

The microcosms of violence

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‘For every victim there is a traitor and for every traitor the ultimate curse: his life shall always be connected with the people to whom he did injustice to. Think about the Romans and the Christians. Think about the Nazis and the Jews. And when you think of the Turks, are the Armenians then far away?’ (Edgarian, 1994, p. 225)

Acts of violence are often studied as facts, not as cultural and symbolic expressions. Within this article, the author will shed light on another dimension; explaining how a personal experience of unprovoked assault changed the author’s scholarly vision of the intrusive nature of violence, as well as how violence influences the subjective perception of victims. He will show that during that moment of violence, all cultural meaning unravels and the social imagery of the perpetrator is internalised by those that are victimised. The aim of this article is twofold: a) that the specificity of violence needs very specific attention in terms of intervention and rehabilitation, and b) that objectification, especially during genocide, but also other war crimes, provides a key role as to how violence is experienced. Further, the author shows that violence is an intrusive act, where the will of the perpetrator is forced to become the will of the victim.

Keywords: embodiment, genocide, identity, intrinsic dynamics of violence, sense of self, transgenerational trauma, violence

Introduction: from microscopic to macro dimensions of violence

There is a lot written about different forms of violence: the gradations in which violence occurs, how this is explicitly experienced by its victims¹, and specific elements which are important in understanding violence and how victims cope when their persona is attacked.

Furthermore, it should be stated that this article is atypical, as the author’s personal experience of violence, as well collected data

Key implications for practice

- Genocidal violence causes very peculiar forms of (transgenerational) trauma
- Understanding violence on a micro-level shows its impact
- Violence creates an interactive and dialectic bond between perpetrator and victim

on transgenerational trauma will both be presented. The violent incident included here, provided new insights in terms of my own understanding of the dynamics of violence, and how it is reconstructed and embodied afterwards.

The aim of this article is twofold: 1) how within the instance of violence itself, the worldview of the aggressor is forced onto the worldview of the victim; and 2) to explain how genocidal violence in particular, which in essence is aimed at identities, causes very peculiar forms of (transgenerational) trauma. Within this microcosm of violence, a link is created between perpetrator and victim that is not easily severed.

The focus here is on *‘genocidal violence’*, not in an effort to diminish the consequences of war crimes or other crimes against humanity, but because *‘identity’* is specifically targeted in the genocidal process. This is important, as during genocides victims are indiscriminately targeted for *‘who’* they are, and not for what they did, dehumanised

and objectified to the extreme. While this also occurs in other war crimes, in genocide it is a goal in itself.

Methodology and research

background

During research on transgenerational consequences of the Armenian genocide among second, third and fourth generation survivors, from 2004 onward, both an historical approach to the research field as well as an ethnographic approach was taken in order to understand the juxtaposition. The primary aim was to decipher what Carol Kidron (2009) considers 'narrative truths', i.e. stories we tell ourselves to make our world more comprehensible.

During research, the pain my informants felt was considered within the context of something metaphorical, or as a direct consequence of the fact that Turkey still does not recognise the atrocities that occurred between 1915 and 1917. My personal experiences with violence (in a completely different context), however, shed another light on this and led to the realisation that the pain is not simply metaphorical, and that the transgenerational trauma was not only linked to Turkey not recognising the genocide, but also by the incident itself.

In many ways, my personal experience of having been physically beaten for no reason gave rise to another interpretation of the data, namely that the intrusiveness of violence causes typical psychological trauma and that violence is a dialectic process. It seems acultural to the one who experiences it, but highly cultural to the one who commits it. In fact, it's the cultural expression of the norms, values and worldview of the perpetrator (s) that is transferred to the one who suffers the violence. It is this collision, between the unravelling of culture and sense of self on one hand, and the transferred implementation of a culture and sense of self on the other, that colours how violence is felt. It is my argument, therefore, that if we understand the dynamics of violence

and the dialectic process underneath, that we may understand how violence is embodied and experienced transgenerationally. Further², that genocidal violence takes a peculiar place in this, especially as genocide is a very specific form of warfare, with a specific goal and where the victims are culturally objectified and socially alienated in the extreme. To understand this, the dynamics of violence and the symbolic language it carries needs to be examined.

The language of violence

The statement of Edgarian (above), a second generation American Armenian, seems to emphasise a social and political point of view, but it felt as if something eluded me. That there was something in the wording, something in what Michael Taussig (2004) might consider 'tacit knowledge'³ that was missing. It was clear that both the perpetrator and the victimised group were bound together by history, by politics and by the political and social recognition of the violence or sometimes, as in the Armenian genocide, the denial of the aggressor. I also understood that violence is something, in the perception of the victim, acultural, meaning that the act of violence itself unravels all cultural meaning. Mattijs Van de Port describes:

'I am reality, war says... Experiences obtained in the terrible reality of the war, in which these confrontations with the most brutal violations of the integrity of the human body – violations of what is perhaps the ultimate story we have to tell about ourselves: the story that says that we are more than just skin, bones, blood and brains – seem to bring about an utter alienation' (Van de Port, 1998, p. 102–103).

Even though violence springs from culture and should not be placed outside the realm of it (Blok, 1991)⁴, the experience of violence for the victims unravels everything that

creates a sense of 'inner sameness'⁵. This is, of course, a subjective experience. Everything that goes into making an individual, a person with an identity, a language and cultural baggage, becomes naked, vulnerable and alienated. The aggressors cause the victim to feel this alienation, to feel the consequences when every layer of identity is stripped away. It is exactly this alienation, this intrusion of the self, that cannot be conveyed to offspring, to siblings or family. It is also why, according to Kidron (2009), after each genocide there is a *'silent generation'*; a generation that disassociates themselves from what they endured and cannot convey what they have experienced.

By itself this does not, however, explain how perpetrators and victims are connected. For that, insight into the microcosm where violence takes place is required. First, the study of the cultural expression of violence and how some forms of violence, like genocide, tend to be more intrusive and indiscriminate than other forms of warfare will be examined. Then, a personal experience of violence will be shared, which although it cannot be in anyway compared to those who have suffered mass atrocities, but did provide me, as an ethnographer, a unique inkling into how intimate and intrusive violence can be. The connection between victim and aggressor is more than simply a relationship of recognition or non-recognition, or the intention/cultural expression of the violence itself, it is a bond. It is in this bond that will offer a better understanding of victims of genocide, and provide an analytical insight as to how genocide survivors deal with their collective history, and why the fear of disappearance and external threat is a reoccurring theme in their narratives.

Mass violence and genocidal intent

Genocide differs from other forms of warfare by the sheer implication that genocide intends to annihilate a specific group of

people. Not because those targeted are dangerous to the aggressor, but because their *identity* forms an *imaginary* threat to the dominant culture group, whose identity is perceived as endangered and has to be solidified (Holslag, 2015a). This is the reason that genocide often occurs during warfare, and is often accompanied with speeches where the dominant culture group positions itself as a victim. Milošević for example, saw the Serbs as victims of the *poturice* of 'those who had become Turks' (i.e. converted to Islam). They were seen as internal enemies and, in some contexts, *poturice* was a synonym for 'traitor' (Bringa, 2002, p. 215). Similarly, in Rwanda, the Tutsi's were depicted as invaders from Ethiopia. Tutsi's were depicted as intelligent (*hamite*) invaders, who conquered the slow-witted (*bantu*) Hutu's (Taylor, 2002). It is when this identity crisis heightens, when the aggressor is confronted, with warfare or revolutions, that this discourse of victimisation deepens and the need to cleanse and purify a nation, a landscape, or an empire, becomes a political goal in itself (Sémelin, 2007).

It is for this reason that genocide is in some ways so random, aimed at *all* civilians, regardless of age or gender, and results in an enormous array of violence: from gruesome acts of torture, to physical and cultural destruction. The political purpose is not the conquering or subordination of a specific targeted group, but to totally destroy the victim and the victim's identity in every aspect, to objectify the victim completely. It is also for this reason that genocide often occurs alongside the destruction of cultural heritage, cultural indicators, language and other institutions. Within this context, it also explains why some scholars insist that sexual violence is more frequent and gruesome during ethnic cleansing and genocide, than during other forms of warfare (Das, 1996; 2008; Wood, 2006). By conquering women, and therefore the reproduction of a community, perpetrators are at the core, destroying the capabilities of a community to

reproduce (Holslag, 2015b). Genocide is about the destruction of an *'other'*, while at the same time solidifying a sense of *'self'*.

From the experiential point of view of the victim, this violence, if seen within the context of crimes against humanity or war crimes, may seem just as random and intrusive as genocidal violence. Yet, there is a difference. Where victims of war crimes or crimes against humanity can fall back on existing institutions, these same institutions, (churches, languages, social indicators) will be targeted and destroyed during genocide, leaving the victims adrift. This is an important factor and could explain why the trauma of genocidal violence is more elusive and transgenerational than other forms. The victims of genocide have to truly rebuild their own collective history, identity, heritage and culture again (Holslag, 2015c).

There is, however, another dimension at play here and that is that genocidal violence, at first hand, seem random and senseless. Meaning that as there is no physical threat to the perpetrator, only an imaginary one, and that the violence seems illogical even within the dynamics of warfare itself. Why use all these resources to kill and exterminate a targeted group within the boundaries of a country, when these same resources can be used for the war effort? Genocide is logical, however, from the point of view of the perpetrator. He or she is after all protecting their *existential* self, whether this is Hutu, German, Bosnian Serb or Turkish. The *other* (Tutsi, Jews, Roma, Sinti, Bosniaks or Armenians) is placed outside the polity of the existing social and political body. Or, as Taussig states: *'it is clear (...) that the victimizer needs the victim for the purpose of making truth, objectifying the victimizer's fantasies in the discourse of the other'* (Taussig, 2004, p. 40, emphasis by author).

In this sense, genocidal intent is of essential importance. The genocidal goal is to destroy an identity, in all its forms, in order to reconstruct a new identity, an inner sameness or *'self'* (Holslag, 2015a). To them, the violence

isn't random, it is specifically targeted and within this, violence itself takes centre stage. It is here where the *other* becomes a *'true'* other, a physical other, that must be destroyed.

Genocide is, therefore, a battle of existence as the following quote shows, and one which is a common quote made by *genocidaires*. When the Turkish leader, Talaat Pasha, received telegrams of the massacres of the Armenians in the Turkish empire he said:

*I received many telegrams about the Armenians and became agitated (...). But if we hadn't done it, they **would have done it to us**. Of course we started first, that is **the fight for national existence'** (Gaunt, 2006, p. 70, emphasis by author).*

Here, it can be seen that within violence the *other* is dehumanised to such an extent that killing them is seen as a necessity. Although the violence seems senseless and acultural to an outsider, it is in fact, from the psychology of the perpetrators, a culture expression of their worldview.

It is here, within this microcosm of violence, where the link between perpetrator and victim is created. Not only through the violence, as will be shown, but also through the momentum of the violence and the crater in society it leaves behind.

The microcosm of violence

Anthropological research is based on participant observation. A research method, first implemented by Malinowski (1922), which implies that the researcher gets a local point of view of the group that is studied by living in the same circumstances as the respondents. It is through this method that the researcher not only intellectually studies a targeted group, but also gets a sense of their experiential world.

In research about violence, this will create very specific problems for an ethnographer. Even though genocide studies tend to be

interdisciplinary, it is often through interviews and eyewitness accounts that the ethnographer tries to establish the experiential world of those who were victimised. This not an easy task. As a researcher you have to deal with terrible stories in order to get an inkling as to how violence is experienced, and even then, this secondary experience is partly intellectual, partly empathetic and interpretive at best.

It does not occur often that the ethnographer is targeted as a victim. Yet, this is what happened, not in circumstances of mass violence or even warfare, but in a one-off incidence of violence in Amsterdam in 2008. Although it is unorthodox within scientific scholarship, because science implies a presumed objectivity, it is important to include my personal experience in an attempt to create additional insights that could be of importance to further scientific inquiry.

To contextualise the experience, how anthropologists approach trauma caused by violence will be discussed. Then, a dimension that is infrequently mentioned within scholarship, my personal experience of violence, will be added.

A cultural anthropological approach to violence

Cultural anthropologists, such as Van de Port (1998) and Taussig (2004), agree that violence is primordial or acultural. Meaning that violence is so intense, so intrusive, that all the webs of meaning, all the cultural significance we give to our identity and daily interactions, disintegrates in the moment of violence. Taussig speaks of the *'space of death'* and Sasanka Perera calls it the *'shadow of death'*; it is the moment culture unravels and all social meanings are lost: *'[it] must ideally be understood as a particular stage in journey or path that any individual may have to go through at some point of time in a society of terror'* (Perera, 2001, p.164). Taussig defines *'space of death'* even further:

*'...space of death is pre-eminently a space of transformation: through experience of coming close to death there will be a more vivid sense of life; through fear there can come not only growth in self-consciousness but also **fragmentation**, then **loss of self conforming to authority**'* (Taussig, 1987, p. 7, emphasis by author).

Space of death is a moment where there are no words, where the victim is aware of his physical being and the loss of control over his/her own self-determination and autonomy. The victim is nothing more than a physical vessel that can be tortured or killed according to the whims of the aggressors. Language cannot fill this experiential space. There are no cultural frameworks that can give meaning, definition or direction, there is only the experience of fear and the realisation of death itself.

Yet there is another dimension to this, a more frightened dimension, which makes violence intimate. The bond between victim and perpetrator is created, not through the physical violence, even though this is the vehicle through which the space of death is transmitted, but in the way that the experiential worldview of the perpetrator becomes the experiential worldview of the victim. Not just by reinforcing its will, but because of the dialectic nature of the violence itself: the cultural expression of the aggressor is so strong that it overtakes the experiential world of the victim. It's this juxtaposition of disintegration of culture on one hand and the cultural expression of violence of the perpetrator on the other hand, that creates a very fragmented sense of self.

Personal experience of violence

In Amsterdam, on 29 November 2008, I was walking home after attending a lecture on the Armenian genocide. At one point, I heard someone shout to me. It was one of three youngsters who asked if I knew *'where a party was'*. At that time in my life, I had

worked with teenagers, sometimes from troubled homes. While I stood there and answered the question, I knew that he had wanted to stop me. It was not intuition that brought this conclusion. Or at least not intuition alone, it was the cumulative factors of the look in his eyes, the tone of his voice and nonverbal behaviour. All of these signs appeared to be hostile and I knew that no matter what I said, he was looking for a fight. Later, when I went through counselling, I learned that ones' mind goes into a flight or fight mode, that the brain is solely focused on survival. To this day, I am quite surprised at how calculative my mind was, and how fast I was going through the options. I could get away, but they would follow me. I could fight, but then all three would attack me. Or, I could escape. While I was going through my options, which occurred in an instant, I saw a car driving towards us and I knew that the car would come between me and my aggressors.

I took the opportunity to run onto the main road and, as I knew they would, all three followed me. I knew I had to get to a place where there were people. At some point I fell, got beaten up, but managed to run away afterwards. Even though I felt no pain, later, I discovered that my leg was severely bruised, and my knee, spine and neck had contusions. My mind, however, was perfectly clear. It was as if my brain had shut out all physical impulses and was focused only on survival.

Later, I learned that each victim has a moment where an incident becomes a trauma, where culture truly disintegrates and where the victim consciously experiences the *'shadow of death'*. This is the moment where violence becomes so overwhelming, that it cuts straight through your autonomy and individuality, all of the illusionary layers you attach to yourself. That happened to me when I ran that last leg towards the main square. I remember the yellow streetlights moving back and forth in the breeze, I remember the shadows on

the sidewalk, that the road wasn't even and that I could fall. I also knew if I did, primordially, they would jump on me and there was nothing I could do to protect myself.

I was aware that the assailants were behind me and were laughing as they honed in on me. They were having fun, my fear, my anguish and my pain were giving *them* pleasure. It was at this instant that my mind broke, that the violence became more than just unravelling of culture and a confrontation of possible pain or death. I *instinctively* knew that if I fell down, they would kick me and I would not survive.

Everything that I knew, or thought I knew, became meaningless, all attachments and identifications – roles, status, knowledge, everything that made me *'me'* – fell away. There are no words to describe this experience. Violence in this instance was a precursor of culture, of words and there was no experience that I could lean on to give this moment meaning. I was indeed reduced to *'blood, brains and bones'*. Yet, even this does not describe the dynamics of the violence, for there was something else that was even more intrusive, more intimate, than unravelling of cultural and psychology alone: the experiential world of the perpetrators became *my* experiential world, and their will became my will. I was not only objectified, I was also the object, and I *sensed* this and *felt* this in my core. I was a puppet in the hands of my assailants, their worldview became my worldview and I began to see myself through their eyes.

There is something both filthy and personal about this, something that halts all definition and goes further than being objectified. It is as if you become an extension of the other, the aggressor. This is what I consider to be the microcosm of violence. The experience itself is not only a top down, one-way direction, there was a dialectic process between me and my assailants, where in the heated moment of violence we became attached and inseparable.

It was the laughing that haunted me, not the hitting, the pain or name calling. The laughter created an experiential world that was no longer my own, where my body, my pain, became the target of their focus and their pleasure. I could not escape it.

Soon after I reached the square, the police arrested the main assailant. Although I will not describe the aftermath of this event, while writing down this experience I can still feel the adrenaline surge through my body and sense this filthy connection once again. I can almost see myself running and feel nothing more than disgust. Not shame, shame indicates a feeling that turns inwards. What I felt was truly outside myself: a feeling of being *made* helpless, which left a permanent imprint or mark⁶. The best way to describe it, is like a crater in your sense of self; a crater that is filled with laughter and utter darkness. A darkness that reminded me that I was nothing, diminished to a play toy, an empty shell for those who wanted to hurt me.

A 'new' starting point

Even though this is in no way comparable to those who suffer major atrocities, as a social scientist, I did start to look differently at eyewitness accounts and eyewitness accounts of violence. Before this incident, victims were always unfortunate individuals caught up in something terrible that had occurred. Of course, I knew about dehumanisation and objectifying of the victim, but as scientists we tend to look at this only through the eyes of the perpetrators, or through a periscope of anthropological/psychological theories and not as an embodied experience. The objectified individual truly becomes an object; the experiential mind-set of the perpetrator becomes the mind-set of the one that is victimised. It is not that culture just unravels and new meaning is given. It is more that meaning is forced onto you and this experience must be incorporated into a 'new' sense of self.

It is not strange that individuals and groups who survive these attacks, take the violence (and the meaning of this violence) as a 'new' starting point:

'The range of these modes of symbolic re-empowerment is infinite – from "imagined communities" that provide a quasi-familial, fantasized sense of collective belonging, through forms of madness in which one imagines that external reality is susceptible to the processes of one's own thinking' (Jackson, 2002, p. 35).

Liisa Malkki (1995) shows us in a case study, that the Hutu that fled the genocidal violence in Burundi believed that their newly obtained status as a refugee provided a 'healing' power; that through 'suffering' they became 'cleansed' and 'prepared' to return to their motherland. The experienced violence became, as it were, a vehicle of 'purification' of the Hutu's national and ethnic identity.

In her study, Perera (2001), discovers in her dissection of the aftermath of political violence between 1988 and 1991 in Sri Lanka, two different cultural narratives; those of 'spiritual possession' and 'ghost stories', as a way of contextualising the horrific and non-discursive experiences. Spiritual possession, symbolises and re-enacts the physical acts of violence itself; where the community, body (and mind) was penetrated by torture, rape and murder. The ghost stories allude to family or community members that are lost.

Even though these are all instances where groups of victims had to create a new experiential world, where the violence is embedded and given a new culture meaning. This is not only because culture was unravelled by violence, it is also because the intention of the perpetrator, the intrusion into the experiential world of the victim, has to be reconstructed and given cultural meaning. The dehumanisation is not only a normative format of the aggressor to shape and politicise his behaviour, but it is also something

that is literally felt by their victim. Both perpetrators and victims are irreversible linked. It is important to realise that silence after violence does not only occur because violence is a precursor for culture and meaning, but also because violence takes something from you – a sense of individuality, autonomy and a sense that your life is your own. This intrusive relationship is forced on you, and it is this microcosmos that has to be given cultural meaning.

Short and long term transgenerational consequences

After this experience, I remembered a quote from a Jewish informant. We met once after one of my lectures. This was before the incident, before I realised what kind of mark violence leaves. He grabbed me and said: *'this will never leave us, you know. There is a before and an after.'*

At the time, I thought I understood him, now I *feel* what he meant. After being exposed to the objectification of the perpetrators, you have to create a new inner-sense, a new mirror image that seems fragmented at best. For the first time, I realised that the *'pain'* and *'suffering'* my respondents kept referring to was more than a metaphorical or cultural pain, it was an embodied pain that felt as real to second, third and fourth generation survivors as those who had experienced it first-hand.

Genocidaires act from a sense of victimhood, from an *imaginary* threat. The intent is culturally played out in the symbolic nature of the violence. Think, for example, of the linkage between racial purification ideologies and how the Jews, Sinti and Roma during the Holocaust were killed. They were *'delicied'* and cleansed in *'showers'*⁷. Or think of the current Christian victims of ISIL who are crucified and their religion thereby mocked in death. *Genocidaires* act preemptively and by doing so solidify their ideology and their sense of superiority by destroying the other in *all its aspects*. These

are the remnants, the smouldering ashes if you will, where the survivors have to pick up their lives again.

For many informants I spoke to, the trauma that was consistent with this was that the pain of *'loss'* was not simply a memory, but physically placed within the body. This pain, however, was also felt among second, third and fourth generation Armenians, who had not dealt with the violence themselves, but it had been assimilated as a *'typical'* characteristic of Armenians. Only Armenians could feel this pain, and this in turn gave the Armenians an *'inner-strength'*. Just as in the case-study of Malkki (1995), the violence became the centre upon which a new cultural identity was built. An identity filled with Christian symbolisms and martyrdom, exactly the cultural aspects for which they were persecuted.

There was, however, also a fear attached to this experience, which in essence embodied the crater I felt myself, which was termed *Jermag Charrt* (white genocide). In the experiential world of my informants, the Armenian identity was always on the verge of extinction. Even intermarriage with non-Armenians, which were called *odars*, was considered by some *'dangerous'*, as in intermarriage there was a mixing of blood and Armenia-ness was first and foremost placed in the body. For direct survivors, all other institutions had been destroyed, therefore it's not unimaginable that in their narratives Armenian identity no longer resided in the church or political institutions, or even language⁸, but in the body itself.

This also explains, in many ways, why survivors of genocide tend to be wary in terms of international and foreign politics. When we think of the Republic of Armenia, we cannot discount Karabach (a region that the Armenian republic annexed and where tremendous atrocities were committed). When we think of Israel, we cannot discount Palestine. While the victimhood of the aggressors is imaginary, the fear the victims feel of extinction is very real. They have

experienced it, they have included it in their cultural narratives and it becomes the essence of what and who they are. We need to understand these dynamics, because it gives us an insight into their collective behaviour.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was not to give a closed answer or provide guidelines on how to deal with people who are suffering in the aftermath of genocidal violence. There are other authors, such as Metin Başoğlu and Ebru Alcioglu (2011) who deal with subject to a great extent. The complexities are enormous, and as such, this article concentrated only on the anthropological and the psychological consequences of violence, during the act itself. Violence is not static, there is an interactive and dialectic bond between perpetrator and victim. This bond is created during the act and not after it, when questions arise of ownership of guilt or recognition. It can be impossible to imagine how someone must feel who has left their home, their family, their kinship, their country, has survived enormous atrocities and is suffering from both physical and psychological consequences. One act of violence is not the same as another act of violence, this is what I have learned.

This is not new, but I hope this article has added to the discourse in two ways: a) to clarify the bond that is created between aggressor and victim, where the worldviews of both are intertwined and that the violence becomes embodied; and b) that we should not only look at how the individual is traumatised, but how this trauma is collectively encapsulated. The latter gives us an insight into the trauma of the victims, and how this is transgenerationally and collectively transferred.

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¹ See also Ehlert and Lorke (1988) who wrote about disassociation during violence and how the perpetrator’s mind influences the impact of the violence. Their work has been quoted in numerous articles, including Ulrich (2005) who incorporated the findings of Ehlert & Lorke regarding sexual abuse, in Hirsch (2005) who focuses on the trauma within families, and Nicolai (2000) who focuses on the internalisation of the perpetrator’s worldview.

² Nicolai (2000).

³ Tacit knowledge is cultural knowledge. It can be considered as a juxtaposition of 'explicit knowledge'; the content of a conversation and how a conversation is framed. Tacit knowledge is what we read between the lines or how narratives are interpreted. The interpretation of narratives is often guided by our cultural values and imagery. So, tacit knowledge guides how the information is processed.

⁴ Blok observes: 'to characterize violence as pointless or irrational is to abandon research at the point where it should start.... Violence as a cultural category or construction should be understood in the first place as a symbolic activity – not as meaningless, but as meaningful behaviour' (Blok, 1991).

⁵ Volkan (1999) describes this 'inner sense of sameness' as an illusionary sense of self, where different adaptations are used where an individual creates, through different sets of objects and values, an inner continuous narrative where a sense of 'ego' is established (Volkan, 1999).

⁶ In this sense my experiences and feelings fits more the trauma models of Metin Başoğlu and Ebru Şalcioğlu (2011), even though 'imprint' or 'mark' doesn't cover the heaviness of the

experience. It's more that the feeling of helplessness is so incorporated into the body, that I think 'embodiment' is a better wording. The sense of being objectified becomes the centre of who you are.

⁷ See Proctor (1995) for a more detailed account of how racial ideas and purification ideas came together through medical discourse. Or read Taylor (2002), where the Hutu's imagined Rwanda to be a system of tubes and blockages and where the victims were impaled to alleviate the blockages.

⁸ Through the Turkification processes leading up to 1915, the Armenian language was subject to discriminatory laws and was no longer allowed to be used.

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