

Joan Frigolé

The Extreme Faces of Power: Genocide, Massacre and Ethnic Cleansing

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Summary

This paper analyzes some historical, ideological, symbolic, methodological and theoretical factors that affect the consensus about the concept of genocide and in particular, the terms “massacre” (Sémelin 2002 and 2005) and “ethnic cleansing” (Mann 2005) as alternative concepts to genocide. Finally, the paper tries to contribute to a definition of genocide in Social Anthropology and other Social Sciences.

Key words: genocide, massacre, ethnic cleansing

Genocide, a term coined by the jurist Raphael Lemkin to account for the atrocities of the Nazi regime, is “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” (Lemkin 2002: 27). For the UN Genocide Convention (1948), “genocide means 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.¹

Recently the terms massacre (Sémelin 2005) and ethnic cleansing (Mann 2002) have emerged as alternative terms to genocide and this has affected the consensus about this concept in the Social Sciences.

My position can be identified with that of Coquio, who writes: “In spite of the increase on genocidal potential in a world of nation-states subject to contradictory

movements of homogenization and fragmentation, we need to maintain the specific nature of the concept genocide.” (Coquio 1999: 68) I would say “due to” instead of “in spite of”.

My objective is to analyze some factors or causes that make it difficult for there to be a generalised consensus regarding the concept of genocide. These causes can be historical – the process of formulating an official definition –, ideological – the assimilation of the Holocaust and the Soviet Gulag –, symbolic – the conversion of the term genocide into a metaphor –, disciplinary – the rejection by Social Sciences of a dependency of Law –, methodological – the opposition between uniqueness and comparison – and theoretical – the concepts of massacre and ethnic cleansing. The analysis of these terms occupies a central place in this paper. A complementary objective is to make some contribution to the definition of genocide for Social Anthropology and other Social Sciences.

In order to clarify my position, I consider that genocide is a phenomenon belonging to the political sphere and related to the practice of a political authority. This authority, in a supreme demonstration of power and violence monopoly, decides and executes genocide, that is, an extermination plan of a certain group or population sector which has previously been considered to be an insurmountable obstacle or an extreme threat to the authority. Genocide is a plainly political phenomenon which obeys to a political logic, even if there are some

¹ Article II, 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention.

other types of causes, such as economic reasons, which also contribute.

The difficult consensus about genocide

I will point out briefly some factors that difficult consensus about the UN's definition of genocide.

The UN's definition of genocide was the result of a political agreement between states. The process of negotiation brought as a result a restrictive characterisation of the genocide's object group, since it only considers the destruction, in whole or in part, of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group. Social scientists solved the problem by creating specific concepts such as politicide to talk about the persecution and killing of opponents, and, most of all, by opening the characterisation of the genocide's object group. Fein replaced "national, ethnical, racial or religious group" by "collectivity" (Fein 2002: 82). The conceptual enlargement of the victim group allows us to include the Soviet Gulag as genocide, but it does not solve by itself, for example, the difficulties arising when comparing the Holocaust and the Gulag. The attempts to assimilate the Nazi and the Soviet regimes in terms of genocide are somewhat ideological. The Soviet Gulag presents a basic similarity with the Nazi Auschwitz: they both arise from the political sphere and are a creation of the authorities, though they present important differences regarding the fabrication and identification of the enemy and their persecution.²

Since genocide has been identified as the figure of total evil, persecuted groups or populations tend to conceptualise their tragedy and suffering in terms of genocide. "In asserting their claims about ethnic cleansing, Italian exiles from Istria employ both implicit and explicit analogies to victims of the other genocidal campaigns. /.../ The most obvious references are to the Jewish Holocaust and to the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s" (Ballinger 2003: 146).

An indiscriminate and loose usage of the term genocide to talk about or to denounce various realities, which are totally different from those realities of genocide, weights the concept down and arises some doubts about its usefulness. Some examples: "The Vatican accuses pharmaceutical enterprises of genocide for not lowering the prices of medicines against AIDS in Africa."³ "How can we distinguish between the 'good' Palestinian suicide terrorist who commits selective genocide against innocent Israeli civilians and the 'bad' State terrorism of Israel who

2 E. Traverso (1999: 130), O. Bartov and C. Coquiu in J. Frigolé (2003: 9) and Sémelin (2005: 57) point out significant differences between both systems.

3 Newspaper *20 Minutos*, January 30th, 2004.

selectively executes its enemies from Hamas, even if in doing so they are causing civil victims?"⁴ The huge semantic charge that this concept carries reduces its analytical value and "its use stirs suspicion" (Fein 1994: 95). Its conversion into a metaphor is a basic element in the process of banalization and instrumentalisation of genocide. The will to understand new social, economic and political phenomena or the will to shed light on already known realities find in the metaphor a useful instrument, but this understanding mustn't transcend certain limits or imply a confusion of the limits.⁵

The social and political use of the word genocide affects the scientific status of the term and hampers the establishing of its limits: from the assertion of the uniqueness of the Jewish genocide to the inclusion of the Atlantic slavery system, the Soviet concentration camp system, or the destruction of Dresden and Hiroshima.⁶

I would specify some aspects of the relationships between war and genocide. First, war creates the opportunity structure for the implementation of genocide. Dadrian asserts that it is no coincidence that the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust "were consummated in the vortex of two global wars" (Dadrian 2001: 150; see also Bartov 2003: 5). Second, terms such as "civil war",⁷ "intercommunal confrontation" or similar are used to deny genocide, as in the Armenian genocide:

In the name of ostensible fairness, Benjamin Brade and Bernard Lewis tend to put Armenian and Turks on an equal footing. Under the heading of intercommunal tensions, they equate the forces of the majority population, with the apparatus of a state buttressed by a fully equipped professional army, with the members of a minority of unarmed civilians. In their account, the Armenians "perished". (Valensi 2002: 54)⁸

4 Beck, a sociologist. Newspaper *El País* November 23rd, 2003.

5 Giorgio Agamben: "What the Nazis did was to use a legal figure, the state of exception, in order to create a space where everything was permitted, where offences didn't exist, because laws didn't exist. I tried to understand Auschwitz as a model, not as a historic fact. And this model, the state of exception, is now the rule. There you have Guantanamo or the *undocumented* (immigrants)" (Newspaper *El País*, February 3rd, 2004).

6 "The concept of total national mobilization war destroyed the central column of the civilized war, that is, the combatant – non combatant distinction" (E. Hobsbawn 1998: 256).

7 "Rather than a civil war, which indeed never took place and exists only in the imagination of professional falsifiers" (R. Suny 2001: 23).

8 See for an alternative view, Taner Akçam, *Un acte honteux. Le génocide arménien et la question de la responsabilité turque*. Paris: Denoël, 2008.

Sémelin considers the term genocide to be inadequate for the Social Sciences due to its legal origins and its normative character (Sémelin 2002: 375). In my opinion, the heart of the matter does not lie in its origins, but in the insufficient elaboration of the term by social scientists. It is not enough to change certain elements from the UN's definition or to just select a part of it, for example, "the intentional destruction of at least a part of a group" (Bjornlund, Markusen, and Mennecke 2005: 25). We need to deeply examine the logics of the original definition, its potentialities, what's implicit and what's explicit in it, in order to reconstruct it as a whole and in other words within the Social Sciences, but always remaining loyal to the original.

The statement that the Jewish genocide is a unique and unprecedented phenomenon, and therefore, incomparable, not only raises a methodological problem but also an important conceptual one that affects the consensus regarding the term genocide. In simple methodological terms, "there is no fundamental contradiction in asserting that an event is both unique and comparable: it admits that its features reveal both what is singular and what is universal" (Sémelin 2002: 460). To compare is also "differentiate" (Ibid: 19).

Bauer supports the uniqueness of the Holocaust because of its exclusively ideological, global and total character (Bauer 2002: 62). He differentiates the Holocaust from genocide. The last "is the brutal annihilation mechanism of a group accompanied by massacres with the result of a partial extermination of the victim population" while the Holocaust is "the total extermination" (Bauer 2002: 68). Traverso considers the Holocaust to be a "unique synthesis of various elements that can be found in other crimes or genocides" (Traverso 1999: 135). Bensoussan (1999) advocates integrating the Jewish genocide not only in the history of Germany but also in the History of Europe, and in the general history of genocides.

The reception of genocides also affects the concept of genocide itself. I am not only talking about the memory and commemoration of genocide, but also about the connection between the past and the present. According to Zivkovic, the Holocaust constitutes "the West's central moral tale" (Ballinger 2003: 146). In order to avoid its reduction to a moral lesson, Bensoussan proposes a political reading of the Holocaust, since only this reading

can connect the concentrationary world's extreme reality with our present. So, for example, the anguish we end up accepting in the name of economic

rationality, in the same way as the social fear that through the oblique line of massive unemployment, gangrenes our present, are the antipodes of moral lessons that can be heard being formulated from Auschwitz. The lighter the link between past and present, the more conventional and conformist the Auschwitz speech is. (Bensoussan 1999: 149)

Massacre and ethnic cleansing as alternative concepts

Sémelin, a politician, proposes massacre as the generic term. Massacre is an "organised process of civilian destruction" (Sémelin 2002: 486). In a later work he adds "its objectives are both people and their goods" (Sémelin 2005: 387). He builds a three-variant typology: massacres to subdue, to eradicate and he later expands it with the third type: massacre for insurgency. He uses the term genocide to refer to an extreme subtype of the category "massacre to eradicate". Genocide is a particular massacre whose "objective is the total eradication of a community defined according the persecutor's criteria" (Sémelin 2002: 490).

Sémelin introduces two new terms: "process" and "civilians or non combatants". The term "process" introduces a reference to time, to history. The term "destruction" already appears in the UN's definition, and "organised" refers to the intention, a key term in the UN's definition. If we compare Sémelin's definition to the UN's, we find a lack of precision in Sémelin's. For example, there is no explicit reference to procreation, to the extreme conditions of existence, and it does not distinguish between physical and mental integrity.

In the UN's definition, destruction can happen in whole or in part. To Sémelin, genocide is reserved for a "total" massacre, since the objective of genocide is "the total eradication" of a group. In order to specify the meaning of "total", Sémelin uses as a reference Arendt's dichotomy, to make a group disappear from "their earth" or from "the earth", and also Fein's, possibility or impossibility of escaping. Genocide's object groups are highly territorial due to being part of states, and erasing them off from their land has global consequences. The dichotomies borrowed by Sémelin, even if they could seem useful at a first glance, lack the necessary rigour and therefore cannot solve the meaning of "total eradication". I think that the meaning of total could be delimited more precisely if we distinguished different levels, such as the symbolic – declarations like those from Nazi leaders or an Argentine general⁹ –,

⁹ "We will start annihilating the subversive ones, then the collaborators, then we will go on to the sympathizers and we will finish with the indifferent ones" Andreassi (2005: 2).

the symbolical-practical – actions such as the attack on procreation, important symbolic indicator of elimination –, and if the numbers of those who have been annihilated and the percentage of the total population which they represent are shown.

Sémelin makes genocide a restricted concept with a very restricted use. On top of that, the requisite “total” could intensify the debate on the uniqueness or singularity of certain genocides. The restrictive use of the term genocide opens the door to another term, in my opinion inappropriate, that is ethnic cleansing, which I will examine later on. Sémelin justifies the term ethnic cleansing “because without it we would not be able to distinguish the differences in destructive intensity and radicality” and gives as an example the ethnic violence which in Bosnia has known certain limits, while it has no stop in the Nazi Germany or in Rwanda (Sémelin 2005: 411).

According to the UN’s definition, the scale of genocide can vary, but its structure and essence are the same.

To Sémelin, the objective of massacre to subdue is the remodelling or restructuring of a society and, in this sense, it is a “social engineering” technique (Sémelin 2002: 489). Bauman associates this function to genocide:

Annihilating the opponent is not a goal in itself; it’s a means of achieving a goal, a necessity that arises from the final goal /.../. The objective is the great vision of a better society, radically different. Modern genocide is an element of social engineering to produce a social order according to a project of ideal society. (Bauman 2002: 155-6)

It seems that when only taking function into account it is not easy to distinguish between the two basic types of massacre proposed by Sémelin. Also, it is a typology based on only one criterion, when really it would be more convenient to take into account various factors such as the “theory” or ideology from which massacre is designed, the type of authority that perpetrates it and the basis of its power, and the transnational context.

Briefly, Sémelin’s strategy consists in asserting that there is continuity between massacre and genocide. But not every massacre ends up in genocide, and many pogroms¹⁰, as Bauman says, do not constitute genocide by itself.¹¹ Bauman emphasises discontinuity, in that they are

qualitatively different realities. Although we can say that massacre is part of genocide, making reference to one of its parts is not an adequate scientific strategy to define genocide, such a complex reality.

The expression “ethnic cleansing” is more of a common notion than it is a scientific concept. Some reasons to support the evaluation of this term are the lack of a definition, because when we try to define it, its attributes are not exclusive, and its origin.

According to Ternon, “the expression ‘ethnic purification’, literally translated from a Serbo-Croatian expression, appeared in 1981. In its origin, it’s not a legal figure, as it happens with other similar expressions such as ‘ethnic cleansing’ or ‘ethnic eradication’” (Ternon 1999: 107). It became popular through Slobodan Milosevic during the nineties. It’s a modality of codified language: “Cleaning of a region” really means “Not to leave anyone alive”. It’s an evocation of the Nazi expression *Judenrein*. Bringa states that “the vague use of the term ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina gave an exotic touch to violence” (quoted in Hinton 2002: 23). Coquio reveals the function of this and other similar expressions:

These words, arisen from turbulent situations, whose birth we would have to specify case by case and which scientific and ideological manipulations we would have to decode, are used before any interpretation, that is to say, any consideration of the facts in its real specificity, in order to avoid a priori the use of the term genocide. So, the a-critical use of the formula “ethnic purification” borrowed from the murderers negates the Bosnian genocide without justification. (Coquito 1999: 42)

According to Coquio, “the revelation in 1994 of the existence of Serbian rape and death camps (sixty thousand deaths in 1992) showed that the ‘ethnic purification’ in Bosnia concealed genocide” (Ibid: 20).

Ternon points out that the expression ethnic cleansing has entered “progressively the international vocabulary: it means, in one of Mazowiecki’s¹² reports, “a systematic purge founded on ethnic criteria of the civilian population, in order to oblige them to abandon the territories where they live” (Ternon 1999: 107). The expression ethnic cleansing is accepted in the media and in international institutions, on the one hand, because the predominance of the ethnic and on the other hand, because it hasn’t legal

10 An example of pogrom: Under direction of Nazi Party, the *Kristallnacht* (1938) caused the murder of one hundred Jews and the destruction and plunder of many Jewish shops and homes and synagogues.

11 “Even with an incalculable number of *Kristallnächte*, it is impossible the conception and the perpetration of a killing on the

scale the Holocaust” (Bauman, 2002: 153).

12 Tadeusz Mazowiecki was the Special Emissary of United Nations Organization to Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.

recognition, and so it doesn't require any intervention. In a sense, the expression justifies the perpetrators' action by dehumanizing victims through the equivalence between filth and being out of their own place.

In Social Sciences, it has become a key concept to the historian Naimark (2001) and the politics Mann (2005). For Naimark, the term ethnic cleansing means "to remove a people and often all traces of them from a concrete territory" (Naimark 2001: 3), who have been previously declared as foreign. Ethnic cleansing is equivalent to deporting a population. Dadrian writes about deportation in the context of genocide:

The most striking and, at the same time, the most functional method of trapping the targeted Jewish and Armenian populations was the reliance on the use of the term "deportation". The term was easy to explain and defend in the context of wartime exigencies. It allowed the victims to acquiesce to what it denoted, without much pondering as to what it might connote to the perpetrators. (Dadrian 2001: 153)

Mann adopts the expression ethnic cleansing, without defining it, as a key concept. Relating six types or degrees of violence and three types or degrees of cleansing – lack of cleansing, partial and total – he builds a type of ethnic cleansing scale. He puts the non violent ethnic cleansing at the base and the murderous ethnic cleansing at the top. Genocide is a type of total ethnic cleansing through premeditated massive murder. According to Mann, "murderous ethnic cleansing has been a central problem of our civilization, our modernity, our conceptions of progress, and our attempts to introduce democracy" (Mann 2005: IX). He recovers this relation in the first of eight theses he formulates at the beginning of his work: "murderous cleansing is modern, because it is the dark side of democracy" (Mann 2005: 2).

Sémelin objects that

we cannot call, for example, "democratic" all "ethnic" states such as Serbia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, etc., constituted at the end of the 19th century when the ottoman domain was liberated. Therefore, the phenomena studied by Mann are not really inherent to the birth of democracies, but moreover, and in a more general way, to the formation of nation-states, these being described as "democratic", "authoritarian", "fascist", etc. /.../. It's not so much a comparative analysis of the "dark side of democracy", but of the "dark side" of the nation-state" in the democratic era. (Sémelin 2005: 140)

Hobsbawm had already pointed out the consequences of the importance of nation-states prominence in Europe since 1780: "The logical consequence of the attempt to create a continent clearly divided in coherent territorial states, each of them inhabited by an ethnically and linguistically different and homogeneous population, meant the massive expulsion or annihilation of minorities" (quoted in Sémelin 2005: 143). And indeed, massive expulsions and even genocides started. An example of massive expulsion is the following.

After the Greco-Turkish War (1921-22), both states agreed on a population exchange ratified by International Law. Finney writes: "The compulsory exchange of minorities between Greece and Turkey agreed upon at the Lausanne peace conference in 1922-1923 saw 380,000 Muslims transferred to Turkey and 1,100,000 Orthodox Christians leaving their historic homelands in Asia Minor" (Finney 2003: 89). Other authors increase these figures. It was said that the Anatolian Greeks lived in that region since the era of Homer. More than 600,000 deported Greeks were resettled in the South-middle part of Macedonia, which had been added to the Greek states in 1913. The Macedonian Slavic population

has been subject to a policy of forced assimilation or Hellenization, a policy whose goal was to transform the diverse population of the area into an ethnically pure and homogenous population consisting exclusively of Greeks. The first stages of this process involved exchanges of population and the Hellenization of Slavic personal and place names. (Danforth 2003: 215)

In 1919, Greece and Bulgaria agreed on the forced transfer of around 55,000 people from Greece to Bulgaria, and of 30,000 from Bulgaria to Greece. This movement was increased by "70,000 further people moving one way or the other as "unofficial" emigrants" (Finney 2003: 89). The Hellenization process in Macedonia continued. Danforth wrote:

Under the Metaxas dictatorship, Slavic speaking people who identified themselves as Macedonians and not Greeks experienced severe repression. By the end of the Greek Civil War, some thirty-five thousand Macedonians fled to Yugoslavia and other countries in Eastern Europe under extremely difficult circumstances. In the decades that followed, conservative Greek governments continued a policy of persecution and assimilation toward the Macedonians in Greece, one of the most blatant of

which was the administration of “language oaths” in several Macedonian villages to swear that they would renounce their “Slavic dialect” and from then on speak only Greek. (Danforth 2003: 215)

This example can support the use of the term ethnic cleansing by Mann and other authors, but it can be alternatively analysed with more univocal terms such as deportation or imposition of an official monolingualism. The goal of national policy from nation-state governing parties is the production of homogeneous citizens, a homogeneity mainly based on common language, religion and beginnings (Saïd 1975: 32)¹³ narrative from which basic identity symbols stem, and not so much in sharing the same culture or ethnic affiliation.

It is not common to use the expression ethnic cleansing without a violent connotation. Mann, on the contrary, puts multiculturalism as level zero of ethnic cleansing and characterises voluntary cultural assimilation, partial or total, as ethnic cleansing without violence. In my opinion, multiculturalism is more of a perspective or an ideology than it is a reality. It's a way of looking at reality as a conglomeration of cultures and identities, of giving priority to the cultural dimension understood in a certain way, that is, understood as a substantial reality, well-defined – we could use the mosaic metaphor, cultures as being part of a mosaic – and not so much as a process or a set of contextual differences. Multiculturalism is also a contemporary value, but this does not make it an adequate supposition in which to build a typology. According to Amselle, “the omnipresence of the concepts genocide and ethnocide in the international political scene means the triumph of multiculturalism, that is, of a patrimonial and memorial conception of identities” (Amselle 2001: 230). This observation helps understand the rapid acceptance of the expression ethnic cleansing.

Mann, when adopting the expression ethnic cleansing as a main concept, views reality under the principal or predominant prism of the ethnic. In order to provide a definition of ethnic, Mann goes back to the etymology of the old words *demos* and *ethnos* and opposes the government of the *demos* to that of the *ethnos*. Using etymology in order to provide a definition can be seen as a way to elude the complexity of the definition and of the phenomenon. In a nation-state universe, the ethnics cannot be dissociated from the nation-state evolution and its national politics; there is a dialectical relationship between the national level, more general and inclusive by definition, and the ethnic level, more particular and exclusive. The ethnic is not so much a differentiated culture as it is a

“condensation” or reification of this dialectical relationship throughout history, usually a long-term one. Ethnic is more of an ideological production culturally formed, that stems from a beginnings narrative, plays an important role in political mobilization and in the unleashing of conflicts and of genocide. Taking as a reference the Burundi and Rwanda cases, the ethnic cannot be defined or delimited making reference to a different culture, since the genocide perpetrators' and victims' language, religion and culture were the same. But not everyone is taken by this political ideology. In Rwanda, the Muslim community where not divided or swept away and neither were the moderate Hutus, who also suffered from murders. Sémelin, talking about Burundi's genocide records points out that “Burundi's political reality became ‘ethnic’” and later “plunged into the ‘ethnic inflation spiral’”, but alerts that we “should be distrustful of an ethnic reading” since “the Tutsi ‘ethnic group’ was not responsible for those massacres, but only some of its more radical elements” (Sémelin 2005: 145).

While the concept of genocide, reformulated by social scientists, can integrate the murder of Tutsi and Hutus by Hutus executioners, thus overcoming the ethnical limit, the concept of ethnic cleansing insists on an ethnic division. Genocide is not an ethnic conflict, even if an ethnic ideology can have a predominant role in its unleashing.

Towards a definition of genocide

The UN's definition of genocide presents certain limitations from the Social Sciences point of view, such as the absence of references to the temporariness of genocide, to the executioners and their ideology, and a restricted characterization of the victim group.

The introduction of concept of process, as Sémelin proposes in his definition of massacre, allows genocide to have a historical context. Mann asserts that murderous cleansing is perpetrated deliberately, “but the route to deliberation is usually a circuitous one” (Mann 2005: 8).

The intention and planning of the extermination of a category of persons make the victims acquire a group quality through an external attribution. They become a group for the others, a reality with an organic quality to the perpetrators of genocide. Sémelin points out that it is “a way of seeing an ‘other’, of stigmatising, downgrading and annihilating them before really killing them” (Sémelin 2005: 25). Kertész, an Auschwitz survivor, says that everything in the victims “comes as an imposition from the exterior; its identity is not its own identity, its destiny is not the destiny they have chosen” (Kertész 1999: 89). The terms to designate the victims are chosen by the perpetrators of genocide who define its meaning and

13 Saïd distinguishes *beginnings* from *origins* (1975: 32).

establish its limits. And in this sense the terms are not more precise or imprecise than others. "Ethnic" terms used by some perpetrators of genocide are not more precise than "non ethnic" terms used by other perpetrators of genocide. In this sense, "Tutsi" and "subversive", terms to characterise victims of the Rwanda and Argentine genocides respectively, are equally precise, because its precision does not come from their own meaning, but from the meaning that has been fixed by definitions and implementation carried out by genocides.

Political power is territorially practiced in many ways. Genocide has an intense and extensive territorial shaping. The geography of the extermination is related to the beginnings narrative of the exterminated group, for example, if considered to be non indigenous. Genocide implies a set of actions with spatial references such as localization, immobilization, kidnapping, deportation, and detention in concentration camps, murder and the disappearance of any trace of the victim. The term eradication used to make reference to this plan "goes back to the idea of 'cutting the roots', of 'extracting from the earth', briefly, 'of uprooting', as we would say about weeds or about a contagious illness; but in this case, this vast eradication operation has a whole human community as an objective" (Sémelin 2002: 489). These natural images are part of ideologies related to genocide and therefore eradication is not an adequate analytical term.

Classification, symbolization and dehumanization are the three initial stages set by Stanton on the development of genocide, and all of them contribute to the building of a "negative otherness" (Stanton 1998).¹⁴

Ideology is at the base of the classification system and its values. I will point out several ideologies that have inspired and justified genocide. Genocide can be the outcome of the process of consolidation of the expansive states into territories inhabited by populations that the so called social Darwinism and racism consider them as being doomed to disappear; of the process of consolidation of nation-states and of politics of cultural homogenization; of the process of consolidation of revolutionary regimes and the radical transformation of the social class stratification; of the military regimes and the politics of restoration of a pristine national and social order.

Genocide has a tripartite structure: planning, execution and negation by the executioners. Lévy asserts that the negation is as "inherent to genocide" as the "getting rid of the traces is part of the perfect crime" (Lévy, in *Le Monde*, February 2nd, 2007). Feierstein distinguishes between two inseparable stages in genocide, the material

and the symbolic achievement: "the genocidal social practices don't culminate with its material achievement; they are carried out in the symbolic and ideological field, in the ways of representing and narrating it" (Feierstein 2007: 237).

In order to summarise, I consider that the genocide is the result of a plan conceived by a State authority and directly or indirectly executed by the State apparatus, in its own territory or in a conquered one, with the objective of eliminating a population or a human group as a category within a classification system referred to human, national, political, etc., diversity. The criteria and categories of this classification system are established from specific "theories" or ideologies adopted by the political authority. At a symbolic level, genocide pretends to be total, but as a historical process is subject to the action of predictable and unpredictable factors, including the victims' capacity to resist. Genocide implies an attack on the human group's reproduction in all its possible ways and in this context, the attack on the procreation system becomes a crucial mechanism. The attack on the procreation system is the most explicit expression of the genocidal intentionality.¹⁵

I will briefly illustrate significant aspects of the relationships between genocide and procreation such as the killing of all the members of a family, the abduction of children and the rape of women. About the killing of all the members of a family: in East Timor, before the self-determination referendum, "Indonesian officers and Timorese militia commanders met on 16 February 1999 and Indonesian lieutenant-colonel Yahyat Sudrajat called for killing pro-independence movement leaders, their children, and even their grandchildren. 'Not a single member of their families was to be left alive', the colonel told the meeting" (Kiernan 2002: 175). Jacobo Timerman, a journal editor, narrates an anticipatory reference to genocide made by an Argentine Navy commander: "– If we would exterminate them all, fear would last for many generations. – What does it mean them all? –All...about twenty thousand. And also their families. We must wipe out all of them as well as all people who could remember their names" (Timerman 2000: 68). About the abduction of children: In Australia, from 1910 to 1970 thousands of "half-caste" children "were separated from their families" (Kiernan 2002: 177). In 1997, the report *Bringing Them Home*¹⁶ concluded that the abduction of Aboriginal children had constituted genocide. In Germany, the Nazis carried out a vast politics of abduction of children

15 About procreation as a cultural domain and a core concept, J. Frigolé (1998: 68).

16 Report compiled by the national Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission.

14 Originally presented as a briefing paper at the US State Department in 1996 (www.genocidewatch.org).

with Aryan features, most of them from Poland.¹⁷ The Argentine military Junta also practiced the robbery of babies after having assassinated their mothers. Finally, about the rape of women: Coquio asserts that “agents of genocide attack the baby and the maternal body without mercy, because they aim at offspring as a target” (Coquio 1999: 33). Nahoum-Grappe considers that the rape and the enforced pregnancy are “a crime against descent” (quoted in Kullashi 1999: 277).

Procreation is related with the origin, the continuity and the identity of individuals and groups and genocide attempts to erase them.

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