidal dehumanisation is particular in three ways: firstly, in that it legitimises destruction, rather than more generally legitimising some harmful or exclusive action against an outgroup; secondly, in that it occurs in the specific types which I have outlined; and, thirdly, in that in order to play its role, it must occur at a certain societal register, that is, it must be an acceptable public narrative (not, I emphasise, the only possible narrative) in order to be available both at a collective and an individual level as a functional legitimating strategy in the overall enactment of genocide. It is not enough for this discourse to be found in the words of 'fringe' individuals or collectivities (although it may have precursors in such locations). It must be a *collectivised public discourse which is available to legitimise and/or to motivate the obliteration of its collective object*.

There are many motivations for genocide, many ideologies which contribute, and many factors which allow genocide to occur. Given the subject – that is, the nature and function of dehumanisation in genocide – it is enough to acknowledge that these motivations and factors exist, and exist in multiplicity. I have been concerned with examining the functional role of one particular aspect of the multifaceted process of causation, an examination which includes not only strictly narrative questions of the direct historical causes for a particular event, but also the conditions in which it was possible that it *could* occur.

To take 'genocide' and its causes as a subject of research is necessarily a comparative endeavour. Serious problems may arise if an attempt is made to generalise from only a few specific cases. I have therefore drawn upon, rather than created, detailed multidisciplinary analyses of the cases which I have examined. For each of these, it would be possible (and in some cases, such work has informed my own analysis) to trace in detail the various pre-existing discursive strands which gave genocidal dehumanisation purchase and to explain why it took the forms that it did. Where such work has not yet been undertaken, my model

provides both a rationale to do so, and a method to be employed. The conception I have provided here thus opens up avenues of inquiry which can be explored further within other disciplinary frameworks.

Finally, we may recognise that the ‘cultural turn,’ in the context of postmodernism and post-structuralism, is an approach which has come under heavy criticism. It has been my aim in this thesis to demonstrate that, far from divorcing inquiry from more ‘realist’ concerns, there are pragmatic questions about the occurrence of particular historical episodes which can only be answered by applying insights drawn from this mode of analysis. The approach that I have taken to my subject is one which concerns itself with discourse, and hence with the reading of texts as a method of inquiry. My purpose has been to *understand discursive constructions* – which occur both on individual and collective levels – and *the way in which they inform the nature of action*. I have therefore applied a discursive approach to a discursive target. In doing so, I have suggested how interdisciplinary methodologies may be applied, and indeed, are necessary for certain objects of inquiry within the broader question of explanations for genocide.

I have given above an overview of my model, the way in which it was developed, and the presentation of evidentiary material for my claims. I have also mentioned the means by which the addressing of initial and conceivable problematics allowed the creation of a *targeted* model, one which in turn can provide methods and uncover material which enables the development of these lines of inquiry in fruitful directions. We may now ask: what, in fact, has thereby been established which can be of use for the scholar of genocide, or of dehumanisation as a broader subject? How can we now employ a theory of dehumanisation as a precise tool of analysis? In answering these questions, we will return to a more detailed description of my earlier account of genocidal dehumanisation as a model, one which takes into consideration the complexities and nuances which have been provided not only by the

model itself, but by the analysis of its development through an evolutionary process of investigation and problematisation of the initial question.

Firstly, *genocidal dehumanisation is a vital aspect of modern genocidal killing*, in that it addresses the problem – peculiar to the conditions of the modern age and the nation-state as a normative model of governance – of the perceived moral legitimacy of involvement in genocidal action. Given the ambiguous relationship between any proposed normative position regarding genocidal action, and individual involvement in such action, as well as the existence of many motivations for many kinds of action against an outgroup conceived as a problem, there is a need not only for the legitimisation of action of any kind, but the specific need for the legitimisation of genocide or genocidal killing as a solution to the existence of the outgroup. Hence, *legitimisation of action to achieve the biological disappearance of the group in question is a universal aspect of genocide, and it can only be obtained through a particular characterisation of that group qua group*. This legitimisation is achieved through the use of available discursive resources to reframe the nature of interpersonal and intergroup genocidal action, creating both distance between the perpetrator and the victim, and the suppression and denial of any inhibitive moral understanding of the genocidal act as such.

Secondly, as well as having a universal function as a legitimising factor in genocide, dehumanisation may also be a motivating factor. Motivation is present when narratives of dehumanisation construct the object in a way which refers to a *threat* which that object is seen to pose to the subject. Therefore, by determining whether an element of threat is present in a given dehumanising narrative, we can understand the work which this narrative is doing as a factor in the causation of genocide.

Thirdly, there are *three major types* of genocidal dehumanisation, and in genocide and genocidal killing they have a *stable relationship with function* either as motivation and

legitimation, or solely legitimisation. In establishing the existence of these types and presenting their features in the apposite chapters, I have traced their historical development into genocidal strategies, and the reasons why they have purchase in particular situations; and I have demonstrated their different functions with regard to the provision of motivation and/or legitimisation. I have used examples from various cases to demonstrate the common existence of a specific type of dehumanisation in different episodes, and the way in which type is related to both (non-verbal) perpetrator practice, and to perpetrator construction of the meaning of practice. In any given episode, this typology may be employed in order to understand both the development of genocidal rhetoric, and the function of genocidal discourse.

Finally, I have argued that dehumanisation is best conceptualised as a *continuum*, rather than through a binary framework which seeks to ascertain only whether it is present or absent, and which, if it is present, takes its presence for granted without the need for further investigation. In this thesis I have described the extreme range of that continuum, and I have denoted differentiations of type and function within that range; I have also pointed to conceptual possibilities outside of this range, opening up a field of investigation within which the model presented here could be employed, and extended. In other words, we now know that, in genocide and genocidal killing, dehumanisation may either legitimise and motivate, or it may solely legitimise. As a legitimating strategy, dehumanisation, I suggest, would be present, at the least, in all forms of institutional oppression of essentialised groups, particularly in more extreme cases such as slavery and apartheid. However, in these cases, at least initially, the motivating element, the element of essentialised threat, is generally absent. Research in these areas, involving the application of this model, presents as a productive possibility for further inquiry.



What I have introduced here is a new conception of the genocidal form of dehumanisation, one which emerges, and which can only emerge, from the comparative analysis of many cases, and from the application of culturally-based analysis to textual utterances. I have provided substantial documentary material which demonstrates both the existence of this phenomenon, its manifestation in different forms, and the relationship between the particular form in which it manifests and its function in the commission of genocide and genocidal killing.

How is this model to be applied in analysing actual episodes of genocidal killing? In any given case, the use of this model of analysis will reveal something about the way in which language actually functions in the enactment of genocide and genocidal killing. It is no longer enough merely to note the presence of such language or to see it as a relatively unimportant cultural accompaniment to genocidal action. In any episode, the arena of public discourse, and also that of perpetrator testimony (whether public or private) must be examined in order to *ascertain the nature and functionality of acceptable language, or 'thinkable' constructions, about the outgroup*. If, for example, a medical metaphor is present we can see that dehumanisation was either functioning as, or representing, a motivation, and is thus located on the most extreme end of the continuum. If we only find evidence of bureaucratic euphemisms, we might look elsewhere with regard to motivations for genocide. In all cases, a further question is why a particular type of dehumanisation had 'purchase' in a particular context; that is, from whence it emerged, in a cultural-discursive sense, and how it thus came to be available for use as a factor in genocide. Finally, when analysing contemporary utterances, their form will tell us something about the way in which the situation is conceptualised by those in positions of power and influence, what actions such individuals and groups might be likely to take based on those conceptualisations, and where those actions might possibly lead (for example, in the case of violence by Robert Mugabe mentioned in the chapter on biopolitical discourse).

In this way, the model presented here can be used as a precise tool of analysis in examining episodes of genocide and genocidal killing. However, the research undertaken in this thesis also has a more general application. Two recent theoretical innovations, the employment of a comparative approach to the study of genocide, and that of the approach of the 'cultural turn,' allow the development of a general model of the nature and function of dehumanisation. In presenting this model, *the critical importance of the construction of language and the analysis of cultural forms*, which has often been downplayed as having minor significance, is re-emphasised: these are shown to have a direct connection to genocidal action in that they make such action 'allowable,' legitimate (as well as sometimes making an important contribution to motivation). In this sense, this thesis can be seen not only as an examination of genocidal dehumanisation, but also as a contribution to an emerging discussion as to the methods by which cultural theory can be applied to the study of genocide, enriching older models and allowing the development of new paradigms.<sup>7</sup>

A final use of these findings, given that dehumanisation may be conceived as a continuum which is not only implicated in genocide but in other forms of asymmetrical power relationships between collectives, is *to point to specific aspects of the nature of oppression in non-genocidal societies and individual practices*. The framework I have provided here opens up productive avenues of inquiry regarding dehumanisation in non-genocidal cases. We see in these findings that the use of language, and, in particular, metaphor and other types of

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<sup>7</sup> See for example T. Barta, 'Discourses of Genocide in Germany and Australia: a linked history', *Aboriginal History*, vol. 25, 2001, pp. 37-56; N. Finzsch, "'It is scarcely possible to conceive that human beings could be so hideous and loathsome": discourses of genocide in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America and Australia', in A. D. Moses & D. Stone (eds), *Colonialism and Genocide*. Routledge, London & New York, 2007, pp. 1-19; J. Semelin, 'Toward a vocabulary of massacre and genocide', *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol. 5, no. 2, 2003, pp. 193-210; J. Semelin, *Purify and Destroy: The Political Uses of Massacre and Genocide* (trans. C. Schoch), Columbia University Press, New York, 2007; P. Smith, *Why War?: The Cultural Logic of Iraq, The Gulf War, and Suez*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2005; D. Stone, 'White men with low moral standards? German anthropology and the Herero Genocide', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2001, pp. 33-45; D. Stone, 'Biopower and Modern Genocide' in A. Dirk Moses (ed.), *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, Berghahn Books, New York & Oxford, 2008, pp. 162-179.

'naming' or 'labelling' discourse, is not harmless even when (as is often argued) everyone knows what is 'really meant,' or knows that there is no literal negative implication. Furthermore, pre-existing structures of power embodied in text and practice, structures which we find unobjectionable, relatively unobjectionable, or a 'necessary evil,' make available discursive forms which can then be applied to forms of oppression and violence which we find more harmful. The literal meaning of words is vitally important, and necessary evils snowball. Every time we are complicit in the construction of animals as lesser than humans, we employ a discourse of unequal worth which makes it more possible to enslave and kill not only animals, but also other humans. The same applies to practices from the casual application of military terminology to medical procedures, to participation in the centralised demographic projects of the nation-state. It is in the nature of modern society that not all acts of complicity are avoidable (though many are) and that in numerous cases we may consider that the benefits outweigh the risks; but it is possible to identify the nature of those risks, and the consequences of their manifestation, in a clear-eyed fashion. While dehumanisation of the other may be 'human nature,' this does not imply that we must remain powerless to recognise its consequences. The act of recognition not only provides insight into the historical workings of genocide and genocidal killing; it is in itself a challenge to the catastrophic consequences of the abuse of language in the service of harmfulness and destruction.

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