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Is genocide preventable? Some theoretical considerations[1]

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Preventionism in genocide studies

Since World War II, the field of genocide studies has evolved as an interdisciplinary and scholarly field in its own right. As an autonomous intellectual field, genocide studies has reached a point where it is necessary to develop models for the analysis of the field itself. In addition to studying the phenomenon of genocide, one needs also to study the study of genocide. The guiding theoretical spirit of such a task comes from the sociology of knowledge, which sees knowledge of genocide as a cultural production of various scholars with particular world-views, biographies, ideological dispositions, and material interests, networks of attachment, all which shape and influence the structure of what is known about genocide. This is not to say, of course, that genocide is a social construction. It is all too real, which is the very *raison d'être* for genocide studies in the first place. The production of knowledge, however, about it is fundamentally a social process. Genocide is an objective reality, but it is one which people approach with a variety of personal, ideological and disciplinary dispositions which shape what we know about this all-too-real phenomenon. A mark of maturity in the development of a field of study is when those who work within the field engage in reflexive projects, by casting a critical eye not just on the phenomena they study, but on themselves as active producers of knowledge.

This article represents a first step toward what might be called "the sociology of genocide studies." While there are many things about the organization of the field that one could focus on, what follows is an analysis of the idea of *prevention* in genocide studies, along with some theoretical and empirical reflections on the problems and prospects of the prevention of genocide in the early twenty-first century.

While scholars in the field vary in their theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of genocide, even a cursory glance at the field indicates that there is a strong and widely shared belief which holds that: (1) genocide is preventable and (2) a fundamental goal of genocide studies is to offer understandings of genocide which will be useful and, indeed, necessary for the

prevention of genocide. *Theories* of genocide are, implicitly and explicitly, linked to the *practice* of prevention. Genocide studies is not like "pure science," which is generally "disinterested." Rather, it is characterized by a strong ideological belief that genocide is preventable and that knowledge about genocide will help bring about prevention. This belief in prevention is here referred to as *preventionism*. It is a fundamental ideology within genocide studies, one which offers legitimacy and relevance to the field and offers a certain political legitimacy for the field. Preventionism is not limited to genocide studies: it is an ideology which pervades the liberal project of modernity and the social sciences which are part of that project. The fundamental assumption underlying the modern project is the idea of social progress and betterment through knowledge and understanding. Indeed, preventionism is an ideology which has provided legitimacy to social science since the earliest of times: knowledge of society produced through scientific inquiry is the first step in the prevention or amelioration of social problems.

As a mental experiment to indicate the prevalence of preventionism in genocide studies, one might consider what the likelihood of finding someone within the genocide studies who studied genocide purely for the scientific satisfaction of knowing about it. Indeed, in almost all significant works on genocide, there is an implicit or explicit idea that perhaps the central purpose of understanding genocide is to try to prevent it. Preventionism is a kind of shared language, or in Ludwig Wittgenstein's terms, a "language game" which identifies and unifies people within the field. As such, a commitment to prevention is probably as important for status within the field as various kinds of disciplinary expertise and credentials. By seeing preventionism as a kind of language, I do not mean to infer that the unifying function of the language of prevention presupposes some kind of solidarity or agreement about *how* to prevent genocide. Indeed, as we have seen in recent years in the case of Bosnia, Kosovo, and now the American war on terrorism, there are rather stark differences in approaches to prevention ranging from those who advocate non-violent approaches to those who argue that prevention must come from military intervention. While the arguments over exactly how to prevent genocide exist, there is general agreement and consensus on the basic fact that genocide can and must be prevented and that the production of a particular kind of scientific knowledge about genocide is fundamentally related to that task.

The general aim in this essay is twofold. The first is to make explicit the connections between the ways in which one currently understands genocide and the task of preventing it. In doing so, it will be argued that the effort to present genocide relies primarily on positivistic, naturalistic and deterministic models of genocide which miss some of the most important aspects of genocide as it appears in modern social conditions: its contingency, unpredictability, and its status as a product of *human agency*. By way of that, the second task is to problematize the idea of the preventability of genocide in the particular historical epoch. While the belief in the preventability of social ills is itself a product of modernity, modernity is also characterized by various social and cultural forces

which mitigate against the prevention of genocide and which have actually facilitated it. The main body of this essay is to outline those aspects of modernity which mitigate against prevention of genocide and facilitate its occurrence. By way of that, it is argued that those who wish to prevent genocide also need to develop a theory of genocide which is, at the same time, a theory of modernity.

Because the argument is a central challenge to an orthodox belief in genocide studies—indeed, if what is said about preventionism as a unifying language is true, then this paper is, from the outset, a form of heresy—several things need to be made clear. First, and most importantly, the aim is not to argue that genocide is unpreventable. To argue that point would be to succumb to a kind of pessimistic determinism that would virtually ensure that genocide would continue. Rather, it is argued that its prevention in some systematic way is more problematic than most people who work in the field would like to think. Second, the understanding put forward here is not meant to insinuate that there is no relation between knowledge of genocide and its prevention. Rather, the purpose is to show that knowledge about genocide needs to be expanded to include more consideration of *human agency* and the social structure of *modernity* than is currently present in the field of genocide studies, in particular those works which have as their main aim the prevention of genocide. Most theories of genocide are ahistorical and attempt to posit some general "essence" of genocide which persists across time and space. The argument here is that theories of how and why genocides happens, or how future genocides may be prevented, must always be looked at in relation to the specific historical epochs in which they occur. Knowing, for instance, how genocide has occurred in, say, the ancient world or in pre-modern Europe may have little to do with understanding it in the present, since the stage upon which genocide occurs is vastly different and fundamentally altered by modernity.[2] The massacre of the Melosians by the Athenians, of which Thucydides wrote, proceeded according to quite a different "cultural logic" than the massacres of people in the twentieth century: one should never lose sight of the fact that the twentieth century is, simultaneously, characterized by the development of modernity as well as the development of the most heinous forms of genocide. If the interest is in how genocide occurs now and how it might occur in the future, theories need to reflect a deeper understanding of the particular historical period of "late modernity" and how aspects of later modernity facilitate and foster genocide.

Finally, it should be pointed out that I share the assumption that genocide is preventable in some cases. I do not think it is preventable in all cases, nor do I think it is sociologically astute to believe—for either theoretical or historical reasons—that we have moved beyond the actuality of genocide and that it would be naïve to assume that it will not occur in the future. Like Immanuel Kant, I accept the "depravity of man" as a constant force that must be contended with, even as we aim to counter that depravity with various plans for "perpetual peace."[3] I am less optimistic—for theoretical and empirical reasons—that this depravity is as ameliorable as Kant felt it to be, especially since I do not believe that our reason is as powerful as we imagine it to be.

Admittedly, there is some degree of realism and pessimism in this prognostication. It is impressive that scholars remain so committed to the optimistic idea of prevention in spite of the perennial occurrence of genocide. In spite of the strength of the effort to prevent genocide, though, the phenomenon of genocide has continued and even intensified in recent years. Indeed, the 1990s, a period of rapid growth of the "genocide prevention industry," was the period in which two major genocides occurred in Bosnia and Rwanda. The severity of those genocides—especially the Rwandan one—stands out in stark relief to the discourse of prevention, which also intensified during this period. Upon reflection, more than 10 years after the Bosnian genocide, it now appears that there was virtually no relationship between what we knew, or our desire to prevent it, and the actual conduct on the ground. Indeed, in retrospect, it now appears that more knowledge of the event actually might have had something to do with facilitating and exacerbating genocide than if one had not known that much at all, a point to which I will return later. The same could be said for the Rwandan genocide: all the indicators of an impending genocide were known by political actors, but the genocide still proceeded. The frustration which is often expressed in the writings of those who aimed to prevent genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda is due to the recognition that the sphere of knowledge and the urgent desire to prevent genocide seemed to be separated from the sphere of political means and practices which could have halted the mass killing. Indeed, the very instrument of "perpetual peace," the United Nations, not only was not effective in preventing genocide, but actually aided and abetted it. Other phenomena of modernity—instantaneous communication, the deployment of intellectual experts, sophisticated weaponry, techniques of political negotiation just to name a few—were not put into the service of prevention of genocide, but were actually used to facilitate it.

For most people who wish to prevent genocide, the key variable in genocide is the lack of political *will* on the part of those who have the power to stop genocide. To be sure, all genocide could be prevented if, for instance, the United States declared that its policy would be to intervene with military force in any case where the "experts" say there is an impending genocide. From a social science standpoint, the reduction of failure to prevent genocide to the amorphous variable of "lack of political will" is insufficient. Such an explanation imagines that something called "political will" is able to harness all of the competing forces of modernity and to move history according to its dictates. It misses the central point that the failure of political will is, itself, explainable by the various aspects of modern culture which I shall lay out in this article. The point is this: the hiatus between our rhetorical expressions of prevention and the actual practice is vast and this hiatus is not able to be closed simply by getting politics in the right place. It is much more complicated than that.

Whither preventionism?

Why do vast numbers of people believe that the worst behaviors of human beings, such things as genocide, torture, enslavement, etc., can be alleviated or

abolished? In perusing the course of human history, the idea that such things could be prevented would seem counterintuitive or counterfactual. No rational person would think it possible to prevent earthquakes or tornadoes. Yet in the realm of human phenomena, it seems to be precisely the opposite. The worse the phenomenon, the more people seem to mobilize to prevent it and the more urgent the discourse of prevention seems to become.

Deviant behavior, violence, evil, wickedness have been around since the beginning, but it is only recently in human history that people have come to believe that the latter are eradicable and preventable. This belief is grounded in the Enlightenment idea that the purpose of human knowledge is to ameliorate social ills and advance the human condition. The intellectual efforts of Immanuel Kant, who was the embodiment of the Enlightenment attitude of "knowledge for progress," aimed to make the world a better place, a world of "perpetual peace" (although it is interesting to note that after such utopian dreaming, Kant came at the end of his life to a more realist and pessimistic view of human nature and the possibilities of perpetual peace).[4] In some senses, Kant might be considered the first and even the greatest of practitioners of human rights, since his efforts were geared not just toward understanding, but laid out a specific political strategy for the prevention of evil and the advancement of the good. The task for Kant, as it is now, is how to get the politicians to take heed of what philosophers (and in the present, social scientists) have to say. Kant's experience illustrates the central paradox to be explored here: how to move from understanding to practice, or how to translate knowledge of what constitutes a good society to the actual constitution of the good society. It is painfully clear that the idealism of Kant's *Perpetual Peace* fell flat against the political realities and was unrealizable in the face of them. We are still faced with this dilemma to this day, with the fundamental Kantian paradox of how to move from the conceptualization of the good, and the understanding of evil.

Basically, the Kantian idea that knowledge would inherently lead to social progress was one of the dominant ideas of the Enlightenment and served as the basis for the foundation of the social sciences. Auguste Comte's positivism posited the new science of sociology as a means toward social perfection. The positivist motto, *Savoir pour prevoir et prevoir pour pouvoir*—knowledge for prediction, prediction for power—reflects this Enlightenment belief in the logical connection between theory and practice almost perfectly. Scientific knowledge of society would allow social guardians to predict social outcomes and to exert power and control over the world. One can see in this ethos the very beginnings of prevention discourse which immediately becomes part of all organized attempts to understand violations of human rights: if we can understand and predict, say, genocide or torture or war, we can use that understanding as a form of power to intervene and prevent these things from happening. Knowledge becomes a form of power over the world, and the essence of that power is the ability to prevent that which we do not want to have power over us. From the time of Comte onward, this narrative, which imagines that our knowledge is necessarily a form of progressive power over the world, is evident in virtually

every field of human inquiry. The narrative embodies the idea of progress that embodies a basic *telos* of human history, that advancement of human knowledge will advance the human species so that, eventually, the good society will emerge.

There are at least two problematic aspects to this vision. The first has to do with the positivist ontology which underlies it. It assumes that social life is determined by certain kinds of intractable or natural "laws" and that if we know these laws, then we can intervene to change the course of human history. Positivism, as a scientific viewpoint, aims to "freeze" the social world into categories and variables, which eliminate contingency and indeterminacy and human agency from the picture. The second problem has to do with the complexity of how one gets from knowledge to power. For Comte and other positivists, enlightened rulers would recognize the laws of society and then engage in organized efforts to guide and steer society. In Comte's view, rulers were something like applied sociologists who simply translated science and theory into practice to make a better world. In Comte's view, the answer was that the sociologists should take over and plan the good society. But since this was then and is now an absolute impossibility, one is still left with the problem of how to get from knowing to the point of exerting power over human imperfection and evil through the act of prevention.

Genocide studies and the discourse of prevention

The acceleration of the human rights movement from the 1990s until the present has been characterized by an increase in the production of knowledge about human rights and an expansion of the ideology of preventionism. Nowhere is this prevention talk more in evidence than in the rise of the field of "genocide studies." Genocide is as old as human history, but the field of genocide studies did not emerge until after World War II. Genocide studies is really the outgrowth of the study of the Holocaust. The efforts to understand the Holocaust which emerged after World War II eventually led to interest in recovering memories of and naming earlier genocides (the Armenian genocide, for instance, which had been buried by the experience of the Holocaust), developing theoretical and conceptual knowledge about genocide, and studying post-war genocides. The phrase "Never Again" which is invoked with regard to the Holocaust embodies in crystalline form the preventative discourse which is at the center of Holocaust studies. It embodies the idea that the purpose of studying the Holocaust is to prevent a repetition of that event and, more generally, other genocides. This preventative thrust radiated out from Holocaust studies to the study of other genocides and from its very inception, genocide studies was seen as a means not only of understanding genocide, but of exerting some element of control over it. There is, of course, the tired and pointless debate about the historical uniqueness of the Holocaust which still, to some extent, is omnipresent in the field. But regardless of how one stands in that debate, the prevention of mass killing is one of the highest values in the field.

This impulse to prevention was embodied in the very task of conceptualizing

genocide, which was undertaken initially by the Polish jurist Raphael Lemkin. Lemkin's pioneering work aimed to name the phenomenon which had occurred throughout history and in a particularly gruesome way in World War II.[5] It is important to stress that Lemkin's work to name and conceptualize the phenomenon of genocide was the first step in preventing and punishing it—the act of prevention could not proceed without naming it and without knowledge of it, and it is rather clear from Lemkin's work that he recognized this. The very title and organization of the book in which he coined the term indicates this: *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation—Analysis of Government—Proposals for Redress*. Analysis is the first step in redress. Lemkin's work was a crucial step in the development not only of genocide studies, but also concrete practical plans to prevent it. The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide which was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948 was a direct practical result of Lemkin's pioneering work, a preventative measure which depended fundamentally on his analytical study and naming of the crime. It is notable that the Genocide Convention, in practical terms, has done little to solve the problem of genocide. It is an example of a modernist, progressive ideology that has fallen flat on the realities of modernity itself.

Lemkin's impulse to crystallize an understanding of genocide as a step toward its prevention remains an integral part of both the theoretical and practical side of the genocide studies project. The idea of prevention of genocide could not exist until the phenomenon was named as such and understood in several crucial dimensions. In the emergence of the discourse on genocide which followed, there is virtually no serious study which is separated from the discourse of prevention. The impulse, either overtly in the titles of the works, or the texts themselves refer directly to prevention and see prevention as the desired ideal of intellectual inquiry. This progression is evident in the work of pioneers of genocide studies such as Leo Kuper. Kuper's work *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* outlines a general understanding of the causes of genocide, followed by an imagining of the "non-genocidal society" which is to come about, presumably, by virtue of the understanding of the causes of genocide.[6] This work was followed by one entitled *The Prevention of Genocide*, which outlines specific strategies by which the United Nations can prevent genocide and guarantee the right to life (in light of the ways in which the UN seemed to foster the conditions which led to genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda, Kuper's faith in the prevention of genocide by the UN appears prosaic at best).[7] This is quite simply the transposition of Kant's idea of perpetual peace to the phenomenon of genocide: whereas Kant wanted a society free of the depravity of war, Kuper wants a society free of genocide. Each is a utopian vision.

Kuper's work is just one example of the assumption running through the entire field of genocide studies that the pursuit of knowledge about genocide is a direct precondition for the prevention of genocide. This is a continuous trend from the birth of genocide studies right up to the present. It is virtually impossible to find a major work in the field that does not invoke the discourse

of prevention as either a proposed outcome of the research or a legitimation for the study of genocide more generally. To offer a sense of how this discourse appears in the present, consider some of the articles, which have appeared in this journal. These examples, taken quite randomly, illustrate how preventative discourse manifests itself in respectable peer-reviewed scholarship, in some cases by pioneers in the field. In an article by Christian P. Scherrer, the author, who offers observations on the development of a theory of genocide, notes that: "Comparative genocide research has attracted more scholars during the last decade. Appropriate approaches should try to realize a balanced relationship combining two spheres of research. However, there are only very few research projects operating on a larger scale with the object of relating the development of theoretical findings with empirical studies and vice-versa. *Only then can one begin to talk about early warning, genocide prevention, and peacebuilding*."[8] In another article on Rwanda, the author worries not only about Rwanda, but about the possibility of genocide in the Congo, ending the article with the ritual invocation of the ideology of preventionism: "Rwanda may be sliding into a wide-scale war, the cycle of violence may be continuing; *this time what is essential is that the international community act on its obligation to prevent crimes of genocide*."[9] Interestingly, in one clause, this statement invokes two powerful narratives: the narrative of prevention and the narrative of "the international community," which is, presumably, to be the instrument by which to move from knowledge to prevention (the very idea of an international community, of course, presupposes a common normative framework which does not exist). A third example: in an article about genocide and gender, the author ends the article with the following phrase: "*The future of genocide remains to be written unless states and peoples are convinced that it can be stopped*. It is not enough to say 'Never again' again, for it has happened again and again."[10] It is hard to think of any human social phenomenon of a general nature that has not happened again and again: murder, war, etc. What is interesting in this passage is the firm idea that genocide is eradicable, while at the same its occurrence is something which is held to be ubiquitous and perennial throughout history.

Passages such as these do not seem to indicate any concrete processes or mechanisms for how the knowledge presented in the essay is to be realized in a policy of prevention. Mainly, they are rhetorical expressions of ideological commitment to the *idea* of prevention to genocide. They serve the ritual function of uniting like-minded people in the pursuit of a noble practical effort. They express a lament about the persistence of genocide, even as they dream of liberation from it. There is, though, a rather glaring discrepancy between such ritual statements and the magnitude and complexity of the phenomenon of genocide itself. Such accounts specify in incredible detail the specific aspects of genocide and specify genocide as a remarkably durable phenomenon, but at the same time imagine it to be eradicable. There is a rather stark disjunction between the high quality of the knowledge presented, in some cases knowledge which offers deep understandings of the phenomenon of genocide across time and

space, and the simplicity of the statements about prevention. The knowledge is serious and scientific. The prevention discourse is symbolic, eidetic, and performative precisely because knowledge about what genocide is and how and why it occurs is quite a different matter than knowledge about how to prevent it. Laments about genocide's perenniality and expressions of faith in its preventability embody the Enlightenment/positivist idea of "knowledge as progress, " the idea that knowing is necessarily connected to doing ("doing" in this case being prevention).

These points are made not to expose genocide scholars as naifs, but to bring to relief what I see as a strong "domain assumption" in genocide studies that an increase in understanding will lead to greater prospects for prevention.[11] This assumption, while particularly strong in genocide studies, is evident as well in virtually all aspects of the study and practice of human rights. As a comparison case, one could, for instance, look a the literature on torture which, as with genocide studies, proceeds from the assumption that to understand torture is to make a positive step to alleviate it. Notwithstanding the fact that there is little agreement about how to even define torture, it is not clear that either knowledge about torture or concrete preventative measures against torture have actually alleviated the practice of torture to any significant degree in the modern world. In fact, in some cases, knowledge about torture often allows torturers to practice their craft with more efficiency in order to escape detection.

Practical applications of preventionism

If it is the case that many major works of genocide pay homage to the idea of prevention, it would be unfair to characterize the whole field as one which remains at the ideological level. In fact, the situation is quite the opposite. The belief in the preventability of genocide has spawned a litany of works which specifically outline the steps which could be taken to prevent genocide. What is most notable about these "practical projects" is how they conceive of genocide. For the most part, the theoretical model of genocide upon which such works are based is a positivistic or naturalistic. Roughly, the logic is as follows: through empirical and scientific observation of operationally defined cases of genocide, one can isolate the variables and causal mechanisms at work and predict future genocides. Armed with such predictions, one can take specific practical steps to intervene and stop genocides from occurring. The key to success is the development of political mechanisms or structures, which will heed the scientific understanding and possess the political will, which means basically the ability and the physical force necessary to intervene to stop genocide. This model of prevention is naturalistic, in that it assumes that genocide is more or less the same across time and space, and that it is predictable if we can isolate the variables which cause it. This naturalistic view of genocide shares much with other scientific models. It is very much like medical models in its commitment to idea that if the variables which cause disease are known one can predict and prevent the occurrence of disease by controlling or responding to these variables.

Even medical science stresses that medicine is an "inexact" science and medicine never claims to control contingency. Those who don't smoke or drink can die of heart attacks, while smokers and drinkers can live to advanced ages, a result of factors that are not known and may never be. Certainly, no one probably imagines that genocide can be completely eradicated. Yet at the same time, there seems to be a dominant sense in the field that *contingency* is more eliminable, or that genocide is more eliminable, than history demonstrates. This is partly because the belief in the "eliminability" of genocide is something separate from the reality of history, much the same as Kant's idea of a society in which there is no war stands outside of the reality of history.

The naturalistic view of genocide is evident in some of the most central and important efforts at prevention in genocide studies. While one would need to look more deeply at preventative efforts to see the extent to which the naturalistic model predominates, it is useful to look at a few models here for purposes of illustration. Take, for instance, the recent efforts of those who adopt an "early warning" approach. The language of "early warning" is actually a military metaphor which describes a military strategy of forestalling attack by seeing it in its early stages and acting accordingly. The perfect military strategy would be one in which those who are being attacked predict completely the movements of their enemies and move against them before they can implement them.

Let us consider an example which embodies this naturalistic view of genocide. I want to be very clear at the outset that my goal here is not to dismiss the value of such research. Indeed, it is very useful to understand the structural conditions, which seem to be related to instances of mass killing, or even assumed to be their primary causes. Thus, while I consider naturalistic approaches to be somewhat too optimistic in their belief in the preventability of genocide, I consider what they have discovered to be useful as a basis from which to build more complex theories of genocide. What is at issue here are the assumptions that underlay a naturalistic approach to genocide and genocide prevention and the ways in which naturalistic approaches dodge the issue of historical contingency and theoretical perspectives which privilege the role of human agency, on the one hand, and external cultural and social dynamics, on the other, in the analysis of why genocides occur. Here, I consider only one example since it seems to embody this approach. From the analysis of this one example, it would be useful to consider whether this is the dominant approach in genocide studies. My hypothesis would be that it is.

The article under consideration is entitled "Systematic early warning of humanitarian emergencies" by Barbara Harff and Ted Robert Gurr.[12] The authors present an insightful analysis of the structural factors which are the background conditions of genocide and politicide, in their own words: "Genocide and politicide are attributed to background conditions (e.g. political upheaval), intervening conditions (e.g. fragmentation), and a short-term increase in theoretically prespecified accelerators" (p 551). "… Genocide and mass murder … are proposed to be a response to background conditions such as political upheaval,

strength of group identities and regime structures, intervening conditions such as characteristics of the governing elite; and accelerators" (p 558). Accelerators are "variables which are subject to short-term change and are operationalized as multiple events outside parameters of the general model … they act together to rapidly increase the level and significance of the most volatile of the general conditions of genocide and politicide and thus exponentially increase the likelihood that an episode will occur" (p 562).

The naturalistic approach favors structural forces over human agency in the explanation of genocide. This conception mirrors the more general approach of positivism in social science which views structure rather than agency as the motive force in social outcomes. Genocide is conceived much more as an outcome of certain structural processes rather than as a type of *social action*. Such structural approaches dominate the social sciences and are reflected in genocide studies as well. Yet, if one conceives of genocide as a type of social action, then the focus must be on seeing it as an interaction between structure and agency, as something which is much more of a "creation" or an "accomplishment" than result of a particular constellation of social structures.

The naturalistic model is guided by two further assumptions, the *assumption of predictability* and the *assumption of preventability*. These assumptions are plainly evident in Harff and Gurr's work. The first assumption holds that "empirical theory and evidence on ethno-political warfare and genocide and politicide are good enough to identify sites of potential future episodes" (p 552). The idea here is that the internal structural conditions, which give rise to genocide and politicide in one historical situation, are transposable to other historical situations. This may very well be the case, but not necessarily so, and this view is somewhat ahistorical. It seems to dismiss the idea of historical contingency in determining whether or not genocide will occur. Such a view could lead to the dismissal of situations in which genocide might occur even without the presence of the structural factors which the authors hold to be crucial. That is to say, the naturalistic model assumes a degree of predictability which may not be the case historically and one would want to perhaps consider instances of genocide in which the structural factors which the authors isolate do not exist, but in which genocide still occurs.

Regarding the assumption of preventability, Harff and Gurr assume that "if researchers can forecast more accurately the sites and sequences of crisis escalation, policy makers will be more likely to act early rather than late" (p 552). One might ask: why is that the case? One could just as well argue—and we shall focus on this point later—that early warnings of potential genocides might make policy-makers, most of whom still operate according to the principle of what is in the interests of the states which they serve, actually serve as advance warning that the state will need to distance itself from the conflict in order to avoid intervention and the imbroglios that come from such intervention. It is rather clear, for instance, from examples of genocide in the 1990s, that early warnings of impending genocides serve as "red flags" which mobilized powerful states to distance themselves from the conflicts rather than engage them head on.

Harff and Gurr believe that their theoretical models will predict genocide and they state their case with considerable power. In all fairness, they are well aware that is at least some contingency involved and that their models cannot be mechanistically applied to every case. They note that "theoretical models, even with the best available data and statistical techniques, are not sufficient to bridge the gap between risk assessment and early warning. A comprehensive system for explaining and forewarning of humanitarian crises also requires a systematic, close to real time monitoring of potential crisis situations in risk assessments" (p 556). This is an important qualification, since it acknowledges the existence of other, perhaps less predictable factors, which make it more probable that genocide will occur. The authors' logic appears to be that we need to know the structural factors, which serve as the stage for potential genocides. Subsequently, one must monitor particular situations for certain " accelerators" which serve as catalysts which spark the "reaction" of genocide (note the scientific imagery here). While I am critical of the structural determinism evident in such natural-istic models, I believe the authors' idea of accelerators serves as an important bridge by which to introduce several new ideas about the context in which genocide occurs. The authors focus primarily on accelerators within the soci-eties. That is, the model focuses almost exclusively on endogenous factors which are held to be the causal mechanisms of genocide. Certainly those endogenous factors are crucial and we are better off for knowing about them. Yet, I would argue that *exogenous* factors is extremely important as well and these exogenous factors have much to do with the condition of modernity. Such conditions make the prediction of genocide much more problematic and introduce much more historical contingency into the task of understanding genocide. I would like to take this idea as a starting point for building a more complex theory of genocide which considers the ways in which aspects of the structure and culture of modern cultures.

The normalcy of genocide versus the prevention of genocide

Why is genocide so durable and perennial, and why does it keep occurring even in the light of so much knowledge about it and so many attempts to prevent it? There are a number of responses to this question. As already mentioned, some argue that the failure to prevent genocide is because those who have the power to stop it lack the will to do so. On this view, either powerful states such as the United States or ineffective (but always symbolically important) bodies such as the UN are somehow to blame for the persistence of genocide. Quite often, one hears the variant of this that the failure to stop genocide is due to a lack of "leadership." Others argue that the failure is due to the lack of an international criminal court, which could punish *genocidaires* and thus prevent future geno-cides. Still others argue that genocide cannot be prevented until global inequal-ities and injustices are eliminated and democratic processes and redistributive programs are generalized around the globe. In all of these cases, it is held that some instrument of modernity—a modern state, a modern bureaucratic organiza-

tion, a modern legal system, a more equitable system of resource allocation—if deployed properly, would alleviate the condition of genocide.

In all of these cases, there is usually no recognition of the possibility that genocide might be inextricably linked to, and even facilitated and enabled by, the very modern organizations and practices which people imagine to be the tools which will help prevent genocide. Preventative discourse is itself part of the modern project, an expression of a twentieth century belief in the Enlightenment dream of constructing the good society by preventing radical evil. But modernity is, itself, not defined purely by its progressive and utopian elements. It is characterized as well by technologies, practices, and forms of social organization which have not eradicated gross violations of human rights, but enhanced the capacity of people to commit them. From within the context of the human rights community, which is organized around the ideology that human rights abuses such as genocide are preventable and eradicable, this idea is rather radical and provocative, for the logical conclusion of arguing that it is modernity itself which creates the perpetuation of the conditions for the continuation of genocide is that we must invariable ask ourselves about our own role in facilitating that which we despise. Based on the history of the 1990s alone and the experience of genocide in Bosnia–Herzegovina and Rwanda, we must face a number of facts about the relationship between modernity and genocide.

First, modern systems of government and non-state organizations are responsible for failing to act when knowledge of genocide is there for everyone to see. In spite of rhetorical commitments to peace, modern governments remain committed to *realpolitik* in international relations and the modern context has allowed for new forms of expression of *realpolitik* rather than a replacement of the latter by an ethic of "perpetual peace" or morality in foreign relations. The United Nations is an organization which is, symbolically, a manifestation of the Enlightenment idea of perpetual peace, but which has since its inception either (A) proceeded—especially in the case of some of the grossest forms of human rights violations—according to the logic of *realpolitik* or (B), as Michael Barnett has shown this dramatically in the case of Rwanda, with reference to its own organizational cultural norms and values rather than more global universal prescriptive values of human rights or proscriptive norms against genocide.[13] Much prevention discourse in genocide studies relies on a faith in the United Nations as the key mechanism in preventing genocide. History would provide a strong counterfactual argument to such a view.

This problem is confounded by the durable persistence of the reality of state sovereignty. As much as their has been a movement against the right of sovereigns to do as they please within their own territories, the present world-system is still characterized by several autonomous sovereign states which have the power to more or less do as they please within their own territories. Thus, the Russian destruction of Chechnya, which is by most measures genocidal in character, cannot be checked by any outside force since Russia enjoys sovereign status in the modern world-system. China's destruction of Tibet, surely an act of cultural genocide, cannot be countered since China enjoys the privilege of

sovereignty. To think about a future case, it is instructive to consider India. Recent events in that country have led to a situation in which violence of a genocidal nature could occur against Muslims. Since it is a nuclear power, it is very unlikely that any powerful state would intervene to stop genocide there. The prevention of genocide is restricted mostly to states that do not have the power to resist intervention by stronger powers. Genocide prevention is thus restricted by the continuing reality of state sovereignty and the pervasive influence of *realpolitik in* the contemporary world-system. Moreover, especially in a state of social anxiety and uncertainty, states promote their own national cultures and shy away from universal or transnational norms. The present situation of the United States' mobilization in the war against terrorism is evidence of this trend. Concerns of national security trump any adherence to collective norms which are supposedly the cultural edifice upon which the international community is based.

Second, modern political practices of negotiation with actual and potential *genocidaires*, which are grounded in the Enlightenment belief in "perpetual peace," are ineffective against those who do not share such ideals and negotiations. Negotiation is as old as politics itself, but specifically modern forms of negotiation have developed which have been deployed to prevent genocide. Yet these are more often ideological expressions of the desire for peace and the prevention of genocide than they are actual mechanisms of peace and prevention. In both Bosnia–Herzegovina and Rwanda, political actors engaged in negotiations with perpetrators of genocide, and it was under cover of such negotiations that a great deal of mass killing were perpetrated. In Bosnia, the greater part of the genocide which occurred there took place under the cover of negotiations, which Milosevic and Karadzic exploited to their full advantage. The modern mentality of achieving peace through non-violent means such as negotiation stands in sharp contrast to a genocidal mentality which not only stands outside of the discourse which values negotiation, but actively and consciously exploits such negotiation to further the practice of genocide. The intersection of negotiation, a modern practice, with genocide (which is neither modern nor "pre-modern" but simply a perennial social phenomenon) favors the latter. Genocide is the practice of human agents who reflexively monitor the social world around them and adapt their social actions accordingly. Such reflexive monitoring is exceedingly difficult to control, since it is always resilient and adaptive to any efforts to control it.

Third, modern non-governmental organizations of civil society respond to crises and potential genocides in organizational forms, which become bureaucratic and lethargic because of their complexity. While one usually imagine a condition of modernity to be an emphasis on speed and efficiency—and in modern culture it is—as Max Weber showed, modernity is also characterized by the diffusion and entrenchment of bureaucracy as a means toward solving social problems. In contrast, while genocide may be organized bureaucratically, it is also more resilient and adaptable. Our understandings of genocide seem to rely on a model of genocide taken directly from the experience of the Holocaust. The Holocaust represented a "perversion" of modernity, the use of modern means to

facilitate mass killing. The aim of the Nazis was to kill as many Jews as possible and they used the instruments of modernity—bureaucracy and technology—to do so. Yet it might be the case that genocides which have occurred since then do not fit that model. Certainly, there are elements of the social organization of mass killing in Bosnia. Yet a good deal of the killing took place in an anarchic and unsystematic way. This was especially evident in Rwanda which was a case of what might be called "anarchic genocide."

Perpetrators of modern genocides develop skillful means for taking advantage of the lethargy of bureaucratic and procedural responses to genocide. That is to say, they commit genocide in the spaces and cracks which bureaucracy inevitably leaves unattended. This raises the question of whether prevention of atrocities—which by their nature are often quick and "reflexive"—can be attained by modern bureaucratic means. It also raises the more general question of whether bureaucracy can ever be the ideal means for the positive fostering and expansion of human rights, a point which deserves more examination than I can offer here. The modern genocidal process is somewhat anarchic and it may be that more anarchic, less decentralized means of combating it must be developed. Such anarchic means of prevention cannot necessarily rely on a naturalistic model which imagines that it has isolated all of the predictors of genocide.

Fourth, the citizens of modern countries live in a culture of capitalist modernity, which is a consumer culture. The prevention of genocide rests to a great extent on public support of the citizens in those countries which have the power to act against genocide. Consumer culture, however, creates narcissistic and egoistic individuals who focus primarily on self-gratification (or the gratification of the family unit) and who are generally indifferent to the suffering of others, especially what Luc Boltanski refers to as "distant suffering"[14] The expectation that citizens in modern societies will respond to distant suffering relies on a mythical construction of "concerned citizens" who, having found out that there is genocide going, on will exhort their leaders to exert leadership in order to prevent it. In fact, the natural state of modern consciousness is indifference and only through extraordinary effort is such indifference overcome. Modernity also poses specific challenges to people's abilities to evaluate the scale and intensity of phenomena in their environment. This idea was put forth by Georg Simmel, who argued that modernity made it difficult for people to make distinctions among phenomena, or what he called "the blasé attitude."[15] The primary characteristic of the blasé attitude is the inability to make value distinctions, an inability which makes it difficult for people to act according to any dominant normative scenario. The blasé attitude of modern people is exacerbated by the rise of the "society of the spectacle in which a whole range of cultural phenomena are treated as extraordinary and spectacular, so that when a person is confronted with a true spectacle of atrocity (such as that of Bosnia, which was the most publicized genocide in history), they are unable to distinguish its reality from the culturally constructed and simulated spectacles which frame their environment."[16] Thus, the spectacle of genocide, instead of

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mobilizing cognitive support, can lead to a turning away or an assimilation of the reality of the spectacle into a universe of cultural simulations.

Fifth, modern technologies of mass media, designed to spread knowledge for progress, contribute to a cultural environment in which it is difficult to hold attention to serious phenomena such as genocide and creates a situation of "compassion fatigue" which leads to an active turning away, or indifference.[17] In this case, the media may succeed in informing observers of genocide that genocide is occurring and awakening or creating emotional responses. But there can be no presumed relation between image and action; in fact, the relationship between image and action in Bosnia–Herzegovina appears to have been an inverse one: the more the world knew about the genocide, the more violent and diffuse the genocide became. In addition to the effects of media coverage on public sentiment and action, the modern media have become tools of propaganda, which are used as a central means for mobilizing people to commit genocide. If one examines the discourse that accompanied the invention of major mass media in the twentieth century—radio, film, television—one sees a distinct pattern of belief in the positive and progressive potential of the media. They were seen in liberal democratic societies as the means by which an enlightened popular democracy could be formed. Yet each technological innovation in mass media was also appropriated by anti-Enlightenment powers—most notably by fascists—and put in the service of domination and, in the case of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, genocide. This use of mass media, as an instrument of domination, has continued into the present and has been a central factor in the perpetration of genocide. The use of radio to incite Hutu massacres of Tutsi in Rwanda is well known. Serbian and Croatian elites skillfully controlled and manipulated the mass media in order to create symbolic images of enemies as a precondition for their physical destruction in the form of genocide. A consideration of the mass media in modernity leads one to the conclusion that knowledge remains a form of power, but that is a form of power which might aid and abet the "modern" practice of genocide.

Sixth, modern scholars, intellectuals, and experts (the latter category being an invention of modernity) who produce knowledge about human events have not necessarily produced accounts which have helped to prevent genocide. Rather, they often produce accounts which obfuscate, confuse, and distract political leaders and citizenry by calling into question the reality of genocide, the status of victims of genocide, and the possibility of preventing genocide. This is especially the case with knowledge producers who serve as advisors to powerful states. The modern world is characterized by the development of a distinct class of "experts" whose knowledge—s drawn on by political elites. In many cases, this expert knowledge does not serve the interest of victims of genocide, but, rather, serves to solidify states' positions of self-interest and legitimate what might be called "distance from genocide." As the cases of both Bosnia and Rwanda show in the 199os, political elites in the West surrounded themselves with experts who skillfully reconceptualized the reality of mass killing in far away places. At least a major part of prevention of genocide, as Lemkin showed,

is the necessity of naming it as such. Yet what we have seen in the modern era is the emergence of a whole new class of experts whose task it is to engage in the definition of the situation, to produce the cognitive categories which serves the interests of states or non-state organizations which, for whatever reason, do now wish to take action to prevent genocide. As Joseph Bensman has argued, experts and systems of expertise are a central aspect of modernity and they figure fundamentally in the production of knowledge, concepts, and world images which have a decisive influence on the conduct of genocide.[18] What is more important, new classes of experts, each with their own vested interests, create opposing myths of what is "really" happening in the world. The more accounts that are created and the stronger they are expressed, the more one encounters a "collapse of socially objective reality."[19] That is to say, it becomes more and more difficult for consumers of expertness, especially if experts disagree on whether or not genocide is being committed, to commit to a common definition of the situation. The result is social apathy.[20]

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, what emerged in the course of the war were (at least) two classes of experts: those who made the case that what was occurring there was not a genocide, but a "civil war" and those who argued that what was occurring there was genocide.[21] Because the experts held so strongly to their respective points, and because the experts in each case were of high social and professional standing and credibility, it was hard for outside observers who were at a distance from events to make any concrete decision about the definition of the situation on the ground. Predictably, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, those experts that were preferred by the US government at the time when the mass killing start (which I consider to be the invasion of Croatia by the JNA) were those who argued that the killing in Croatia and then Bosnia was *not* genocide, but "civil war." This alliance between experts who provide the symbolic definition that is useful to governments which do not wish to get involved in the prevention of genocide should be an object of more serious study by those who want to understand the relationship between modernity and genocide. For under conditions of modernity, experts have become the cultural arm of the political orders which hold the power to prevent genocide. More generally, the clash of experts is a fundamental aspect of complex, modern societies, and the confusion and chaos in interpretation caused by competing experts' definition of reality makes it easier for perpetrators to put their genocidal plans into practice.

Each of the above points challenges the conventional wisdom about the supposed progressive nature of modern organizations, cultural practices, and individuals. Each of these points sees exogenous factors as crucial factors in facilitating genocide. Together with the work of those who focus on endogenous factors, I believe that we can develop a more realistic view of the possibilities of genocide prevention. Such a task, however, demands nothing short of a rethinking of the idea of genocide prevention in light of the idea that there are several aspects of modernity which actually contribute to the persistence of

genocide. Instead of seeing genocide as some kind of aberration in modernity, we need to reconceptualize it as a somewhat more normal part of modernity.

The idea that genocide is a product of modernity is one which has been made by several sociologists, especially Zygmunt Bauman, who argues that the Holocaust was made possible by the lethal combination of advanced technologies, modern bureaucratic social organizations, and the utopian ideas which are at the basis of the modern project.[22] While Bauman articulates a fundamental linkage between modernity and the Holocaust, scholars have been more hesitant to make such an explicit linkage between genocide more generally and modernity. As I have argued, this is because the modern project is defined primarily in positive terms: the negative consequences of modernity are hard to conceptualize precisely because it is modernity which is the source of utopian dreams and the taken-for-granted prevention discourse that guides most practitioners whose aim it is to prevent genocide. From a modernist point of view, genocide is the worst thing that can happen in a human society, the nadir of social progress, the very embodiment of the barbarism that modernity is trying to leave behind. The modernist idealist, the preventer and practitioner of human rights, simply cannot abide the fact that not only has genocide not been prevented or eradicated, but it has actually been on the rise just when, after the fall of barbaric communism, we were supposed to have achieved the Hegelian end of history and the triumphant success of capitalist modernity and a universalization of human rights. For the true believer, genocide is the anomaly of anomalies, that which should not be there, but which should definitely not be ascendant. The overriding assumption then is that through study and diligent application, genocide should cease to trouble the conscience of humankind. This belief grates against the idea that genocide might be a "normal" consequence of modernity. Genocide is not a phenomenon that is counter to modernity, but actually built in to modernity, and, indeed, facilitated by the very social processes of modernity.

Some tentative conclusions

I have addressed numerous themes in this article: the origin of the field of genocide studies as a preventative project of modernity and as a form of human rights practice, the relationship between genocide and modernity, and a specific and rather pronounced critique of the conceptual practices of genocide studies. My specific aim has been to rethink the entire idea of "preventability" of genocide and to show how the prevention of genocide depends on the critical self-examination of the organization of knowledge about genocide as well as knowledge about the modern social forces which enable and abet the practice of genocide in the immediate past and present. This is a crucial starting point, since there is virtually no work on either the nature of prevention discourse in genocide studies, and very little more work on the relationship between modernity and genocide.

Those who wish to prevent genocide need to ask themselves a number of

tough questions. Can we eradicate the worst things that we do to each other? What are the limits of our understanding of the things we wish to fight against? How do we operate in a field which might be more complex than we might now? How does what we do, either theoretically or practically, affect the world in ways which might counter our efforts and beliefs?

There are no easy answers to these questions. They are, in their very nature, posed as enticements for further thinking rather than in the spirit of providing easy answers. Since I made the claim in the opening part of this essay that I shared the spirit of those in genocide studies who wish to prevent genocide, I would like to offer at least some preliminary discussion of how the understanding of genocide here can facilitate prevention. To be sure, by locating some of the forces that lead to genocide in the very fabric of modernity itself, we make the problem much more difficult, since to try to counter modernity itself seems somewhat quixotic—modernity is quite a large windmill to tilt against. Nonetheless, by uncovering the relationship between modernity and genocide, we open the way to more sophisticated approaches to the enduring problem of genocide. Practical efforts to prevent genocide must proceed with an understanding of genocide which takes into consideration the ways in which genocide is facilitated by a modern society which has spawned the very impulse to prevent this most serious of crimes.

Notes and References

1. Versions of this paper were presented in numerous venues, including the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at Harvard University, the American Sociological Association, the University of Connecticut, the Danish Center for Genocide and Holocaust Studies, the International Peace Research Institute in Oslo, and the Department of Philosophy at the University of Oslo. I am grateful to these institutions for extending invitations to me to share and refine the ideas presented here and am grateful for the many criticisms, questions, and comments from audiences in these places. I am also grateful to Michael N. Barnett, Rhoda Howard-Hassmann, Bridget Conley, John Torpey, Arne Johan Vetlesen, Sally Merry, Michael Kaus, Israel Charney, Jerry Fowler, and Eric Markusen, for providing thoughtful and constructive comments on various versions of the paper. Such comments in no way signify agreement with all of the ideas presented here, but have helped me sharpen my thoughts on these difficult matters.
2. This is not to say, however, that it is not valuable to understand genocide in a comparative-historical perspective, as say, in the work of Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn, *The History and Sociology of Genocide: Analysis and Case*s (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). It is to say, though, that the way that genocide proceeds might be significantly altered by the social-structural configurations of the epoch in which it exists.
3. Kant's work on perpetual peace, *Perpetual Peace, and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), never assumed that humans are innately good–in fact, he specifically posited that they were depraved and that any plans for social betterment needed to take this depravity into account.
4. Immanuel Kant, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone* (New York: Harper, 1960).
5. Lemkin's definition of genocide appeared in the work *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation–Analysis of Government–Proposals for Redress* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1944), pp 79–95. And is as follows. New conceptions require new terms. By "genocide" we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word, coined by the author to denote an old practice in its modern development, is made from the ancient Greek word *genos* (race, tribe) and the Latin *cide* (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc. (1) Generally speaking, genocide does not necessarily mean the immediate destruction of a nation, except when accomplished by mass killings of all members of a nation. It is intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves. The

objectives of such a plan would be disintegration of the political and social institutions, of culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of national groups, and the destruction of the personal security, liberty, health, dignity, and even the lives of the individuals belonging to such groups. Genocide is directed against the national group as an entity, and the actions involved are directed against individuals, not in their individual capacity, but as members of the national group.

It is useful to note that Lemkin's definition serves as the basis for the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948. Article II of the Convention defines genocide as "any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: a) Killing members of the group; b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

6. Le Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1981).
7. Leo Kuper, *The Prevention of Genocide* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).
8. Christian P. Scherrer, "Towards a theory of modern genocide. Comparative genocide research: definitions, criteria, typologies, cases, key elements, patterns and voids," *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 1, No 1, 1999, p 22.
9. Mark A. Drumbi, "Sobriety in a post-genocidal society; good neighborliness among victims and aggressors in Rwanda," *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 1, No 1, 1999, p 39.
10. Helen Fein, "Genocide and gender: the uses of women and group destiny," *Journal of Genocide Research*, Vol 1, No 1, 1999, p 59.
11. The idea of domain assumption was coined by Alvin Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Harper, 1970) to describe the ideological and ontological assumption which grounded and influenced the supposedly objective and scientific practice of sociology. Gouldner's concept is ripe for application to the field of genocide studies, which seldom examines its own ideological assumptions.
12. *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol 35, No 5, 1998, pp 551–579.
13. Michael Barnett, "The UN Security Council, indifference, and genocide in Rwanda," *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol 12, No 4, 1977. See also Michael Barnett, *Eyewitness to Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001).
14. Luc Boltanski, *Distant Suffering*: *Morality, Media, and Politics* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
15. Georg Simmel, "The metropolis and mental life," in Donald N. Levine, ed., *Georg Simmel on Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp 324–329.
16. On the "society of the spectacle," see Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1973).
17. Susan D. Moeller, *Compassion Fatigue* (New York: Routledge, 1998).
18. Joseph Bensman, *Craft and Consciousness: Occupational Technique and the Development of World Images* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991).
19. Israel Gerver and Joseph Bensman, "Towards a sociology of expertness," in Robert Jackall, ed., *Propaganda* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), pp 68–69.
20. Ibid, p 69.
21. I should be clear here that I define myself, and was seen by others, as an expert representing the second view. I argued very early that what had occurred in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was, according to legal criteria and sociological conceptualizations, genocide. At the time, among most professionals in the Western Balkan studies community, this view was more or less scoffed at. See, for example, Robert Hayden, "The tactical uses of passion," *Current Anthropology*, Vol 38, No 5, 1997, pp 924–936, and my rejoinder, Thomas Cushman, "On Bosnia: a response to Hayden," *Current Anthropology*, Vol 40, No 3, 1999, pp 365–366. This interchange represents this clash of expertness which I am discussing here. It is interesting to note that a number of major scholars refused to use and even eschewed the use of the term "genocide" to describe events in BiH; in most cases, that class of experts was much closer to government power (i.e. the Brookings Institution, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars) than most. This point needs much more attention than can be given here.
22. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).