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Abstract

After reviewing and modifying slightly the fourth dimension of James Waller's general explanatory theory of genocide, the chapter takes issue with the first of the four dimensions of that theory and offers an alternative theory of dispositions that apply to bystanders as well as perpetrators. The chapter then critically reviews a number of specific explanations of the Rwanda genocide, dividing them into universal and cultural explanatory theories to reveal the inherent inadequacies of each. By applying the revised general theory, the chapter shows how the inadequacies of each type of explanation as well as each specific one can be overcome to explain the Rwandan genocide.

## Theories of Genocide: The Case of Rwanda

Rwanda in 1994 was the scene of genocide against Tutsi and moderate Hutu. At least 800,000 people were killed despite the presence of UN peacekeepers believed by the victims to have been mandated to protect them. (Cf. African Rights, 1994a; 1994b; 1995; de Waal and Omaar, 1995; des Forges, 1999; Destexhe, 1994; 1995) Many political leaders<sup>1</sup> and most media outlets originally incorrectly depicted the genocide as tribal warfare stemming from ancient, unchangeable hatreds.<sup>2</sup> If an event is a result of a continuing, long-term, chronic problem seemingly immune to correction, then contemplating intervention to change the situation seems futile. (Adelman, 1999c; Feil, 1996) Further, in this inaccurate depiction, both groups are presumed to be equally culpable; therefore, neutrality seems advisable. Finally, there is no reason to look for a small cabal plotting and planning mass murder. Advancing an accurate and correct explanation for genocide is a critical ingredient in facilitating its prevention or mitigation.

If one fully understands why perpetrators commit such acts, once they have the power<sup>3</sup>, who and what will stop them? Understanding why mass slaughterers do what they do is not going to help the victims anymore than understanding why polio maims and kills is sufficient to prevent the devastation of that dreaded disease. The understanding must be complemented by devising preventive tools, creating the means to intervene to limit, and hopefully prevent, the devastating effects of genocide by developing mechanisms to make societies resistant to its possibility. Knowing why perpetrators commit genocide is insufficient. We must also know why others who have

the mandate and/or the power to prevent or mitigate the genocide – both states and international agencies – abet the genocide, subvert attempts to intervene, or idly stand by. This suggests that we have stepped into the realm of responsibility as well as the sphere of necessary and sufficient causes when we consider acts of negligence and omission as well as acts of commission.

In considering the interveners as well as the perpetrators, the choice of the Rwandan genocide as a case study is particularly apt. When one examines genocides that seemed to characterize the twentieth century, the Rwandan genocide stands out as by far the easiest to stop.<sup>4</sup> There was sufficient early warning information. (Adelman, 1999e; 1996; Adelman and Suhrke, 1996; Guilmette, 1995; Gurr and Harff, 1994) The mandate of the UN initially proposed by the Rwandan parties to the Arusha peace agreement (Adelman and Suhrke, 2004) was sufficiently robust to have enabled the peacekeepers to have been effective in prevention. Canadian and Ghanaian military troops held the Kigali airport throughout the genocide enabling ready access to Rwanda for an intervening force. The number of interveners needed to stop or mitigate the genocide was relatively small, especially given the low tech capabilities of the genocidal killers. The moral issue was clear. It is difficult to imagine an easier case both to justify and mount an intervention.<sup>5</sup> Why then was virtually nothing done in the way of prevention or even mitigation?

Hopefully, a theory of genocide will assist in answering this question. In Part I, this chapter begins with a critical consideration of one potentially comprehensive theory

of the causes of genocide. This critical examination provides a framework in Part II to examine specific explanatory theories of the Rwandan genocide, differentiating primarily between rational universal theories<sup>6</sup> and cultural theories<sup>7</sup>, and between those that focus on perpetrators and others that focus on bystanders. (Cf. Hilberg, 1992) Part III then tries to reconcile the general theory with the various specific explanations for the Rwandan genocide.

### **I Waller's Thesis on the Causes and Conditions Fostering Genocide**

There are a plethora of general explanatory theories of genocide. James Waller in his theory (2002) offers two advantages. He views genocide as an extreme in a continuum of mass slaughter and an even larger spectrum of types of mistreatment of other humans. Second, in addition to viewing genocide simply as an extreme of ordinary bad behaviour, Waller's social psychological analysis focuses on "how" rather than "why"; the explanation is focused on mechanisms without any apparent confusion between reasons and causes that often plague "why" explanations in identifying the broad spectrum of conditions conducive to humans becoming instruments of mass murder. This is very different than a focus on just the motivations and/or reasons driving those who initiate and plan a genocide, or those that focus on necessary and sufficient preconditions.<sup>8</sup>

Waller's thesis not only offers a very comprehensive causal account, it also serves as a foil for my own position. Underpinning Waller's thesis is a fundamental dichotomy. An "evil person is just as much an artificial construct as a person who is purely good." (p.

18) However, there are no actual examples of purely good people. There are examples of absolutely evil people. Evil persons are actual and not just ideal types. There are people who commit extraordinary evil. Instead of taking two ideal types, someone who is purely and exclusively evil in contrast to someone who is purely and exclusively good, he takes people who commit evil, (while stating that evil is an ideal type, and contrasts them with an ideal type, someone who is purely good and is truly a totally artificial construct or ideal type. My dichotomy will contrast actual evil persons and actual good persons.

“Perpetrators of extraordinary evil are extraordinary by what they have done, not by who they are.” (p. 18) Waller dichotomy is used to examine behavior *rather than* character. In contrast, at the end of this paper I will suggest that looking at behavior of evil people to discern character may be the best early indicator of genocide; looking at behavior of good people to discern character may be the best way to identify potential interveners. Character and behaviour are not disjuncts; they are complementary.

To *adumbrate* my argument against Waller’s thesis, I will challenge Waller’s strictures against understanding evil as an artificial construct and an ideal type. Secondly, I will challenge Waller’s thesis that those who are extraordinarily evil and who initiate and organize genocide cannot be distinguished from the rest of us except by their actions. Instead, I will argue that the characterization of evil is a crucial ingredient in understanding genocide. In the plethora of conditions that foster genocide – though, as the reader will see, identifying certain conditions are crucial – we can best take action to prevent and mitigate genocide<sup>9</sup> when we can identify the people who have a propensity to

evil and prevent them from taking power. Identifying the character of initiators and organizers of genocide (I will identify this later as virtue ethics) is more important than identifying the conditions under which ordinary people participate in genocide. However, the crucial factor will not be a “unified theory of perpetrator behavior” or even a theory of genocidal *leader* behavior, or even of genocidal leader *character*, but a political theory of the role of abettors, subverters and passive bystanders. (Cf. Adelman, 2004a; 2003; Krosiak, 2003; Power, 2001; 2002; Wheeler, 2002)

Before I get to these criticisms, let me say that I agree with three of the four dimensions that Waller uses to characterize genocide, even though I sometimes characterize those three dimensions a bit differently. In Waller’s four-dimensional model explaining genocide, the first dimension concentrates on human predispositions<sup>10</sup>, the second on cultural forces, the third on institutional cultural re-enforcers that submerge an individual perpetrator within the group, and the fourth on institutions that alter the perceived identity of the other. I differ with Waller in a fundamental way only with respect to the first dimension dealing with predispositions.

Waller identifies three predispositions: *ethnocentrism*, the tendency to focus on one’s own group as the ‘right’ one’; *xenophobia*, the tendency to fear outsiders or strangers; and, third, the *desire for social dominance* often leading to aggression and violence. (pp. 19-20) For Waller, these traits are universal and present in everyone from infancy. The second dimension concentrates on the cultural forces that help mold these predispositions in a particular direction. Waller names three *cultural belief systems*:

*authority orientation, moral disengagement* (fostered by ideology and propaganda), and a cultural system that fosters *rational self-interest*, both professional and personal. In addition to universal predispositions and cultural re-enforcers, the social context provides the third dimension, the existence of specific institutions in a society that foster a culture of cruelty. With respect to perpetrators, Waller names three: *professional socialization; group conformity*, and the *merger of role and person*.<sup>11</sup> The fourth dimension refers to institutions that alter the perceived identity of the victim to identify them as *other*, to *dehumanize* them as other, and to *blame them*.

#### Summary of the Four Dimensions Explaining the Behaviour of Perpetrators

- A. Predispositions: 1. ethnocentrism; 2. xenophobia; 3. desire for dominance.
- B. Cultural Forces: 1. Authority System; 2. Moral Disengagement; 3. Rational Self-interest
- C. Cultural Re-enforcers: 1. Professional socialization; 2. Group Conformity; 3. Merger of Person and Role.
- D. Identity Alterations: 1. Othering; 2 Dehumanizing 3. Blaming the Other

Since I have no fundamental quarrel with the final three dimensions, let me comment upon them in reverse order. With respect to the fourth dimension, institutions alter the perceived identity of the victim, identify them as *other*, *dehumanize* them, and *blame them*, make them deserving of their treatment. As Waller puts it, we “rearrange our perceptions of people and events so that it seems everyone is getting what they deserve. Victims must be suffering because they have done ‘something,’ because they somehow



are inferior or dangerous or evil, or because a higher cause is being served. The belief that the world is a just place leads us to accept the suffering of others more easily, even of people we ourselves have harmed.” (p. 254)

Instead of these three being elements of the fourth dimension, I identify them as *stages* in altering the identity of the other or in othering the other. Further, I identify five stages instead of three characteristics of Waller’s fourth dimension. His initial characteristic of defining a group as other is the first stage. I then introduce a second stage that he does not mention, defining the other as of lesser value than one’s own group. Characterizing a group as other is not the same as evaluating the group as having a comparatively lesser value. My third stage is the same as his second type of institutional role that defines the other as having a value that is less than human. For it is one thing to define the other group as having a lesser value than one’s own group; it is another to characterize the other group as having a value that makes them unworthy to be considered human. My fourth stage is similar to Waller’s third characteristic in altering the perceived identity of the other. However, in characterizing it as blaming the other, I am more specific since the fourth stage defines the other as having an intent to destroy one’s own group. Finally, I disaggregate a trait Waller included in blaming the other and add a fifth stage, defining the other as a threat *independent of intent* to one’s own group and thus an other that must be dealt with through elimination of the threat rather than through education.

These five stages are similar to the pantheon Waller sets forth with respect to treatment of the identity of the intended victim.<sup>12</sup> The first two are simply aspects of what Waller calls “Us-Them Thinking.” The first stage is the process of social categorization that distinguishes in-groups from out-groups. Then comes the evaluation that favors the in- versus the out-group, as members of each group tend to perceive other members of the in-group as possessing one identity differentiated from that of the identity of the Other, often exaggerating those differences. There tends to be attachment and allegiance even when the basis of differentiation of the two groups is relatively trivial; and arbitrary as indicated in the famous Tajfel experiments in social identity theory.<sup>13</sup>

Such a distinction easily deteriorates into seeing the other, not only as other, and not only as inferior, but as *inherently* inferior, thereby reifying competition, antagonism and then complete distrust. When it reaches the latter position, there is a very fine line before the third characteristic is manifest that corresponds to Waller’s thesis about dehumanization where the other is categorized as sub-human (the Tutsi were characterized as *inyenzi* or cockroaches) or unhuman (monsters and demons), and were linguistically and physically assaulted. The fourth and fifth stages constitute what Waller refers to as “Blaming the Victims” so that victims are regarded as getting what they deserve, thereby reducing any sense of responsibility in the minds of the perpetrator (Staub, 1989, p. 17).. This is facilitated by the well-known philosophical error of engaging in a category mistake by attributing “blame” simply where there might be some arbitrary “cause” – young women cannot be blamed for a greater frequency of being rape victims simply because they are young. Together, these characteristics make up what

Helen Fein (1993) called relegating an intended victim to a realm “outside the universe of moral obligation” and what Orlando Patterson (1982) termed condemning others to “social death”.<sup>14</sup>

I have set these characteristics up as a sliding scale of greater and greater alienation from any responsibility towards the other so that the presence of the first seemingly innocent and universally pervasive factors serve as part of a warning system about the initial stages in a trend towards extraordinary evil. The utility of the different specific categories or the creation of a scale can be debated, but some sense of a process of delegitimization of the other is present in all explanations of the mechanisms for genocide. Whether these are best explained in terms of self-protection mechanisms, concern with self-protection, self-esteem, or provoked by frustration (Waller, p. 255) I will leave to our discussion of the underlying ontological universal human predispositions set forth in Waller’s first dimension explaining genocide.

Similarly, there are various categories to characterize those specific cultural factors that reduce an individual sense of responsibility and promote conformity to group norms so that, in the extreme, there is no difference between the individual and the individual’s role in the group. Once again, I see the three that Waller has articulated as well founded in the social science literature; they are simply measures of increasing the degree of loss of individual identity, first through reinforcing group conformity, then using peer pressure and other re-enforcers to bind the individual to the group to reduce the sense of individual responsibility further until the very extreme is achieved when the

sense of individual responsibility is destroyed altogether and the individual becomes simply his or her role through a social psychological process of compliance, identification, and internalization.

This is accomplished based on escalating commitments – seemingly small innocuous incremental steps constituting ritual ‘theatrical’ conduct - through persistent indulgence in excessive, non-instrumental and unproductive behavior and repression of conscience that progressively desensitizes perpetrators through a process that begins with the control of information and makes those who have any information complicit in the cruel deeds. This desensitization then proceeds through other socialization steps: banishing criticism, creating a conspiracy of silence, and developing a language of euphemisms to refer to the actions that, in the end, extinguishes any inhibitions towards inflicting pain and suffering on the victims. The second is *group conformity* that includes activities that diffuse individual responsibility and reduces any identification with the consequences through the numbers involved and segmentation and fragmentation of the task of killing that de-individualizes, enforces conformity, and establishes an atmosphere of anonymity through peer pressure to bind individuals to follow group norms, accept authority, and set aside any capacity for crucial self-reflection. The third factor is something that goes even further to reduce individual identity towards zero through the *merger of role and person*.<sup>15</sup>

If the third dimension focuses on these three specific institutions that submerge an individual perpetrator within the group, the second dimension focuses on more basic

traditional *cultural belief systems*. If the history of Rwanda was characterized by a distinction between Tutsi and Hutu, between the self and other both from the Tutsi and the Hutu perspectives, if that history is then given a new twist in the Hamitic hypothesis<sup>16</sup> that *defined* the two groups as *primarily* other, as products of historical forces of migration from two radically different natural sources that lay in a long-forgotten past beyond one's control,<sup>17</sup> that is, that the two groups originate from two different racial stocks, then the tradition is suddenly provided with roots in natural law. The above conditions are reinforced when the Rwandan political system itself is oriented very powerfully towards *obedience to authority*, particularly when the authority resides in the state, and an ideology and corresponding propaganda, such as that propagated over the air waves of *Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines*, reinforces an *individual detachment*, particularly for those with a high *social dominance orientation* (SDO)<sup>18</sup> and high acceptance of group-based hierarchies. Such individuals have a low level of any sense of responsibility for the other. When this propensity is fostered by economic and political conditions that reinforces a propensity of everyone to look after themselves, both professionally and personally, as happened after the crash in coffee prices in the late eighties in Rwanda and an *economic struggle for survival* that ensued, then the specific economic, social and political situation of the society reinforces the specific cultural institutional factors reinforcing individual irresponsibility, moral disengagement accompanied, at the same time, by moral justification and the identification of the other as unworthy.<sup>19</sup>

## II Ontology and Human Dispositions

Underling the cultural forces and re-enforcers, underlying the way one mis-identifies the Other, Waller locates what he believes to be a set of universal human dispositions - our appetites of desire, fear and hope. In doing so, Waller equates *expressions* of a fundamental character with the fundamental traits themselves.<sup>20</sup> I take a Hegelian tack. The predispositions underlying ethnocentrism, xenophobia and desire to have power over others resides in our *desire* to aspire to be gods, the need for survival (what Hegel calls “life” in contrast to one expression of life, the fear of death at the hands of others), and the interaction of an instinct for survival and a desire to be immortal and immaterial, what Hegel dubbed “desire-in-life” (in contrast with hope).<sup>21</sup> Now is not the place to engage in a full-scale ontological argument about which set of premises about universal human predispositions is more accurate and more comprehensive in characterizing human nature. Let me first simply characterize the differences.

Instead of a basic *desire for social dominance*, or a propensity to seek power over others as foundational (not to be confused with Nietzsche’s *will to power*, a desire to create ones own identity), I take from Hegel a depiction of the masculine in humanity that is driven by an innate propensity to aspire to be god - characterized as a love for oneself as purely mental and disembodied *without* any appetites.<sup>22</sup> Desire is not equated with appetite. Quite the opposite! The strongest desire manifested in the male imagination and thought is the desire to be unboundaried, to reject the limits of the flesh, to be immaterial and see oneself as divine. Thus, Adam is all of *mankind*. His basic propensity is to see

himself akin to God in making things simply by using the language of *logos* and bringing things into being by naming them. He does not have to work. He says and there is. Just by thinking and uttering something, a world comes into being.

This is the very source of the imaginative arts. It has a very negative side. In the Garden of Eden, Adam does not take responsibility for his own body. Adam does not recognize he even has appetites or that he has feelings - such as feeling lonely and needing another. In other words, detachment and irresponsibility are not products of social conditioning; they are the 'original sin'. Certain forms of social conditioning can reinforce these propensities. Alternatively, civilized society develops by creating institutions and cultural practices to counteract this propensity while, at the same time, allowing this source of creativity an outlet for creative expression.

Just as Adam others his own flesh and feelings, Adam projects fleshly existence, the appetites of the flesh, and human feeling, onto the Other. The Other is viewed initially as the female Other. Eve is a projection of Adam's own embodiment. Thus, Adam begins by being alienated from his own flesh and seeing Eve as the embodiment of that flesh and having no center of initiative in herself. But if Adam is primarily desire – not as appetite, but its opposite, the will to be God – Eve is primarily life that cuts through any fear of consequences to follow the dictum to propagate and multiply. She gives into the temptations of Adam's penis – which in the Adam and Eve story is depicted as an erect wholly independent Other, an erect phallus (a snake) for which Adam does not take responsibility. In spite of warnings that such a path will lead to the knowledge of good

and evil with recognition of one's physical mortality, Eve consciously surrenders to the appetite that will result in procreation, while Adam insists that the action was not his responsibility, but that of his penis seen as Other. Adam was in denial that he was being driven by the appetites of the flesh. The objectified flesh (Eve) through Adam's reflection became Life and an object of immediate desire without cognitive endorsement. (Hegel's *Phenomenology*, para. 168)

Adam and Eve surrender to the life instinct and become "one flesh". They have sex. This destroys Adam's delusion that he is a *pure* immortal self-consciousness. At the same time, Life, instead of being a passive material existence for the use of the Mind, becomes Life as a living thing, a life force, an origin of action. Life becomes a process in which unity is forthcoming only out of the clash with its opposite, the desire to be divine and immaterial. On the one side, there is the life force, the passion that seeks unity with the Other. On the other side, there is the *divine* thought which sees itself as *objective*, as being in the business of objectifying the Other, including objectifying its own fleshly existence. Detachment is a fundamental ontological disposition. By definition, the source of the problem that results in genocide is not in the appetites and Life, but in Desire, the aspiration of mind to be free of its fleshly embodiment. That is why it is so willing not only to destroy but to mutilate and humiliate the flesh. That is why genocide is always so self-destructive.

With the discovery of its impossibility and the surrender to the life instinct, comes *em-barr-ass-ment*. Adam and Eve engage in a cover-up and fail to take responsibility for



what they did. The companion of the propensity to both detachment from one's feelings for the Other and from one's own fleshly existence is repression, secrecy, shame, and the evasion of responsibility.

Instead of Waller's *desire for social dominance*, there is a more basic desire to dominate over the Other viewed as one's *own* flesh. The root of the problem is not in the appetites, but in Thought, in a Mind that views itself as *pure* (that is, uncontaminated by embodied existence), a pure self-consciousness and an agent that acts through that self-consciousness. Instead of the very specific form that Life can take at one stage in the form of *ethnocentrism*, there is the more general propensity of the masculine side of the self to pursue only its own definition of the self and ignore any feeling or attachment to the Other. Instead of *xenophobia*, the interaction of Desire and Life leads to a dialectic clash of opposites in which the Other becomes the Object to be feared, as the source of all one's problems, as the root of Evil. The root of Evil is, however, the projection of the alleged root of evil onto the Other. This projection begins with the projection of the source of Evil onto one's own appetites. So the clash between Desire and Life is characterized as rooted in the appetites. Reason blames the flesh. The fundamental root of xenophobia is a phobia directed at one's own body and its appetites.

Modernity begins with the rejection of the aspiration of the self and the characterization of the divine other as pure disembodied self consciousness. Consciousness and self-consciousness are rooted in the flesh. Reason functions as an instrument of the passions, whether it be a passion for power over nature and pursuing

material acquisitiveness, as in John Locke, or a passion for power over other humans as in Thomas Hobbes. What the early modernists did not recognize, and which Waller fails to recognize as well, is that reason is not just an instrument of passion. This characterization of the relationship of passion and reason is itself a product, a construct of reason. In contrast, in the Hegelian modernist version that has its roots in the Scottish enlightenment, power is manifested in the pursuit of divine omniscience, of comprehensive knowledge by the imprint of *logos* on nature. Power over the other is a by-product of the dualism created by dichotomizing Mind and Matter.

When I assert I am Mind, *Cogito Ergo Sum*, Matter is projected as Other without any Mind, as that which must be conquered and mastered. The presumption of a desire for social dominance or a propensity to seek power over others is common to many enlightenment theorists who idealize individual political human autonomy, an individual that defines its own ends and denies the natural propensity to be with the Other and to empathize with the Other. Freedom is best achieved by the pursuit of human happiness without a *telos*, a final cause, without the quest to be with and share the feelings of another. In other words, although modernity begins with the acceptance that the demands of the flesh are real and basic and cannot be rejected, it still mis-characterizes the flesh by projecting onto it characteristics of thought and, at the same time, identifying virtue with autonomous rights of a self-defining and self-legislating autonomous self. The idealization of individual human rights as the counter to possessive individualism and the desire for power over the other is not the antidote, but the complement rooted in the same propensity for dichotomization and othering of material existence of the mind.<sup>23</sup> It is no

wonder then that the construction of a human rights regime based on the idealization of the autonomous individual will never work as a protection against genocide.

John Locke regarded the quest for the extension of the material self through acquiring possessions as basic, a desire to extend the material self in space and time that became realizable with the invention of money. More basic, however, was not the quest for wealth for its own sake, but the quest for wealth to be able to sacrifice that wealth, in fact, the material wealth most highly valued, in order to gain recognition. We seek to become wealthy so we can engage in philanthropy. Why? Because we want the recognition that, for us who are divine, money is not everything. Instead, in the end it is nothing; it is irrelevant in comparison to our quest for recognition as agents of the divine.

Cain and Abel willingly seek to bind themselves to an Other seen as divine and immaterial by sacrificing the best products of their very different ways of economic life, the herdsman his fattest sheep and the farmer the best of his grain. In true ritual fashion, they both engage in 'theatrical' conduct that demonstrates their indifference to the destruction of the best of that for which they labored in what is clearly excessive, non-instrumental and unproductive behavior. When Abel is recognized, and, hence, favoured by God, Cain is crushed. In frustration and total loss of self-esteem, he lashes out and kills his own brother and rival. He does not do so because he wants power over the other<sup>24</sup> or even because he seeks power over the other because he fears the other wants power over him as in Hobbes. He does so because he wants to be identified as divine. When he is only perceived as human-all-too-human, he does not enslave the other but

kills him. Bondage to the Lord is not then a product of coercion but of an inherent desire to obey and be identified with a higher authority.

Genocide is not a by-product of the quest for wealth or the quest for power. It is instead a manifestation of the same more basic ontological root that gives rise to the quest for wealth and the quest for power, the quest to be recognized by a divine pure self-consciousness as also being a divine pure self-consciousness. Genocide is a religious act of sacrificing the other and a willingness to sacrifice the self in the quest for purity. This is viewed as a divine quest.<sup>25</sup>

Further, such a basic account of human nature is much more consistent with the understanding of the other three dimensions that characterize the propensity to commit genocide and the most basic desire to escape and evade responsibility and project blame onto the body of an Other. That is why the death of the Other is insufficient. That is why humiliation of the other as an embodied Other, why assaults against the sexuality of the Other are particularly prevalent, and why rape and genocide are so intrinsically intertwined. That is why the mistreatment of the corpse of the other and denial of a civilized burial goes so closely hand-in-hand with extraordinary evil. (Adelman, 1998a; Neier 1998) That is why there is a fundamental contrast between the moral edict to assume responsibility for oneself as an embodied self, and the evil propensity to slide into irresponsibility for one's own actions.

Does it matter in understanding genocide whether desire for power over the Other, ethnocentrism and xenophobia are rooted in a more fundamental and basic ontology?

Yes. The more fundamental comprehension allows one to understand the phenomena of rape and the mutilations of the flesh that are such integral parts of genocide. Further, the sociological expressions of this more fundamental ontology in the cultural beliefs and the development of the cultural enforcers are then explicable as manifestations of this propensity.

With the categories for understanding the social expression of this fundamental ontology, with the comprehension of specific cultural traits that reinforce this propensity to avoid individual responsibility by reinforcing group conformity reinforced by mechanisms, such as peer pressure to bind the individual to the group to reduce the sense of individual responsibility until, in the extreme, the sense of individual responsibility is destroyed altogether and the individual becomes simply his or her role, with the understanding of when a political system in such a culture acts to reinforce authority with a propaganda ideological campaign that reinforces individual detachment from taking responsibility for the other reinforced by a political economy that fosters self-seeking, and when the Other is painted, as depicted above, as Other, as wholly Other, as a lesser Other, as a dangerous Other capable of destroying the *body politic*, and as an Other that must be eliminated because the other is a “natural threat” independent of intent, then we do have a comprehensive set of categories for understanding when and the conditions under which the extreme degree of irresponsibility is manifested in genocide. But it is precisely in conditions that foster extreme irresponsibility that the responsibility of others

is most needed. That is why, if genocide is to be mitigated and even prevented (Adelman, 1999d; Adelman and Suhrke, 1996), focusing only on the conditions that foster genocide is insufficient. One needs to understand the conditions that will foster responsibility and intervention by others. (Adelman, 1999c; 1998e; 1997; Adelman and Suhrke, 1996; Feil, 1996; Guilmette, 1996)

### **III Explaining the Rwandan Genocide**

#### **A. Universal versus Cultural Explanatory Theories of the Rwandan Genocide**

Before exploring the actual explanations offered for the Rwandan genocide, let me begin by describing the two basic ones in the abstract as well as the limitations of each of them. One set of theories locate the explanation in universal factors, The problem then is to develop systems of *cultural* conditioning that can counteract these universal failings. The other set of theories locate the explanation for genocide in the development of a set of specific traits in a culture, but, other than advocating the alteration of the predominance of those cultural traits, the theory offers no mechanism by which that can be accomplished.

Universal theoretical explanations of the Rwandan genocide generally presume that the irresponsibility of both perpetrators and bystanders is fostered by the pursuit of self-interests. The way of ensuring that these self-serving projects do not become violent entails putting in place *institutional mechanisms* for allowing our constructed intellectual

versions of the world and quest for personal power and wealth to be challenged by a reality and/or morality independent of those constructions. But no program let alone any foundation in human nature is put forth to demonstrate how such ‘moral sensitivity’ can be cultivated.

At another pole are cultural theorists who presume that there will always be cultural clashes. Cultural theorists tend to be anti-utopian, both with respect to any ideal of a perfect detached rational calculation or with respect to any political or economic system that can overcome and prevent violence. The best we can do is to manage and mitigate conflict to prevent and limit violence as much as possible. If universal theories have implicit in them an objective idealism, a utopian vision of what constitutes an ideal rational order, implicit in cultural theorists one finds a subjective idealism, a presumption that within the varied cultures can be found norms which allow those cultures to transcend their own limitations. Humans can pursue a wholeness that is part of their culture from the start.

In this part of the paper, I will not explore the vast majority of accounts of the Rwanda genocide, but instead will concentrate on a select few of those that are both better known and that have a strong element of theory in the construction of the thesis. In contrast to the wide variety of specific cultural explanations for genocide, I can identify only three different sets of motives and explanations offered for the genocide among the universal rationalists. Mamdani (2001) offers a *diachronic political explanation* for the growth and development of racism and genocide that culminated in the genocide.<sup>26</sup> In

Mamdani's account, clashes of power arise out of a particular set of historical circumstances that replay the search for identity and recognition (Waller's third and fourth dimensions), though the replay does not imitate the original process of colonial enslavement. Bruce Jones (1991a; 1991b; 2001) offers a *synchronic political analysis* of the weakness of the strategic decisions and actions taken to foster peace that allowed the extremist spoilers an opportunity to muster their strength, depose Habyarimana, resume the civil war, and begin the systematic slaughter of Tutsi.<sup>27</sup> In Jones' account, the failure is located in a series of interventions from outside that initially appear to be adequate each time but prove, in the end, to be inadequately thought out. The emphasis is on the interveners rather than on the perpetrators.<sup>28</sup>

Peter Uvin (1998) offers an *economic structural analysis* of the impact of foreign aid in exacerbating the crisis in Rwanda by creating a ruling class totally dependent on this aid for their status and power, without any alternative option to preserve the prestige and income when they lose power.<sup>29</sup> When the commodity price of coffee, the main export crop, crashed in 1989, the IMF insisted on restructuring, weakening the state apparatus, creating a motive for corruption, and throwing Rwanda into a crisis that encouraged the RPF invasion. Uvin critiques the role of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the development agencies of various Western countries for their role first in developing an economic system in which the leaders became dependent for their wealth and status on the inflow of external aid. When the commodity price of the main export crop, coffee, crashed in 1989, the IMF insisted on restructuring, weakening the state apparatus, creating a motive for corruption, and, thereby, encouraging the RPF



invasion. In the case of Rwanda, this reinforced the political and cultural propensities already present in Rwandan society. The way of ensuring such situations do not become violent entails putting in place improved and more rational institutional mechanisms for allowing our constructed intellectual versions of the world to be challenged by a reality and/or a morality independent of those constructions, that is, a conceptual and moral framework that can abstract itself from historical conditions and circumstances. However, no philosophical foundation is provided to facilitate this happening.

All three explanations presume a universal dichotomy of rational and non-rational and an idealization of rationality. That which fails to meet the ideal standards of rationality is non-rational. For Mamdani, it is rational to develop political states in which membership norms are based on residence in the territory of that state and not on ethnicity and, more specifically, not on race.<sup>30</sup> Such a membership system prevents the dichotomization of self and other in Waller's third and fourth dimensions, at least domestically. In Mamdani's envisioned solution, we do need a system of states that guarantee *everyone* protection so that no individual lacks a political home that guarantees him/her protection. The primary solution depends upon solving the problem internally by insisting that anyone resident within the territory of a state should have citizenship. Mamdani never considers the possibility that this may merely provide an incentive for irregular migrants to seek residency in the most prosperous states as an unintended consequence. Further, Mamdani overlooks the fact that ethnic identification within a state need not be a source of inter-ethnic conflict, but can be a source of inter-ethnic recognition and respect. Finally, in the utopian vision of a system of states on which

every state identifies its members only by the fact that they are resident in that state, the demand for a melting pot, a harmonization of identity, both ignores the roots of states in an historically based nationality or even in a constructed nationality that, once constructed, limits access to new members by that very construction, and, on the other hand, is intolerant of minorities preserving their identities and uniqueness.

For Jones, rational decisions of leaders outside the fray must be both coherent and comprehensive in taking into consideration all the factors that might threaten the peace, and creating all the necessary and sufficient conditions to foster that peace. The explanation for the failure to act was not one of norms at all, but a failure in strategic thinking, in ensuring the proper fit between intended outcomes and the means put in place to achieve those ends - taking into consideration both opportunities and obstacles to that implementation, either because of a series of cascading misperceptions resulting in poorly coordinated and contradictory policies that undermined the peace effort (Jones), or “ill conceived and counterproductive” ones in the first place that led to an understandable failure given the strategic priorities of the powers, the speed of the genocide, the misleading media coverage, and the size, strength and speed of military intervention required to make a significant impact (Kuperman 2000a; 2000b; 2001). Like Jones, Kuperman views the problem strategically. The problem was not the lack of action but the wrong actions taken. The problem was not moral or cultural, but a rational failure rooted in ill-conceived actions in the political solution developed and the military peacekeeping plan designed to implement it.

For example, though Mamdani (p. 211) suggests that a government containing the CDR was a possible alternative outcome of the talks, to Jones that outcome appears certain: "the final result proved to be a recipe for disaster because it pushed well beyond what was acceptable in key sectors in Kigali on distribution of command posts and the distribution of seats in the BBTG (the Broad-Based Transitional Government)" (p. 95), and thereby violated key tenets of conflict resolution that insist that one party *not* be given a significantly disproportionate role in government, and that the various groups be represented in the army, particularly in command posts, roughly in proportion to their percentage of the population. Different scholars offer alternative answers to the questions whether the RPF made a mistake in excluding the CDR from military and political power, and whether the mistake lay in relying on the international community to neutralize the spoilers. However, allowing committed racists and spoilers to join the government would not have neutralized but empowered them. Jones (p. 82) implies that either possibility would have been preferable, but, in the absence of anyone able and willing to neutralize the spoilers, Jones argues that inclusion would have been the better option, even if inclusion enhances their opportunities. Jones regrets that France did not back the government against the RPF more effectively (p. 78), but concedes that, as the CDR's supporters were spoilers determined to violate the peace agreement, containment was an alternative strategy not adopted.

In their rational choice models, Jones and Kuperman both presume that the problem can be resolved by finding and constituting a group that is wise and all-knowing who can devise strategies for preventing and mitigating violence. However, perceptual

and analytic capacities are insufficient. Tough choices have to be made based on limited knowledge and an inability to forecast changing geo-political circumstances. Do you put in sufficient force to neutralize the spoilers? Or do you try to co-opt the spoilers through inclusion risking giving them more power and leverage? Or do you try to muddle through, exclude the spoilers, and hope the political solution will be in place in time to offset the need for a military solution? And when circumstances tend to dictate one choice rather than the other and that choice proves to be calamitous, then hindsight will fault the “rational” decision-maker for miscalculation.

In a third type of rational universal model (Uvin), it is irrational to impose cookie-cut economic solutions and conditionality for aid after first making the status and security of the leadership class dependent on that aid, and then failing to take into account the historical circumstances of the state in question at that time. This, and all these rational approaches, deliberately eschew taking into consideration the customs and norms of the local community in question. Mamdani focuses on maintaining rationality within the state where genocide has a possibility of breaking out. In contrast, Jones, Kuperman and Uvin focus on maintaining rationality through the rational behavior of outsiders, Uvin focusing on rational behavior that will not exacerbate internal propensities, and Jones and Kuperman on rational behavior that will counteract such propensities once they break into open violence.

Cultural explanations, in contrast, do not presume a universal dichotomy of rational and irrational. Violent conflict is primarily a product of *cultural* conflict and not

of a quest for power in this world, conflict which only ends with the supercession of both cultures in a new way of life. Construction of the objectified world is a result of tradition shaping our norms, beliefs and even character, norms that lead either to clashes with others who construct the objectified world differently, or to passivity in the face of such clashes. It is clear that in two types of rational accounts – Uvin and Jones/Kuperman – and in the cultural accounts, only the superior culture and rationality of outsiders can prevent disaster. It is on the role of bystanders, passive and active, active subverters or abettors, that I now turn.

### **B. Abettors, Subverters and Bystanders**

If rational models of explanations *dominate* the explanations for the genocide itself, though the Uvin, Jones and Kuperman's accounts are clearly exceptions in dealing with a rational failure with respect to outsiders, cultural models tend to dominate in explaining the role of bystanders. Before I go into them, I want to provide an example of one type of cultural account that sees culture as the predominant factor explaining the actions of perpetrators of genocide. For Peter Ronayne (2001), culture is not monolithic; thus, the solution to preventing genocide resides in strengthening cultural institutions and norms that reflect moral sensitivity and a more comprehensive intellectual frame, and which allow the limitations of the predominant cultural norms to be overcome. Only through strengthening non-dominant institutional norms and developing countervailing cultural norms and institutions within the system, more specifically, reinforcing anti-genocide norms and values that reflect this moral sensitivity and more comprehensive

intellectual frame, can a challenge be launched against the preeminence of state norms based on interests and strategic calculations that lead to genocide. Insofar as outsiders enhance non-dominant institutional and cultural norms, they can counteract the propensity towards genocide. The problem is that the cultural criticism of outsiders seems to point to the fact that their own cultural limitations make them poor candidates as interveners.

Samantha Power (2002) and Michael Barnett (2002; 2003) offer two other types of cultural explanation that focus on the role of interveners, in this case explaining why potential interveners failed to intervene and stop the genocide, where culture once again represents a set of norms and habits<sup>31</sup>, mental and behavioral, characteristic of an institution, each institution reflecting its uniqueness and difference from other cultures in the particular set of norms that characterize it and the historical explanation for their predominance.<sup>32</sup> In Barnett<sup>33</sup>, culture stresses social and cognitive processing more than institutional patterning.<sup>34</sup> Barnett's empathetic account of decision-making within the context of UN norms does not prevent Barnett from unabashedly condemning the United States and Boutros Boutros-Ghali.<sup>35</sup> Barnett finds UN bureaucratic procedures blameworthy and 'simply unconscionable' (2002, p. 20). For Barnett, UN indifference was rooted in a principled concern for the survival of the United Nations, the principle of neutrality, an accumulation of personal and institutional strategic and expedient steps, failures in communication between the Secretariat and the Security Council, and the silence of Boutros Boutros-Ghali on the genocide until after the withdrawal of the bulk of UNAMIR troops.

If Barnett focused on an international agency, Power stressed the role of the state, in her case, the most powerful state, the USA. For Power<sup>36</sup>, expanding on the initial lead of Holly Burkhalter (1994; 1994/5), the policy of nonintervention in the face of genocide was part of a consistent American cultural pattern that can only be counteracted by developing enhanced moral sensitivities. This historical propensity was reinforced by familiar expectations of large-scale ethnic violence in the region that contributed to American inaction and irresponsibility. Power notes Clinton's failure to consult Joyce Leader, the US political officer in Rwanda after her return in April 1994, and his failure to assemble his senior political advisers to consider diplomatic intervention. Power documents the belated and ineffective efforts to send reinforcements to Dallaire of Senator Paul Simon (D-Illinois), the chairman of the foreign relations committee on Africa, and Senator James (Jim) Jeffords (R-Vermont), the ranking Republican on the committee, who retrospectively blamed the lack of public support.<sup>37</sup>

However, this account seems inconsistent with Jones' portrait of the United States' role at the Arusha talks characterized as governed simply by a desire to end a conflict in which it had no strategic or economic interest. As a result, the U.S. was trusted both by the RPF and the government of Rwanda delegations. The U.S. served as a source of creative ideas, friendly persuasion, and leverage (p. 75).<sup>38</sup> The other side of the story is that when the crunch came, as Barnett, Melvin, Power, and Ronayne all show, the United States insisted on a weak mandate which undermined the Arusha Accords from the start by limiting any independent arms enforcement actions; gave weak support to a

UN peacekeeping force limited in size owing to the hostility of Congress; supported phased deployment only after no other state supported its proposal of a tiny force of 500 peacekeepers; blocked the supply of armored personnel carriers and helicopters promised; advocated complete withdrawal once the genocide began, on the grounds that intervention in an active civil war was deadly; feared redeployment once genocide was undeniable, fearing the slippery slope of involvement (Power, p. 170); and contended that the other signatories were not committed to abiding by the Arusha Accords. Ronayne (pp. 166-7) stressed the constraints of the PDD-25 mind-set, seen (as Power, pp. 381-2, documents) in the support in July/August 1994 for safe zones on the border that Dallaire called a mission 'to put on a show at no risk', and which undermined his efforts to make UNAMIR II effective. In essence, Power and Melvin stress what the United States knew and could have known but did not act upon that knowledge.

In fact, the United States showed the greatest lack of commitment; obfuscated the identities of the parties to the agreement by collapsing the extremist spoilers into their enemies, the moderate Hutus, whom the extremists regarded as traitors and eliminated first; confused the civil war with the war against the civilian population (Adelman, 1998d); and, when finally deciding in May 1994 to support UNAMIR II, after the genocide was well under way, tangled the provision of the authorized fifty armored personnel carriers in a bureaucratic web of debates about capital, transportation, and insurance cost recovery.



Other scholars focus on the irresponsibility of other states. Reyntjens (1996)<sup>39</sup>, contributed an excellent study of the genocide itself, paying particular attention to the role of Belgium and the way it projected its own cultural divisions and nineteenth century racist ideology on Rwanda. With respect to the French role, following Prunier (1995; 1999), there is general agreement on the self-serving role that France played (cf. also Callamard , 1999, Krosiak, 2003<sup>40</sup> and Verschave, 1994) determined by its cultural concerns with its own honour and the maintaining of francophonie in Africa. Thus, Power restates the conventional view that France was ‘the least appropriate country to intervene because of its warm relationship with the genocidal Hutu regime’ (p. 380). Further, most scholars adhere to Prunier’s explanation that, in June 1994, France launched the militarily substantial Operation *Turquoise* extremely quickly, if very late, but only for domestic public relations reasons and to protect its own political interests (Barnett, p. 147). Although the operation saved lives, it did not interfere with the hate radio broadcasts or try to stop the genocide and the escape of those responsible for it.<sup>41</sup>

However, Mamdani and Melvern went even further than Prunier and followed Kagame’s belief and claim that France’s provision of training and arms for the Habyarimana regime prolonged the conflict and allowed the extremists to consolidate their hold on power, and, further, created the protected corridors by which those politically responsible for the genocide escaped to Zaire.<sup>42</sup> Melvern, like Prunier, attributes France’s support for the Habyarimana regime to a small powerful group in the Elysée Palace surrounding the president, François Mitterand, and his son Jean-Christophe who enjoyed close personal ties with the Habyarimana clique.(Prunier, 1995) Barnett (p.

171) charges France with protecting and continuing to supply arms to the genocidaires after the genocide began. Mamdani (p. 254) and Melvern (p. 183) go further and insist that France continued to supply the defeated Rwandan government in the refugee camps at Goma<sup>43</sup> and, according to Mamdani, conspired with Sese Seko (Joseph-Désiré) Mobutu, to ensure that the extremists who controlled the camps were not disarmed. Jones, while supporting the harsh criticism of France, argues that French diplomats also played a constructive role during the Arusha talks (pp. 76-7) and at the UN.

If the universalist solutions are too grand, the cultural solutions are too limited, and both are self-contradictory. Humanitarian sensibilities are both unreliable and historically inadequate. Institutional systems for reality checks for our constructions of reality are necessary and helpful, and may lead to different decisions in certain circumstances, but in themselves are unlikely to do so. Strengthening the identification of crimes like genocide and the enforcement mechanisms offer a worthy long term goal, but the question remains of how to understand genocide *before* it becomes manifest in collective institutions. When it becomes collectively apparent, we are usually too late. In any case, any of these solutions by themselves are unlikely to work and will generally require the others as well.

### **III General Theory and Specific Explanations of the Rwanda Genocide**

How does the general theory of explanation of genocide in general reconcile with the specific explanations of the Rwandan genocide offered by different scholars?

(Adelman, 2004b) The first and most outstanding difference is that most of the scholars explain the genocide by the inability of outsiders to be effective interveners; they do not focus on the causes and conditions that reinforced the activities of the general perpetrators. Even scholars like Ronayne, who offer a cultural explanation of the genocide, focus on the powerlessness of non-dominant cultural norms to offset the propensities in the culture to foster genocide.

What are those propensities? They are a truncated version of the second dimension in Waller's analysis, that is, the *cultural belief systems, authority orientation, moral disengagement* (fostered by ideology and propaganda), and a cultural system that fosters *rational self-interest*, both professional and personal. Further, virtually all authors in the *depiction* of the Rwanda genocide capture many if not most of the specific categories within the fourth dimensions in the Waller framework dealing with the process of dehumanization and blame of the Other (the Tutsi) and, to a lesser degree, depict the third dimension and the specific institutions that brainwashed a significant minority of the population to participate in genocide wherein individual identities were submerged within a framework of group-think.

Most analysts, however, focused on the failures of the bystanders. Uvin's economic model concentrated on the role of international agencies in fostering the fourth in the list of cultural norms (within the second dimension) that reinforce genocide. Mamdani concentrated on the state as an institution that had a reified belief system that made the divisions between Hutu and Tutsi super-ordinate to citizenship without any

significant external challenges. Power focused on the economic and power interests of the USA that contributed to that country's indifference. Barnett pointed to the 'instinct' for institutional self-preservation that made the UN behave so indifferently. Prunier and others pointed to the cultural flaws and inherent character of the French and their state's preoccupation with honor and the promotion of the French language. But why were all these states and the major international agency so afflicted with mindblindness with very different manifestations in each party?

What is most telling is that at the root of the failure in responsibility in all cases – recalling that most cases deal with the failure in responsibility of the bystanders - was not a desire for power over others, or an ethnocentrism (the emphasis on the centrality of the state is not the same as ethnocentrism), or an xenophobia, but, in fact, a concern with the identity of the self, whether as individuals or as collectivities.<sup>44</sup> In all cases, each agent and agency was permeated with what was perceived to be a profound and higher vision of the entity that did not include a responsibility towards the Other as a prime consideration. Driven by this vision – whether it was the preservation of the United Nations, the extension of the power and interests of America, the honour of France and the glory of French, these self-images were critical in allowing an evasion of responsibility.<sup>45</sup>

In sum, I want to put forth the thesis that a comprehensive theory explaining genocide has to include an explanation of the effective inaction of the bystanders as well as the action of the perpetrators. That requires a common ontological theory of human nature that, I argue, will not be found in any desire for power over others, ethnocentrism or xenophobia

which are all derivative. The basic ontology reveals itself as a *masculine* propensity in human nature to escape from responsibility through a devotion to mental constructs of our own minds, mental constructions that cut us off from feeling both of who we are as well as a concern for others. Civilization is the process of fostering a sensitivity to such feelings, and creating institutions that enhance individual responsibility and do not foster creating intellectually constructed escapes. It is necessary to document the *character* of the organizers of genocide, and not just the culture that promotes irresponsibility both in perpetrators and interveners, and to document the character of those who resist and try to counteract genocide.

There is a need to resurrect a concern with virtue ethics.<sup>46</sup> Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* (I, 7-8) listed as individual virtues honour, reason and the pursuit of self-satisfaction, virtues that are identified herein with promoting indifference and irresponsibility in dealing with victims of genocide. Aristotle defined the self-sufficient as that which is chosen for its own sake rather than for what it contributes to something else, that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing. Such a definition of virtue, I have implied, is but an expression of reason's narcissism, whereby the life of the rational contemplative mind, thought's focus on itself, is viewed as the highest virtue. It is perhaps unsurprising that this intellectual narcissism should be esteemed above all else by a philosopher who sees rational contemplation as the highest virtue and desires to place philosophical self-centeredness at the pinnacle of value. I have suggested that such a naturalistic masculine identification of virtue is itself the original sin in that it raises a natural propensity of most men to the highest rank of virtue when it

is a trait and a disposition that leads to a theory of the state rooted in the self-centered thrust for power and promotion of self-interest, or in the highest esteem placed on the cultural characteristics of one's own group, and that must be counteracted by institutional and cultural mechanisms that make men care for the Other. However, the fuller development of this version of virtue ethics must await another time and place.

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## Footnotes

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, who was Secretary-General of the United Nations at the time, initially avoided using the term ‘genocide’. He characterized the conflict in his January 1994 report as ‘armed banditry’ (Melvern, 2000, p. 113). Later, he called it an ethnic conflict between Hutu and Tutsi rather than a centrally directed genocidal conspiracy (Barnett, 2002, p. 120). He did not characterize the event as genocide until the end of April 1994.

<sup>2</sup> For a very early *accurate* account by a journalist, cf. Collette Braeckman (1994). For a somewhat different account that places as much if not more blame on the RPF and its Tutsi leadership both before the war and in its aftermath in Zaire/Congo, cf. Brauman (1995). For a more scholarly account of the RPF role, cf. Reyntjens (1994).

<sup>3</sup> As many have documented (e.g., Horowitz, 1997), the instruments of state power are critical to committing genocide.

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Gerald Caplan, the author of the Organization of African Unity Report on the Rwandan Genocide on behalf of a Commission of Eminent Persons, called, “Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide.” “Howard Adelman, a Rwandan expert at York University in Toronto, once wrote that Rwanda’s was ‘the most easily preventable genocide imaginable,’ and the panel unhesitatingly accepted my suggestion that we call the three-hundred-page report “Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide.” Gerald Caplan, “The Genocide Problem: ‘Never Again’ All Over Again,” *The Walrus*, October 2004, p. 70.

<sup>5</sup> For a detailed analysis of the realistic possibility of an effective military intervention with a relatively small armed force, cf. Feil (1996). For a critique of this view, cf. Kuperman (2001). For an ethical evaluation, cf. Wheeler (2002).

<sup>6</sup> I have concentrated on theories that explain the event in terms of human agents. There are explanation that focus on issues such as the environment, demographic density and competition for scarce resources. For a materialistic ecological explanation and formula for prevention that eschews a focus on human agents as fundamental, cf. Dobkowski and Wallimann (Eds.) (1998).

<sup>7</sup> I concentrate only on the Rwandan genocide. There are examples of cultural explanations of other genocides. For example, Alex Hinton is completing a book entitled *Cambodia's Shadow: Cultural Dimensions of Genocide*, which adopts an anthropological approach to the origins of the Cambodian genocide (1975-1979) in terms of perpetrator motivation. Cf. Hinton 2002 and 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Gurr and Harff (1994; 1996) and Harff (1994) offer the following preconditions for genocide based on their comparative studies: the pre-occurrence of "state failure," an ethnic or revolutionary war, a ruling elite whose ethnicity is politically significant but not representative of the general population and which upholds and fosters an exclusionary ideology; autocratic rule; and a relatively closed economic system. Note that a trigger is not a cause per se. Thus, using a missile to shoot down Habyarimana's plane triggered the genocide but did not cause it. It is generally held that the extremists who controlled the Presidential Guard shot down the plane in revenge for Habyarimana finally acceding to implement the Arusha Accord at Arusha on 6 April 1994. For a contrarian view, blaming the missile firing on the RPF and Kagame in particular, see Péan, Nick and Muntz (2000). They cite, for example, Krop (1994) who reported that, "strangely, not long after the hit, two members of DAMI, the sub-chiefs René Maïr and Alain Didot, were found assassinated in their lodgings located in the airport surroundings."

<sup>9</sup> Longman (1999) argues that apathy and moral indifference were not behind the factors inhibiting Western involvement. Rather, western states were involved, but in building state power that carried out the genocide. According to Longman, the West allowed the growth of a militant opposition to seize state power at the expense of civil society. (See also Melvern, 2000 and 2004 and Scherrer, 2002.)

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Scherrer adds Uvin's economic aid analysis to the involvement of the West because of the West's interests and power-brokering role.

<sup>10</sup> I have used Waller because he has a theory of disposition, one with which I disagree, but at least he has one. Many theorists of genocide do not. They concentrate on some or most of the categories concerned with socialization. For example, Alex Alvarez (2001) emphasizes the factors in socialization that reinforce conformity and obedience to authority, deviant authority in particular. "Techniques of neutralization" involve: denial of responsibility, denial of injury, denial of the humanity of the victims, a condemnation of the condemners, an appeal to higher loyalties, and the definition of the situation in such a way that one has no choice but to destroy. In this way, ordinary, normal people "can in clear conscience commit the most horrific crimes" (p. 129) especially when these actions in turn are "reinforced by the larger political and cultural context" (p. 113). Social elites play an important role in legitimating genocide and providing the ideology, the impetus and motive relying on conformity and authority. As he stated, "the Rwandan genocide, while guided and orchestrated by military and political leaders, nonetheless relied upon many ordinary citizens to facilitate the killing." The military plays an important role in the recruitment of genocidaires. At the level of the individual, Alvarez applies the Sykes and Matza "neutralization theory" (p. 114). (Cf.. G.M. Sykes and D. Matza (1957). "Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 22, 664-670.) "Neutralization" referred to the rhetorical tricks developed by deviants to deflect criticisms from otherwise dominant norms, including: 1) denial of responsibility (the event was an accident or caused by something beyond an individual's control); 2) denial of injury (no one was really hurt, or, if hurt, he would have been anyway); 3) denial of any victim (even if the action was deviant, even if someone was injured, the victim either brought it on himself or the injury was justified); 4) condemning the condemners (those who condemn condone those who provoked them); and 5) appeal to higher loyalties. The Sykes/Matza neutralization theory was really an application and amplification of one dimension of Edwin Sutherland's criminology theory of differential association (*The Professional Thief*, 1937) which attributed deviant (esp. criminal) behaviour to a particular process of socialization in a specific set of practices with their own rationales. Genocide, like crime, was learned from others and was a product of social context, interaction and communication in intimate personal groups. In contrast, xenophobia, ethnocentrism and the power drive, if valid, characterize all behaviour and do not differentiate the

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genocidaires from ordinary people. In contrast to universal dispositions, which apply to the just and law abiding as well as the deviant, social-psychological processes allow the individual to create a definition for his or her own life in response to experience then define a certain human situation as an appropriate occasion for violating larger social norms. "A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law" (Sutherland, 1947).

<sup>11</sup> The standard reference is the Stanford Prison Experiment (SPE) conducted by Zimbardo and that seems so prophetic in anticipating what occurred in the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad in the first year of the George W. Bush Gulf War.

<sup>12</sup> For another variation on this theme, cf. Kressel (1996).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Henry Tajfel and John C. Turner, "An Integrative Theory of Intergroup Conflict," in W. Austin and S. Worchel, eds., *The Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations* (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1979). In the experiment, individuals without prior contact or even interaction during the experiment are divided into two groups on very arbitrary grounds – a toss of a coin, eye colour, musical preferences, identifying the number of dots on a screen. In one experiment, a set of abstract paintings that were indistinguishable in type, are arbitrarily assigned to two different categories of style and individuals assigned to one type of taste preference versus another based on their preferences where there is no reward or penalty for making one choice rather than another. The experimental result showed that each individual showed a bias, discrimination or competitive orientation towards his or her own in-group versus the out-group, preferring their own group, evaluating them as having better taste, or as being more pleasant or as being harder workers, and deserving of greater rewards seeking a greater *relative* advantage rather than an absolute greater reward. Perception of belonging to one group is sufficient to trigger in-group favouritism and inter-group rivalry. The explanation for this behaviour was attributed to the quest for self-esteem. (Cf. Waller, p. 241-3)

<sup>14</sup> For a critical appraisal of Patterson's thesis, cf. Heike Harting and her project on "Global War and the Politics of Corpses in Canadian Narratives of the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda" who criticizes postcolonial theorists who see violence primarily as a mode of (mis)representation.

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<sup>16</sup> The Hamitic hypothesis offers an example of how traditional economic and social differences can be reified into perceived immutable differences. Hutu and Tutsi were not ethnic groups. The royal court was Tutsi; Tutsi were cattle owners and breeders. Hutu were farmers. The boundaries, however, were permeable as Hutu became prosperous, purchased cattle and became Tutsi. Intermarriage took place between Tutsi and Hutu. Further, political positions were divided between the two groups. In the Hamitic theory, the germ of which can be found in the speculations of an English explorer of the Great Lakes district, John Hanning Speke, and which was developed by the White Fathers, a Catholic missionary group led by Bishop Leon Classe, Bantu-type Africans (Hutu) from the south were perceived to be descendants of Ham, who was the cursed son of Noah; successive generations inherit that curse that determines that they will always be inferior. Tutsi, by contrast, were perceived to be descendants of the white race who spoke a different language and belonged to a different culture that included the Egyptian, Berber, Cushitic and Chadic languages - the Hamitic culture. The Hutus Bantus were descendants of Ham. The Tutsi were superior Hamites, Caucasians with darker skin who civilized the Bantus. With colonization, in the late nineteenth century, colonial authorities – first the Germans and then the Belgians following WWI - viewed the Tutsi as martial pastoralists who had conquered the Bantu Hutu. Since there were clear differences in the appearance of the Tutsi royal family and the majority of the rest of the population, the colonizers projected these differences of physiognomy onto all Tutsi as racial differences. These distinctions were used to justify differential treatment in the allocation of political positions, and economic but particularly educational opportunities. Following the census of 1933, this purported racial difference was now reinforced by the issuance of identity cards in which every citizen of Rwanda was typed as either a Tutsi, Hutu or Twa, the “pygmy” hunters and gatherers that constituted about 1% of the population. In the Hutu revolution of 1959, the Tutsi were then seen as foreign interlopers by the new Hutu ruling elite. Cf. Twagilimana (2003).

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<sup>17</sup> Such forces need not simply be ones relegated to ‘superstition’ - chance, luck, fate or divine intervention - but may be perceived to reside in nature and/or history, even if the source of that belief may be rooted more in myth than actual history.

<sup>18</sup> Social Dominance Theory (SDO) tries to account for social factors that are hierarchy enhancing (as expressed in racist, sexist, class and ethnic domination) with a preference for group-based inequality, that is, the degree to which a person desires to establish and maintain the superiority of his or her own group over another group – what is called social dominance orientation. SDO argues that a hierarchy orientation can be reliably measured and, to the degree a society is hegemonic, can be correlated with socially reinforced habits of hegemony (SDO), or socially reinforced habits that negatively stereotype oppressed groups. Cf. Sidanius and Pratto (2003). For earlier articulations, cf. Sidanius (1993) and Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and (1994). See also Jost and Thompson (2000). For a critique of SDO, cf. Ray (1990).

<sup>19</sup> For an account of a process to unwind such cultural reinforcement, see Smith (1998).

<sup>20</sup> Waller fails to take into consideration Thomas Hobbes’ famous dictum that, “in the condition of men that have no other law but their own appetites there can be no general rule of good and evil actions. But in a commonwealth this measure is false; not the appetite of private men but the law, which is the will and appetite of the state, is the measure.” (Part III, ch. 46, *Private appetite the rule of the public good*) Hobbes found that focusing on individual dispositions to construct a system to counteract such evil was not only misleading but was “pernicious”. This does not mean that Hobbes ignored the commonality of passions or dispositions in all humans. On the contrary, he designated them as desire (Waller includes the *desire for social dominance*), fear (in Waller, *xenophobia*), and hope (not quite equivalent to *ethnocentrism*, but similar in that the latter wants the best for one’s own group). However, the importance was placed on what social systems did with these fundamental propensities. The problem was not to be traced to the propensities themselves.

<sup>21</sup> As well as in some journal articles, this position has been set forth in chapters in three books: Howard Adelman, 1980, "Of Human Bondage: Labour, Bondage, and Freedom in the Phenomenology," *Hegel's Social and Political Thought: The Philosophy of Objective Spirit*, ed. Donald Phillip Verene, New Jersey: Humanities Press, 119-136; 1996, "Of Human Bondage: Labour and Freedom in the

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*Phenomenology*," in John O'Neill, ed., *Hegel's Dialectic of Desire and Recognition: Texts and Commentary*, Albany: SUNY Press, 171-186; and in 1997, "Of Human Bondage: Labour, Bondage and Freedom in the *Phenomenology*," in *Essays on Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, ed. Jon Stewart, SUNY Press, pp. 155-171.

<sup>22</sup> In Desire in general, Hegel writes, "Consciousness, as self-consciousness, henceforth has a double object: one is the immediate object, that of sense-certainty and perception, which however *for self-consciousness* has the character of a *negative*; and the second, viz. *itself*, which is the true *essence*, and is present in the first instance only as opposed to the first object." (*Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, B. Self-Consciousness, The Truth of Self-Certainty, 167) In other words, Man is self defined as mental in relationship to objects defined as material objects for the certainty of his sensibility and the categorization of perception, while the essence of that mental, non-material being, is the absence of materiality and objectivity. The self aspires to be an agent without material substance and, hence, without limitations.

<sup>23</sup> This position is clearly opposite to that of Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. Re the latter, cf. 1993s and 1993b. (See also Jonassohn, 1998) Since human rights concern direct one to take responsibility for the Other, it does not seem self-evident that a focus on human rights as the antidote to genocide is misplaced. The problem, is not the emphasis on human rights, but on connecting the abuse of individuals with abstract, universal norms and standards when the issue is a particular community taking responsibility for protecting the Other.

<sup>24</sup> For Alexandre Kojève (1969), the famous section in Hegel's *Phenomenology* on Lord and Bondage was interpreted to be a clash of two wills each determined to dominate over the Other. I have claimed here and argued elsewhere that another, and, I would argue, more accurate and adequate interpretation is much more consistent with Hegels' religious re-interpretation of Christianity. The Lord is the Divine Lord and not two knights clashing in combat in mediaeval Europe. Each voluntarily seeks to be in bondage to that Lord.

<sup>25</sup> Though he explores genocide from a socio-historical, psychological, and cultural perspective, Nyankanzi (1998) traces ethnic cleansing and genocide to pre-biblical times, and

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thus sees the religious component, but he does not manage to provide the ontological foundation.

<sup>26</sup> For a simplistic account of perpetrator behaviour in terms of racism in an otherwise very moving account by one of the few Western heroes, cf. Dallaire (2003). Mamdani's own account owes a great deal of debt, by his own admission, to Catherine Newbury. (Cf. Newbury, 1988; 1998 and 2002)

<sup>27</sup> See also Suhrke and Jones (2000).

<sup>28</sup> For a rational account in terms of perpetrators, Lemarchand (1995; 2002) subsumes cultural forces, reinforced by four institutional levels, within a rational calculus to offer an account that the extremists embarked on genocide deliberately to serve their interests and quest for power.

<sup>29</sup> For an account of efforts to make aid conditional on human rights reforms in Rwanda, cf. Robrecht and Reyntjens (1995).

<sup>30</sup> See also Adekanye, 1996. Weitz (2003) reinforces my position that racism, misbegotten though it is, is an exercise in ethnic purification and that genocide simply takes it one step further. (cf. Weitz, 2003)

<sup>31</sup> Norms as used in this chapter to stand for conceptualized collective internalized values that shape positive and negative attitudes; they are expressed in rational language as regulative rules directed at making decisions and determining actions following from such decisions and the regulative norms. Norms need not be explicitly consensual and may only be derived by abstracting from actual behaviour. Norms may be constituted as a system of values based on a limited number of guiding principles and may be used to determine modes and conditions that govern separate decisions, as in the interpretations of the rules of engagement sent to General Dallaire by the Secretariat in New York that commanded Dallaire not to take a pro-active role in uncovering hidden arms in Kigali that the rules of engagement he had produced would have allowed.

<sup>32</sup> All these senses of culture stand in apparent opposition to culture as an inherited folk-geist or spirit presumably characteristic of a nation or ethnic group, or culture as the cultivation of an inner authentic spirituality independent of external norms and influences.



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<sup>33</sup> In Barnett's attempt to understand the decisions of the UN from within the context of the goals, informal and formal rules and norms, beliefs and expected outcomes of its leaders, that is, from within the bureaucratic culture of the UN, officials and those in the Security Council came to believe that indifference was the correct response, an indifference rooted in a principled concern for the life of the United Nations as a whole and in the principle of neutrality as well as an accumulation of strategic and expedient steps that were not offset by cognitive practices that would allow reality to penetrate and challenge the constructed reality created by those institutionalized norms and practices.

<sup>34</sup> For Barnett, the source of salvation is not to be found in an inner moral and spiritual excellence sensitive to the natural needs of all humans, but in the norms that regulate human society. However corrupted those norms have become in fostering self-service and hypocrisy, salvation resides in the realm of intellectual creativity that at once allows us both to create a second order constructed reality and also to develop intellectual institutions that allow that very same constructed reality to be tested and challenged. In Barnett, culture stresses social and cognitive processing more than institutional patterning. Avruch (1998) generalizes this approach. However, unlike Barnett, Avruch takes a heterogeneous approach to culture. Rather than viewing one institution, such as the UN, sharing a coherent singular culture, "individuals reflect or embody multiple cultures, and that 'culture is always psychologically and socially distributed in a group.'" (p. 5)

<sup>35</sup> For an opposite but error-prone interpretation of the role of the UN, cf. Klinghoffer (1998) and my comments in Adelman (2000).

<sup>36</sup> For Power, the source of salvation rests in the life world that also maintains a fundamental human moral sensibility that allows humankind not only to rise above the pattern of institutional restrictions, but provides the criteria – human rights norms – for measuring the limitations of any institutional constructions. It is the one cultural school (and, for that matter, the only school including the three universalistic rational schools) that adopts an overt cosmopolitan approach that insists that all humans ultimately belong to a common human culture of rights and freedoms.

<sup>37</sup> For a detailed report of what the Clinton administration knew, cf. William Ferroggiaro, "The U.S. and the Genocide in Rwanda 1994: Information, Intelligence and the U.S. Response," *The National Security Archive*, 24 March 2004. In that document, Ferroggiaro notes that Paul Simon and James Jeffords

wrote President Clinton on May 13th, criticizing the lack of "leadership" on the crisis and noted "swift and sound decision-making is needed." The senators urged U.S. efforts to enact sanctions, an arms embargo, and an "increase" in UNAMIR forces and a change in their mandate, as "an end to the slaughter is not possible without this action" following a Hearing before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. (Cf. the Subcommittee Report on Rwanda, pp. 176-7)

<sup>38</sup> Although Barnett admits that the excuse of ignorance wore thin as April 1994 progressed, he and Kuperman claim that US officials learned only 'by the latter part of April that the killings were the product not simply of a civil war but rather a genocidal campaign', ironically citing Power to support the claim (p. 161) – without citing the page – despite Power's revelation that the Special Forces mission sent to Kigali after 6 April reported on the slaughter under way. She thus refutes Kuperman's claim that US intelligence remained ignorant of the extent of the slaughters and that 'President Clinton could not have known that a nationwide genocide was under way in Rwanda until about April 20' (Kuperman, 2001, p. 101).

<sup>39</sup> He had already established a reputation as one of the authoritative scholarly voices on Rwanda with his (1994) volume (*L'Afrique des Grand Lacs en crise, Rwanda-Burundi: 1988-1994*. Paris: Edition Karthala).

<sup>40</sup> While Krosiak has no critical disagreement with the description of what happened, she is more concerned with applying a general theory of responsibility to France's role in Rwanda, and claims that France had a great deal of responsibility because it had foreknowledge, involvement and capability.

<sup>41</sup> Power, 'A Problem from Hell', p. 380; Jones, *Peacemaking in Rwanda*, p. 125.

<sup>42</sup> Madami, *When Victims Become Killers*, pp. 254-5; Melvern, *A People Betrayed*, p. 214. See also Adelman and Rao, 2003.

<sup>43</sup> Documents found at Goma in 1996 show that the arms had been supplied by a British firm based in the Isle of Wight through Israeli arms merchants who supplied arms from eastern Europe and stamped the cartons with markings in French. An Italian journalist sent me copies of these documents.

<sup>44</sup> Bartov (2000) at least builds his theory by combining general historical socialization with modern identity theory arguing that modern warfare both celebrated the glory of violence as a just means to achieve not just a higher goal, but a utopia at the same time as responsibility for the consequences was

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avoided through historical lies and illusions such as Germans defining themselves as the real victims after WWI and the French developing the historical myth of resistance when the predominant French behaviour was collaboration. Hirsch (1995) and Longman (1999) also focus on the manipulation of historical memory as a crucial component used by leaders to enlist other perpetrators. Longman in his subsequent work on a new history text for Rwanda and Finkelkraut (1998) stress the importance of accurate historical memory as an antidote to genocide. What Bartov (and others) have not done, and what I have tried to do, is develop a fundamental ontological foundation for this denial of responsibility and creation of myths that perpetuate irresponsibility and the blaming of others.

<sup>45</sup> For a general theory of collective agency responsibility and its application to the UN, cf. Erskine (2004), and with slight modifications and a different slant cf. Adelman (2006, forthcoming).

<sup>46</sup> Virtue ethics, as elaborated in Plato and Aristotle, stresses those traits of an individual that makes that individual moral in contrast to deontological ethics that stresses the abstract general principles from which our duties can be deduced, or, at the very least, are the *a priori* conditions of any human being moral. Both of these forms of ethics are contrasted with consequentialist ethics that weighs the expected outcomes of actions to justify the means chosen to achieve a goal by means of some abstract measure. There is a need to get back to virtue ethics and the study of motives, moral character and moral education, but to do so critically against the Greek classic exposition of those issues. (Cf. Hurthouse, 1999)