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Legible Testimonies: Raphaël Lemkin, the Victim's Voice, and the Global History of Genocide

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In the past fifteen years, Raphaël Lemkin has been reintroduced to us as a “historian of mass violence.”¹ However, while recent works have emphasized the import of Lemkin’s historical writings, few have fully evaluated, or even defined, his historical methodology. Thus, while Raphaël-Lemkin-the-historian has recently come into view, we continue to know little of his position and craft as such.

Taking the entirety of Lemkin’s writings, correspondence, and source material for his work on the history and study of genocide as its archive, this article nuances recent characterizations of Lemkin-the-historian. It does so by drawing out three components of Lemkin’s historical approach. First, it argues that despite Lemkin’s relative amateurism in the historical profession, close readings of his writings suggest that he was highly attentive to the “Historian’s Craft.”² Second, it contends that, in addition to being methodologically aware, Lemkin employed a psycho-cultural approach in writing *History of Genocide* and that this approach was particularly influential in shaping his use of testimony. And third, it considers how both Lemkin’s handling of testimony and calls for “psychological relativism” informed his writings on Western and non-Western instances of mass violence and genocide.

Recent scholarship has castigated Lemkin for his “persisting Eurocentricism.”³ However, we have yet to understand how exactly Lemkin’s perceived cultural chauvinism manifested itself methodologically. A comparison between his writings on mass violence in Europe and Africa and a close reading of his unpublished notebooks offer a means to do so.⁴ There, we come to recognize how Lemkin’s methodology shaped his depictions of African subjecthood and victimhood. And we come to recognize why these depictions, despite detailing the Congolese’s and Herero’s psychological and physical suffering, failed to present them as feeling, thinking, and acting individuals – who like their European counterparts worked to make sense of their persecution in its aftermath.

Nevertheless, if this article points to the limitations of Lemkin’s psycho-cultural approach in relation to his writings on colonial violence in Africa, it also reaffirms the import of his legacy amidst today’s “global turn.”⁵ In short, in investigating the causes and consequences of Lemkin’s differential approach to victim testimony, in accordance with the victim’s proximity to the Western world, we are called to consider how this differential treatment might have formed a broader set of methodological practices and historiographical conventions. We are also invited to consider how these conventions might continue to define our efforts to write histories of mass violence and

¹ I draw this phrase regarding Lemkin “as a historian of mass violence” from Dominick Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer’s edited volume, *The Origins of Genocide: Raphaël Lemkin as a Historian of Mass Violence* (London: Routledge, 2009). This volume is the subsequent publication of a special issue of *Journal of Genocide Research* 7, no. 4 (2005), 443-559.

² Marc Bloch, *The Historian’s Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992 [1953]).

³ Ann Curthoys and John Docker have suggested that Lemkin’s cosmopolitanism – along with Hannah Arendt’s – was “defeated by profound persisting Eurocentricism.” Ann Curthoys and John Docker, “Defining Genocide,” in *The Historiography of Genocide*, ed. Dan Stone (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 21.

⁴ This article looks at Lemkin’s writings on mass violence in Poland, Serbia, Armenia, the Belgian Congo, and German Southwest Africa. To be clear, European observers did not perceive Armenia as part of Europe. Rather, it stood as part of the Near East. Here, for the sake of clarity, I frame my analysis as a comparison between mass violence in Europe and Africa.

⁵ David Bell, drawing upon Antoinette Burton’s work, defines the “global turn” as encompassing scholarship that “calls attention to the constitutive impact of global histories on local histories and, more specifically, a critical return to the connections between metropole and colony, race and nation.” David A. Bell, “Questioning the Global Turn: the Case for the French Revolution,” *French Historical Studies* 37, no. 1 (2014), 2. For discussions on the “imperial turn” and “turn talk” respectively, see Antoinette Burton, “Introduction: On the Inadequacy and the Indispensability of the Nation,” in *After the Imperial Turn: Thinking with and through the Nation*, ed. Antoinette Burton (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 1-23; Judith Surkis, “When Was the Linguistic Turn? A Genealogy,” *American Historical Review* 117, no. 3 (2012), 700-722.

genocide on an ever more global scale – a project of increasing import given today's call to “think globally.”⁶

Raphaël Lemkin: Activist, Scholar, Lawyer...Historian?

Lemkin's own biography explains, in part, why for so long we have had a partial view of his career. Indeed, as recent examinations of Lemkin's historical oeuvre have noted, Lemkin came to the historical profession rather late in life. He was forty-seven years old when he submitted his first grant applications for *History of Genocide*.⁷ He did so only after fleeing Poland in 1939, coining the term genocide in 1944, and beginning his career as a law professor in the United States shortly thereafter.⁸

In the last fifteen years, a resurgence of interest in Lemkin's life and thought has compelled scholars to return to Lemkin's unpublished writings. Many have turned their attention to Lemkin's two-volume project, *Introduction to the Study of Genocide* and *History of Genocide*, which Lemkin intermittently worked on throughout the 1950s.⁹ In 2009, Dominick Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer published the definitive volume on Lemkin as a historian of mass violence.¹⁰ Three years later, Steven L. Jacobs published a portion of Lemkin's never published or completed two-part study.¹¹ Along the way, A. Dirk Moses has provided multiple readings of Lemkin's historical oeuvre.¹²

Much of this recent interest in Lemkin's two-part study stems from the particular frame that Lemkin used to examine the *History of Genocide*. Notably, in 1947, Lemkin set out to write the first history of genocide. But he also set out to write the first *global* history of genocide as well. *History of Genocide's* three sections, which extend from “Antiquity,” to the “Middle Ages,” to “Modern Times,” capture Lemkin's early impulse to “think globally” and over the *longue durée*. Moreover, within each section, we find that Lemkin was as attentive to instances of genocide perpetrated under colonial rule, as he was to ones perpetrated under totalitarian regimes. Scholars, working in the field of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, have increasingly sought to uncover the parallels

⁶ For two examples of this call to “think globally,” see Diego Olstein, *Thinking History Globally* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); Eve Darian-Smith and Philip C. McCarty, *The Global Turn: Theories, Research Designs, and Methods for Global Studies* (Oakland: Berkeley University Press, 2017).

⁷ Lemkin's application to the Rockefeller Foundation in November 1947 for his “book on genocide” marks the earliest evidence I have found of his plans to study genocide from a historical perspective. “Roger F. Evans to Raphaël Lemkin,” November 6, 1947, Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, American Jewish Historical Society (hereafter AJHS), Box 8, Folder, 10, Note: AJHS has digitized most of its Lemkin collection. This letter, for example, is available online.

⁸ Tragic circumstances surround Lemkin's work on the two volumes. As his letters to publishers make clear, Lemkin was hopeful that he would finish the project before the end of the decade. His declining financial, physical, and emotional health, however, soon made that all but impossible. For one quite harsh reading of Lemkin's final years, see Michael Ignatieff, “The Unsung Hero Who Coined the Term ‘Genocide,’” *The New Republic*, September 22, 2013, accessed March 25, 2019, <https://newrepublic.com/article/114424/raphael-lemkin-unsung-hero-who-coined-genocide>. I draw most of the biographical details relating to Lemkin's life and career from two volumes: John Cooper, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2008); Douglas Irvin-Erickson, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017).

⁹ The archives and respective collections consulted for this article are: Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS; Raphaël Lemkin Papers, MS-60, Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives (hereafter AJA); Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, New York Public Library (hereafter NYPL). For details of the provenance of each collection, see Tanya Elder, “What You See Before Your Eyes: Documenting Raphaël Lemkin's Life by Exploring his Archival Papers, 1900-1959,” in *The Origins of Genocide*, eds. Dominick Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (London: Routledge, 2009), 25-56. Note: when quoting from Lemkin's unpublished writings, I have made minor orthographic changes when needed.

¹⁰ Schaller and Zimmerer, *The Origins of Genocide*.

¹¹ Raphaël Lemkin, *Lemkin on Genocide*, ed. Steven L. Jacobs (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2012). For two of the earliest observations of the import of Lemkin's historical writings, see Steven L. Jacobs, “The Papers of Raphaël Lemkin: a First Look,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 1, no. 1, (1999), 105-114; Mark Mazower, “After Lemkin: Genocide, the Holocaust, and History,” *Jewish Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (1994), 5-8.

¹² See A. Dirk Moses, “Empire, Colony, Genocide: Keywords and Philosophy of History,” in *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*, ed. A. Dirk Moses (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 3-54; A. Dirk Moses, “Raphaël Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide,” in *The Oxford Handbook on Genocide Studies*, eds. Donald Bloxham and A. Dirk Moses (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19-41; A. Dirk Moses, “The Holocaust and World History: Raphaël Lemkin and Comparative Methodology,” in *The Holocaust and Historical Methodology*, ed. Dan Stone (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 272-290.

and linkages between Nazi and colonial violence.¹³ And in this respect, Lemkin's historical oeuvre, which places the Holocaust in a comparative and global framework, serves as a particularly fruitful point of examination.

Nevertheless, if scholars have recently acknowledged the significance of Lemkin's historical writings for their early comparative impulses, they have yet to detail what type of history Lemkin actually practiced. An under-theorization of Lemkin's position and craft as a historian characterizes recent investigations. For example, in introducing their volume on Lemkin as a "historian of mass violence," Schaller and Zimmerer stress how important Lemkin's historical writings are for our understandings of his work in international law. They do not, however, define Lemkin's historical approach.¹⁴ Contributors to the volume, Tanya Elder, Moses, and Michael A. McDonnell, move one step past their editors' introductory remarks. Moses and McDonnell describe Lemkin's position as a researcher for his writings on colonial atrocities in the Americas, while Elder details the sources that Lemkin drew upon for many portions of his writings.¹⁵ Each article develops certain characteristics of Lemkin's historical oeuvre. However, neither one investigates what type of historian Lemkin wished to be. Nor does either one interrogate what methodology Lemkin hoped to implement across his historical writings.

This under-theorization of Lemkin's status and craft as a historian has been consequential for our understandings of Lemkin's writings on the non-West. More specifically, it has led some readers to explain his one-dimensional portrayal of the victims of colonial violence to be, in part, a result of Lemkin's methodological amateurism. For example, McDonnell and Moses, in their reading of Lemkin's writings on Spanish atrocities in the Americas, take issue with his "uncritical use of sources."¹⁶ They suggest that his use of pro-colonialist sources such as the testimony of sixteenth century Dominican friar Bartholomé Las Casas (1448-1566) was one of the reasons Lemkin came to deny a sense of agency and interiority to the Mayans, Incas, and Aztecs.¹⁷ A similar line of critique is present in Schaller's essay on Lemkin's writings on colonial violence in Africa, portions of which Lemkin relied upon many British sources.¹⁸ An assumption of Lemkin's methodological crudeness,

¹³ For a discussion of how Holocaust historians have recently stressed the connections between Nazi and colonial violence, see Dan Stone, *Histories of the Holocaust* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 203-244. The recent publication of parallel portraits of Lemkin and Arendt – who also, albeit in a different manner, drew connections between Nazi and colonial violence – is further evidence of how Lemkin's oeuvre has served fruitful for this broader effort to place Nazi and colonial violence in parallel view. See Dan Stone, "Defending the Plural: Hannah Arendt and Genocide Studies," *New Formations* 71, (2011), 46-57; Seyla Benhabib, "International Law and Human Plurality in the Shadow of Totalitarianism: Hannah Arendt and Raphaël Lemkin," *Constellations* 16, no. 2 (2009), 331-350. For a work that provides an even broader examination of how various postwar thinkers came to perceive Nazi and colonial violence as interconnected, see Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Schaller and Zimmerer, "Introduction," in *The Origins of Genocide – Raphaël Lemkin as a Historian of Mass Violence*, eds. Dominick Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (London: Routledge, 2009), 1-8.

¹⁵ Michael A. McDonnell and A. Dirk Moses, "Raphaël Lemkin as Historian of Genocide in the Americas," and Tanya Elder, "What You See Before Your Eyes," in *The Origins of Genocide*, eds. Dominick Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (London: Routledge, 2009), 59-62 and 44-46, respectively.

¹⁶ McDonnell and Moses, *Lemkin as Historian*, 71-73. To be clear, Las Casas was an early critic of colonial atrocities. His 1542 work, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, stands as one of the earliest eyewitness accounts of the atrocities committed under the Spanish conquest of the Americas. However, for Las Casas to critique the violence of colonialism was not to critique its logic overall. Nor was it to attribute an equal degree of humanity to the indigenous populations. I should point out, as Moses and McDonnell rightly do, that Lemkin's main source was not Las Casas' writings, but rather subsequent English publications that drew heavily from Las Casas' work, such as Marcel Brion, *Bartholomé de las Casas: 'Father of the Indians'* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1929).

¹⁷ Moses and McDonnell, *Lemkin as Historian*, 75.

¹⁸ Schaller has been the most vocal critic of Lemkin's writings on colonial violence in Africa. He concludes his essay noting, "The way Lemkin has perceived Africans can only be described as racist." Schaller addresses Lemkin's use of British sources in relation to his problematic depictions of African subjecthood. He does not detail which sources Lemkin relied upon as extensively as McDonnell and Moses do. See Dominick Schaller, "Raphaël Lemkin's View of European Colonial Rule in Africa: Between Condemnation and Admiration," in *The Origins of Genocide*, eds. Dominick Schaller and Jürgen Zimmerer (London: Routledge, 2009), 95-102. Also, see Dominick Schaller, "Colonialism and genocide – Raphaël Lemkin's concept of genocide and its application to European rule in Africa," *Development Dialogue* 50 (2008), 75-94.

as a historian, joins these two articles together. Lemkin emerges as a methodologically unreflective and positivistic historian of mass violence, who was “blind” to the biases of his sources.¹⁹ And the reader is to assume that the most problematic portions of *History of Genocide* stem, in part, from Lemkin’s methodological amateurism.

Lemkin’s Historical Methodology: a Psycho-Cultural Approach

The archive of Lemkin’s global history project reveals the shortcomings of this characterization – a characterization that both posits Lemkin’s simplistic positivism and suggests that this positivism defined his writings on the non-West. With respect to the first of these assumptions, in returning to Lemkin’s unpublished writings, we find that Lemkin was highly attentive to the “Historian’s Craft.” His attention to the dynamics of historical thinking and writing is visible in his citation of Ernst Cassirer’s “On the Philosophy of History.”²⁰ It is also visible in his comments on the superior writing style of some historians over others.²¹ Moreover, in returning to Lemkin’s drafts and correspondence, we find that Lemkin, in addition to being methodologically aware, was interested in, and in the process of developing, a very particular methodology to recount the *History of Genocide*. Namely, he was invested in employing a mode of historical inquiry that took psychology, as a force and consequence of history, seriously.²²

Evidence of Lemkin’s interest in psychology is visible throughout the archive. In his unpublished notes, we find an outline entitled, “Greater than Marx,” in which Lemkin listed out the names of sixteen writers and scholars, all of whom had offered an alternative reading of history to the historical materialism of Karl Marx (1818-1883).²³ And his correspondence with psychologists further reflects this interest. In 1952, Irving Sarnoff (1912-2013), then a PhD candidate in the Psychology Department at University of Michigan, wrote to Lemkin. He remarked that he had met Lemkin in Chicago at the American Psychological Association conference one year earlier. Recalling how Lemkin then wished to “enlist the aid of social scientists in dealing with the problem of demonstrating the mental effects of genocide,” Sarnoff followed up with a research program on the topic.²⁴

¹⁹ This assumption of Lemkin’s crudeness is particularly visible in Moses and McDonnell repeated use of the term “blind” to describe Lemkin’s reliance upon certain sources. See Moses and McDonnell, *Lemkin as Historian*, 59, 61, 73, 77.

²⁰ The citation is from Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944). On a page entitled “Cassirer” in his notebooks, Lemkin appears to have cited numerous essays from Raymond Klibansky and H.J. Paton’s edited volume, *Philosophy and History: Essays presented to Ernst Cassirer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936). Lemkin’s partial citation suggests that he read at least José Ortega’s Y Gasset’s essay on Cassirer, “History as a System,” which is included in the volume, if not Cassirer’s original work. For the original note, see Raphaël Lemkin, “Notebooks,” n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 5, Box 4, Folder 1.

²¹ See, for example, Lemkin’s comments on other historians’ “narrative style” in his chapter on the Huns. Raphaël Lemkin, “Huns,” n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 2, Folder 7, 16.

²² Scholars have well documented how important culture was in Lemkin’s conception of genocide. It is visible in his thinking on “cultural genocide,” in his readings of Enlightenment thinker Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), and his engagement with the work of anthropologist and fellow Pole, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942). Scholars have paid less attention to the import that psychology had in Lemkin’s historical studies. One exception is Irvin-Erickson, *Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide*, 215-218. For works focusing on Lemkin’s views on cultural destruction or cultural diffusion, see Balakin, *Lemkin, Cultural Destruction, and the Armenian Genocide*, 62-72; Moses, *Lemkin, Culture, and the Concept of Genocide*, 25-30. I should note that scholars have cast Lemkin’s readings of Herder in different lights. Moses and Irvin-Erickson suggest that while Lemkin admired Herder for the attention he devoted to cultural diversity, he remained wary of political dangers implicit in “groupism,” which we should read as a reaction against Herder’s subsequent uses in ethno-nationalist thought. Thomas Butcher presents an alternative view. See Moses, *Raphaël Lemkin, Culture and the Concept of Genocide*, 23-24; Irvin-Erickson, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide*, 67-68; Thomas M. Butcher, “A ‘Synchronized Attack’: On Raphaël Lemkin’s Holistic Conception of Genocide,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 3 (2013), 253-271.

²³ The listed figures included: Henry Thoreau, Prince Kropotkin, George Bernard Shaw, Henry Adams, Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Alexander James Carlyle, Pope Pius XI, R.H Tawney, Thorstein Veblen, Jacques Loeb, Ivan Pavlov, Alfred Korzybski, Bertrand Russell, and Albert Einstein. Raphaël Lemkin, “Notes (unsorted),” n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 4, Folder 2. See the article entitled “Greater than Marx.”

In the letter, Sarnoff commented that Lemkin's "immediate practical goal" was "the accumulation of data which might convince the Senate Foreign Relations Committee of the worthiness of the anti-genocide treaty." This is not surprising. The early 1950s was a time of intensive political lobbying for Lemkin.²⁵ However, Lemkin's more immediate political concerns should not suggest that his interest in psychology was limited to its instrumental value.²⁶ As the chapter outlines of *History of Genocide* make clear, while he was meeting Sarnoff, he was also researching the "mental effects of genocide" over the course of human history. Thus, in the majority of chapters in *History of Genocide*, he included specific sections discussing the psychological responses of the victims and "genocidists."²⁷ In his manuscript for *Introduction to the Study of Genocide*, he featured a sub-section on "The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology."²⁸ Finally, in his various notes, we find that Lemkin was well acquainted with the scholarship of psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Karen Horney (1885-1952), and Erich Fromm (1900-1980).²⁹

Lemkin's interest in psychology defined the content and scope of *History of Genocide*. However, it was particularly consequential in defining his use of sources and, more specifically, his use of testimonies or other documents penned by the victims and perpetrators of mass murder. In short, for Lemkin, testimony was the key to investigating perpetrators' and victims' psychological responses to mass murder. Without it, he could examine neither the psychological reactions of the victimized group, nor those of their perpetrators.³⁰

Lemkin's comments on the "personal documents," penned by the victims and survivors of the Nazi mass murder of European Jewry, capture the critical role he attributed to testimony in this regard. In a subsection on "The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology"

²⁴ "Irving Sarnoff to Raphaël Lemkin," January 31, 1952, Raphaël Lemkin Papers, MS-60, AJA, Box 2, Folder 13. Sarnoff in 1952 was at the beginning of his career. He would continue to publish on the psychoanalytical causes of social antagonism and cohesion for many decades. For a reprint of his dissertation and later publications, see Irving Sarnoff, "Identification with the Aggressor: Some Personality Correlates of Anti-Semitism among Jews," *Journal of Personality* 20, no. 2 (1951), 199-218; Irving Sarnoff, "Psychoanalytic Theory and Social Attitudes," *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1960), 251-279; Irving Sarnoff and Philip G. Zimbardo, "Anxiety, Fear, and Social Isolation," *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 62, no. 2 (1961), 356-363.

²⁵ For Lemkin's work on behalf of the Genocide Convention, see Cooper, *Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention*, 198-206.

²⁶ Sarnoff was not the only psychoanalyst with whom Lemkin was in contact. In 1956 another scholar, trained in psychoanalysis, wrote to Lemkin. This time it was the more senior, New York-based, psychologist Augusta Alperta (1898-?). In the note, Alperta lamented the fact that during their last meeting they "didn't have more time to talk about the parallels in individual psychology and social psychology." Nonetheless, Alperta assured him that the included references – among them Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Bruno Bettelheim (1903-1990), and Fritz Redl (1902-1988) – could prove helpful to Lemkin in his investigation. Augusta Alperta to Raphaël Lemkin, "General Correspondence, 1954-1959," July 12, 1956, Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 1, Box 1, Folder 2.

²⁷ Sections which include a commentary on the victims' "psychological responses" are: "Albigensians," "Alva (The Netherlands)" "Chios (Turkish Persecution)," "The Germans in Africa," "Greek (Ottoman Empire)," "Incas," "Iraq under Hulagu (13th century)," "Mongols," "Moravia under the Mongols," "Moors and Moriscos," "Jews in Poland," "Parsis," "Serbs," "South Africa," "Stedinger," "Bohemia," "Charlemagne," "Spanish Treatment of South American Indians," "Teutonic Knights."

²⁸ Raphaël Lemkin, "The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology," n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 2, Folder 2.

²⁹ In addition to citing the "death drive" multiple times in his writings, Lemkin – in his notes on "The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology" – references both Freud's "The Ego and the Id" (1923), as well as his *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930). Within his discussion of the "emotional basis for genocide," he draws upon Karen Horney's *Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Selfrealization* (New York: Norton, 1950), as well as Erich Fromm's concept of the "authoritarian personality," as articulated in Fromm's *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1941). Lemkin, *The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology*. See especially Lemkin's included bibliography.

³⁰ Lemkin's remarks regarding the "narrative way" in which "contemporary authors" had described the violence of the Huns encapsulates how Lemkin's psychological analysis hinged on access to testimony. In his chapter on the Huns, he writes, "The contemporary authors who have described the expeditions of the Huns, have mostly written in a narrative way, excluding the psychological reactions of the victim in the conquered areas." Later on, Lemkin returned to the topic. "The psychological reactions of the perpetrators and of the outside world are difficult to decide, depending on the narrative descriptions, which show the usual way of writing for the contemporary authors and chroniclers as mentioned above." Lemkin, *Huns*.

for *Introduction to the Study of Genocide*, Lemkin expanded upon the analytical import of these “personal documents.” “There is abundant literature on responses of ethnic minorities to their social environment,” he wrote. “However, such analyses have stopped short of genocide, although the *personal documents* of recent genocide cases should encourage such investigation.”³¹ A few pages later Lemkin once again returned to the insights yielded by these documents: they would be key for studying the psychological effects of the concentration camp and, more specifically, its effects on “heroism, fear, psychosis and asocial behavior...”³² In Lemkin’s view, studying the psychological effects of the Nazi concentration camp was determined by our access to the letters, diaries, and memoirs, which had been written by those who had survived or had perished in them.

Lemkin’s research assistant Biffy held similar views concerning the interdependence of testimony and studying the psychology of genocide.³³ In 1949 while gathering evidence for Lemkin at *Centre de documentation Juive Contemporaine* in Paris, Biffy wrote to Lemkin. In the letter, she remarked upon their joint investment in detailing the “psychology of the genocidists.”³⁴ Yet, after emphasizing this common interest, Biffy noted the shortcomings of the transcript of the Nuremberg Doctors Trial in this respect.³⁵ As the trial’s examinations and cross-examinations were largely concerned with “technical matters,” she concluded that “many of the pages of the trial were useless from our point of view.”³⁶

Neither Lemkin’s nor Biffy’s privileging of testimony was unique to them. In fact, it reflected the assumptions of other postwar scholars. In the decade following the Second World War, a larger body of literature investigating the psychological constitution of the “Nazi mind” was developing.³⁷ Psychoanalytical theories regarding displacement, a father-fixation, or neurosis were common features of this canon. And some contributing authors, like Lemkin and Biffy, paid particular attention to how one could read the “personal documents” of Nazi officials to uncover their authors’ psychological motivations.

³¹ Lemkin, *The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology*. Emphasis mine.

³² *Ibid.* Lemkin’s focus on the concentration camp suggests that he might have been acquainted with the broader canon of postwar scholarship that focused on the psychological effects of the concentration camp. A few examples of this canon include: Bruno Bettelheim, “Individual and Mass Behavior in Extreme Situations,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 38 (1943), 417-452; Victor Frankl, *A Man’s Search for Meaning: an Introduction to Logotherapy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962 [1946]); Paul Friedman, “Some Aspects of Concentration Camp Psychology,” *American Journal of Psychiatry* 105, no. 8 (1949), 601-605.

³³ I have yet to find Biffy’s full legal name. She signs all her correspondence to Lemkin with “Biffy.” The continued erasure of her full identity points to the degree to which we continue to know very little about the earliest female scholars of genocide. Lemkin employed many female researchers and scholars to write the first history of genocide. Their contribution to early studies on the Holocaust, in particular, and genocide, in general, has yet to be recognized. For two other letters from women detailing their work and research for Lemkin’s project, see “Anna May Barbour to Raphaël Lemkin,” August 29, 1949, Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS, Box 1, Folder 6; “Trudy Sladek to Raphaël Lemkin,” September 18, 1947, Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS, Box 1, Folder 18.

³⁴ Biffy was not the only one who had contact with the founders and researchers of the *Centre de documentation Juive Contemporaine* (CDJC). From Lemkin’s correspondence, it seems that Lemkin had also visited the Center – or at least met with its members – when he was in Paris in 1948. For his correspondence with leading members of the CDJC, see “Isaac Schneersohn to Lemkin,” May 13, 1949, Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS, Box 1, Folder 7; “Léon Czertok to Raphaël Lemkin,” December 24, 1948, Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS, Box 1, Folder 6. For more on the CDJC’s establishment and its significance vis-à-vis early postwar documentary efforts, see Laura Jockusch, *Collect and Record!: Jewish Holocaust Documentation in Postwar Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46-83, 160-185.

³⁵ For more on the Medical Trial at Nuremberg, see Paul Weindling, “From International to Zonal Trials: The Origins of the Nuremberg Medical Trial,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14, no. 3 (2000), 367-389.

³⁶ The complete quote is: “These following are on other techniques, that is, other experiments, and particularly on Euthanasia and Sterilization, and also psychology of genocidist. Many of the pages of the trial were useless from our point of view, as they were detailed examinations and cross-examinations dealing with technical matters, but I have tried to sum up the main points of the pages that I skimmed through, with comments of my own.” “Biffy to Raphaël Lemkin,” February 5, 1949, Raphaël Lemkin Papers, MS-60, AJA, Box 1, Folder 8. Underlining in the original.

³⁷ For a handful of articles that consider how early studies of totalitarianism took a psychoanalytic form, see Matt Ffytche and Daniel Pick, eds., *Psychoanalysis in the Age of Totalitarianism* (New York: Routledge, 2016). On how histories of National Socialism and the Holocaust provoked new interest in psycho-analytically inflected modes of historical analysis, see Judith M. Hughes, *The Holocaust and the Revival of Psychological History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

We find one example of this literature in the American Jewish Archives' Lemkin collection in Cincinnati. There, included among Lemkin's research materials is a copy of Joseph Tenenbaum's 1953 *Auschwitz in Retrospect: the Self-Portrait of Rudolf Hoess, Commander of Auschwitz*.³⁸ In it, Tenenbaum (1887-1961) contended that through mining the memoir of Auschwitz commander, Rudolf Höss (1900-1947), one could "penetrate into the psychological web of the executioners, the SS guards."³⁹ Like Biffy and Lemkin, Tenenbaum viewed access to testimony to be critical to studying the psychological causes and consequences of genocide.

In *Auschwitz in Retrospect*, Tenenbaum focused exclusively on the psychology of "genocidists" who had perpetuated their crimes within Nazi-occupied Europe. In this respect, his project differed from Lemkin's. As a historian whose frame was first and foremost global, Lemkin had to concern himself with the psychology of the victims and perpetrators, irrespective of their country of origin. However, as the chapters of *History of Genocide* attest, Lemkin perceived Tenenbaum's insights vis-à-vis testimony to be applicable to a wide range of case studies. Lemkin's reading of the poem of "Mohammad ben Mohammad aben Daud, the chief agitator of the Rebellion of Granada," illustrates this point. In his discussion of the victims' "psychological responses" in his chapter on the "Moors and Moriscos," Lemkin cited the poem in full. Before he did so, Lemkin directed the reader to what she could glean from the document.

This is a highly interesting document not so much for its artistic value (which is probably largely lost in the translation anyway) but for the insight it gives the modern onlooker of this genocide spectacle into the human situation of the Morisco genocide. It portrays the methods of genocide and the types of responses of victims; it also conveys something of the physical and mental anguish of these Moslems, or their perhaps typical Moslem response to religious persecution – a strong contempt for the 'infidel' who is doing this to them and their sacred beliefs, and an enduring faith in these beliefs, despite their sufferings.⁴⁰

Lemkin's commentary is illuminating on two fronts. First, it reaffirms the central function attributed to testimony in Lemkin's psycho-cultural approach. And second, it points to his surprisingly capacious definition of what forms of testimony could fulfill such function. Both written and oral forms of testimony, published in an expository or literary capacity, could provide insight into victims' and perpetrators' psychological responses to mass murder; they could shed light on the victims' "physical and mental anguish." Irvin-Erickson has argued that Lemkin was in the process of developing a "victim centered" *History of Genocide*; his readings of testimony were key to its implementation.⁴¹

The Limits of Lemkin's Psycho-Cultural Approach: a Call for "Psychological Relativism"

At first glance, Lemkin's use of testimony and embrace of a psycho-cultural approach bear no evidence of what some scholars have called his "persisting Eurocentricism." As the above quote demonstrates, Lemkin read the testimonial recollections of Mohammad ben Mohammad aben Daud, a Muslim, as he would those of a Jew – that is, with their psychological dimensions in

³⁸ Joseph Tenenbaum, *Auschwitz in Retrospect: the Self-Portrait of Rudolf Hoess, Commander of Auschwitz* (New York: Conference on Jewish Relations, 1953). Tenenbaum's work was originally published as an article in *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 3-4 (1953), 203-236. From the inscription in the book, it seems that Tenenbaum had gifted Lemkin this reprint. Lemkin's copy includes copious notes. For the original copy among Lemkin's archival collections, see: "Miscellaneous Publications," n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, MS-60, AJA, Box 6, Folder 2.

³⁹ Tenenbaum, *Auschwitz in Retrospect*, 203.

⁴⁰ Raphaël Lemkin, "Moors and Moriscos," n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, MS-60, AJA, Box 7, Folder 9. See subsection entitled "Moriscos-responses." Lemkin probably drew the citation from Henry Charles Lea's *The Moriscos of Spain: their Conversion and Expulsion*. That volume includes a copy of the poem in its appendices. Lea introduces the author to be "Mohammad ben Mohammad aben Daud" and the title of accompanying poem as "Moorish Ballad of 1568, prior to the Rebellion of Granada." See Henry Charles Lea, *The Moriscos of Spain: Their Conversion and Expulsion* (Philadelphia: Lea Brothers & Company, 1901), 434.

⁴¹ Douglas Irvin-Erickson, "Genocide, the 'Family of Mind' and the Romantic Signature of Raphaël Lemkin," *Journal of Genocide Research* 15, no. 3 (2013), 287.

mind. Moreover, throughout *History of Genocide*, we find that when possible Lemkin incorporated examples of testimonies regardless of their authors' national, racial, ethnic, or religious identities. Frequently he accorded to testimonies the two functions described above; they could describe the physical implementation of the genocide, as well as the victims' and perpetrators' psychological responses to it. A relative absence, or presence, of testimonies therefore does not separate his writings on mass violence occurring in Western and non-Western societies.

Nevertheless, while the incorporation of testimony stands as a repeated feature of Lemkin's historical oeuvre, he did not treat all bodies of testimonies equally. Rather, Lemkin drew certain analytical distinctions in what value he and his readers should accord to some testimonies over others – with the largest distinctions developing along the fault lines of the “West and the Rest.”⁴² To fully understand how and why he did so, we first need to turn to Lemkin's calls for “psychological relativism,” which he included in his discussion on the “Emotional Basis of Genocide” in *Introduction to the Study of Genocide*. In this section, Lemkin took up the indelible question: “why does a particular individual commit genocide?” In his response, Lemkin first argued that the “emotional basis of genocide” was universal; it was found both in the American South and in Nazi-Occupied Europe. Nevertheless while Lemkin stressed the universality of the “emotional basis of genocide,” he also emphasized the degree to which one's psychology was culturally determined. In a section entitled “Psychological Relativism,” Lemkin stressed the import of this insight.

At this point it is of utmost importance to call attention again to the fact that genocide behavior must be analyzed in terms of the culture in which it occurs. In Western culture the genocidist may be considered as deviating from the social norm to a greater or lesser degree. Therefore certain psychological mechanisms which lead to anti-social behavior must be studied here. However, genocide may more nearly approach socially accepted behavior in certain other cultures where the individual has not been endowed with the high value that Western culture attributes to him and where a particularly intense ethnocentrism exists...⁴³

Besides his assumption that genocide might “approach socially accepted behavior” in non-Western societies, Lemkin's recognition that culture defined one's individual psychology is no great surprise. It reflects his belief that cultural differences – not biological ones – separated societies. And it also highlights the degree to which Lemkin frequently accorded a “high[er] value” to Western culture.⁴⁴ Later on, Lemkin expanded upon what insights led him to such conclusions. “Contemporary psychiatrists and psychologists,” he noted, have increasingly “taken their cue from anthropology and sociology” and thus have challenged the perceived universality of psychology, as proposed by Sigmund Freud.

Notably, a wholly universal vision of human psychology, as defined by Freud, would have enabled Lemkin to study the psychological causes and consequences of genocide, irrespective of the genocidists' backgrounds. However, as I have suggested, he was hesitant to do so. Thus, in face of this analytical impasse, Lemkin chose an option that we can characterize as a form of analytical conservatism. He concluded his note on “Psychological Relativism” with a disclaimer:

The following discussion will be limited to those mechanisms which are known to operate in Western society and which have been intensively studied by social scientists and psychiatrists. These mechanisms may serve to explain the psychology of genocide in contemporary Europe and America but their application to genocide in other areas of the world is at best limited.”⁴⁵

Lemkin viewed this insight, this form of analytical conservatism, to reflect the more culturally sensitive work of anthropologists and sociologists. He saw it as an improvement to psychological

⁴² Scholars use this phrase of “West and the Rest” earnestly and pejoratively. For one example, see Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

⁴³ Lemkin, *The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology*.

⁴⁴ Moses notes that Lemkin “seems to have equated national culture with high culture” and that he privileged elite culture. Moses, *Raphaël Lemkin, Culture and the Concept of Genocide*, 29.

⁴⁵ Lemkin, *The Concept of Genocide in Social and Individual Psychology*.

studies, which disregarded the importance of culture altogether. Nevertheless, despite the value that Lemkin attributed to this insight, its effect was the imposition of certain geographic restrictions on his studies of genocide. The world, in Lemkin's eyes, was divided by relative degrees of psychological legibility. In investigating the psychology of genocide in "contemporary Europe and America," the Western scholar could heed the insights of social scientific research. In studying instances of mass violence beyond these areas, he was limited in his capacity to do so.

The Status of Victim Testimony in a Global History of Genocide

How did this call for "psychological relativism" impact Lemkin's efforts to write the history of genocide on a global scale? And how can we perceive its effects in his use and reading of victim testimony in *History of Genocide*? As his bibliographies for the chapters on the persecution of the Jews in Poland and Russia in "Modern Times" reveal, for his research on this topic, Lemkin had access to various sources, penned by members of the victimized group. These included Mendel Beilis' 1926 memoir, *The Story of My Suffering*, in which Beilis recounted the false accusation against him and his subsequent prosecution for blood libel in 1911, as well as more synthetic histories written by notable Jewish historians, such as Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891) or Simon Dubnow (1860-1941).⁴⁶ Both types of sources, albeit in different manners, offered insight into how members of the victimized group, which in this case was European Jewry, understood and responded to their victimization.⁴⁷

In his narration, Lemkin mined these sources for extracts of testimonies, which detailed Jews' varied psychological and political responses. Thus, in citing the declaration of Rabbi Aaron, the Rosh Yeshivah of the town of Tulchyn, Lemkin demonstrated how a strong sense of religiosity and collective identity had defined the community's response to its betrayal by its Polish neighbors.⁴⁸ Or, by citing the memorandum that five representatives of the "Mosaic persuasion" submitted to the Sejm of the Duchy of Warsaw in March 1809, he emphasized how Polish Jews had advocated for their own political emancipation.⁴⁹

The result of these varied uses of testimonies and documents, penned by members of the victimized group, was the attribution of psychological complexity and agency to Polish Jewry. In his readings of these testimonies, Lemkin emphasized the degree to which Polish Jews – in

⁴⁶ Lemkin's chapter on "Jews in Russia" is not found in any archival collection. We only have his bibliography for the topic. We have both his bibliography and chapter manuscript for "Jews in Poland." A few representative sources included in this bibliography are: Mendel Beilis, *The Story of my Sufferings* (New York: Mendel Beilis Publishing Company, 1926); Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, vols. 11 (Leipzig: Leiner, [1853-1897]); Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jewish in Russia and Poland: from Earliest Times until the Present Day* (1915), vols. 3, trans. Israel Friedlander (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1916-1920); Josef Meis, *Geschichte der Juden in Polen und Russland*, vols. 3 (Berlin: C.A. Schwetschke & Sohn, 1921-1925); Joseph Tenenbaum, *In Search of a Lost People: the New and Old Poland* (New York: Beechhurst Press, 1948). For his accompanying bibliographies, see Raphaël Lemkin, "Jews in Poland" and "Jews in Russia," n.d., Lemkin papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 2, Folder 8.

⁴⁷ Beilis was a Russian Jew and the protagonist of a well known blood libel case, the Beilis Affair. Beilis was tried in Kiev for murdering a Russian boy in 1911. He was acquitted in 1913. After that he immigrated to the United States, where he published his memoir. Cooper and Irvin-Erickson both note the import that the Beilis Affair had on Lemkin's early thinking on prejudice and anti-Semitism. Cooper, *Raphaël Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention*, 10-12; Irvin-Erickson, *Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide*, 23. For more on the Beilis Affair, see Robert Weinberg, *Blood libel in Late Imperial Russia: The Ritual Murder Trial of Mendel Beilis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2014). In regards to the relationship between Beilis' memoir and Graetz's and Dubnow's historical accounts, I am not suggesting that they provided the same type of insight into the history of Jewish persecution. Rather, I am noting that all three authors had experienced anti-Jewish persecution first hand. Both Graetz and Dubnow were born into Jewish families in a century marked by rising anti-Semitism. Graetz was born in Xionz, Prussia, while Dubnow was born in 1860 in the Belorussian sector of the Russian Pale of Settlement.

⁴⁸ Lemkin, *Jews in Poland*, 14.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, page 21-21; conflicts between local Polish and imperial French politics made the process of emancipation for Polish Jewry under the Napoleon-created Duchy of Warsaw even more vexed. The 1807 Napoleonic Constitution of Duchy of Warsaw granted freedom and equality to all residents, irrespective of their religious faith or ethnic identity. Local legislation, however, soon undercut many of these promises. In the subsequent years, Jewish merchants and leaders petitioned the Duchy for their political and civil rights. For more on process, see John Stanley, "The Politics of the Jewish Question in the Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1813," *Jewish Social Studies* 44, no. 1 (1982), 47-62.

face of their persecution – had psychologically and politically responded on their own terms; they made political appeals, penned rabbinical liturgies, and wrote historical accounts. Moreover, these documents not only provided the future historian a means to document the victims' "physical and mental anguish," but also stood as evidence of the victims' positions as thinking, feeling, and acting individuals.

We can detect a similar reading and use of testimony at play in Lemkin's writings on the Armenian genocide, as well as in his chapter on the persecution of the Serbs by the Ottomans.⁵⁰ In both portions of writing, Lemkin had access to source material written by members of the victimized group.⁵¹ Additionally, in both portions he used examples of relevant testimonies or literary productions as proof of the Armenians' or Serbians' cultural, psychological, and political agency. For example, while describing "psychological reactions of the victimized group" in his short manuscript on Armenia, Lemkin presented the Armenians as a psychologically defiant and culturally resolute people. Despite their centuries long suffering, the Armenians, in Lemkin's eyes, had maintained a strong sense of faith and history. Moreover, in Lemkin's view, it was precisely their strong sense of identity that had served as a psychological resource and that had allowed them to survive. To make this final point, Lemkin employed the testimonies of survivors. Thus, he concluded his short manuscript on Armenia with the account of "Dr. Artine, the Armenian surgeon of the American hospital at Marash" and that of a young Armenian girl. Lemkin introduced both testimonies as exemplifying the Armenian response to mass murder.⁵² Moreover, both served as evidence of how the Armenians had faced their own "meaning-making struggles" and developed their own meaning-making strategies during and after their victimization.⁵³

In his chapter on Serbia, Lemkin also presented the Serbs as a culturally and psychologically resolute people. However, here instead of turning to examples of survivor testimonies, he looked to various cultural and literary productions. These documents were the means through which he detailed the complexity of Serbians' psychological and cultural responses. Serbian songs, poems, and sayings provided insight into how the Serbs had collectively come to understand their victimization. "Mournful songs" became evidence of how the Serbs had come to commemorate the battle of Kosovo.⁵⁴ Darkly humorous sayings such as – "For long time God did not make Paradise, but after he saw the sufferings of the Serbs he made it" – illustrated how they had learned to laugh in the face of death.⁵⁵ And finally, the famous Serbian song cycle, "the Lazaritza," documented how

⁵⁰ Lemkin's writings on Armenia stood as a separate manuscript from his *History of Genocide*. For Lemkin's writings on Armenia, see Raphaël Lemkin, "Turkish Massacre of Armenians - Book-Length Manuscript" and "Turkish Massacre of Armenians - Short Manuscript," n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS, Box 8, Folders 14 and 15, respectively. For his writings on mass violence against the Serbs, see Raphaël Lemkin, "Serbs/Slavs," n.d., Raphaël Lemkin papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 2, Folder 10.

⁵¹ In his bibliography on Serbia, we find sources penned by members of the victimized group, which in this case was the Serbs. These include: Nicholas Velimirovic, *The Soul of Serbia* (London: Faith Press, 1916); Prince Lazarovic-Hrebeltanovic, *The Serbian People; its Past Glory and Destiny* (New York: Creative Media Partners, 1910); Dušan Lončarević, *Jugoslawiens Entstehung* (Vienna: Amalthea Verlag, 1929). All works placed the persecution of the Serbs in a broader nationalistic reading of their history. In his bibliography for his manuscript on Armenia, Lemkin seems to have had only one source penned by a member of the victimized group. This is Mugurdich Chojhauji Gabrielian, *Armenia: a Martyr Nation: a Historical Sketch of the Armenian People from Traditional Times to the Present Tragic Days* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1918). We do, however, find one example of a memoir, written by an Armenian, in his research materials. This source is Madame P. Captanian, *Mémoires d'une Déportée arménienne* (Paris: M. Flinikowski, 1919). His two main sources for his writings on Armenia are Henry Morgenthau, *The Tragedy of Armenia* (London: Spottiswoode and Co., 1918) and Viscount James Bryce and Arnold Toynbee, *The Treatment of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916. Documents Presented to Viscount Grey of Fallodon, Secretary for Foreign Affairs, with a preface by Viscount Bryce* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1916). For Lemkin's copy of Captanian's memoir, see "Turkey-Armenia Publications, 1915-1919, 1946-1948." Raphaël Lemkin Collection, P-154, AJHS, Box 12, Folder 3.

⁵² Lemkin, *Turkish Massacre of Armenians - Short Manuscript*. In his testimony, Dr. Artine encourages the listener to remember the import of Armenian history, while the young girl describes how the memory of her dead mother provided her with the emotional support to resist conversion.

⁵³ I draw this term of "meaning-making struggles" from Alexandra Garbarini's work on Holocaust diaries, see Alexandra Garbarini, *Numbered Days: Diaries and the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 3.

⁵⁴ Lemkin, *Serbs/Slavs*, 24.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.

a “painful feeling” had come to inform the Serbian outlook of life.⁵⁶ The cumulative effect of these examples is clear: they documented the manifold ways in which the Serbs had developed their own practices to respond to and make sense of their persecution – culturally, psychologically, and emotionally.

Of course, survivor testimonies or songs do not – on their own – yield any larger insights into victims’ psychological responses to mass murder. These insights depend on the historian reading them in such a light. For his writings on Poland, Armenia, and Serbia, Lemkin followed through with such a reading. However, in examining the status and function of victim testimony across Lemkin’s history, we find that this type of psychologically attentive reading of victim testimony is noticeably absent from his writings on colonial violence in Africa, which included his chapters on the “Germans in Africa,” the “Hereros,” and “the Belgian Congo.”⁵⁷ In these chapters, not only did Lemkin have no sources penned by members of the victimized group, but he also failed to attribute a sense of psychological complexity or emotional interiority to the victims.

Lemkin’s section on “Psychological Reactions,” included in “Germans in Africa,” underscores the simplified manner with which Lemkin described the psychological reactions of the “natives.” “The result of the German rule,” he wrote, “left the natives completely cowed and those who did not rebel or escape to British territory become hopeless and apathetic.”⁵⁸ Unlike Polish Jews who, in his narration had displayed a range of emotions – emotions such as courage, fear, and faith – the Herero operated within a much narrower range of emotions.

Many of the distinctions between Lemkin’s alternative portraits of subjecthood and victimhood – as they pertain to his writings on Armenia or the Belgian Congo, for example, – stem from the different ideological arguments he was marshaling in *History of Genocide’s* various sections. To be sure, in his writings on the Jews, Armenians, and Serbs, Lemkin was describing the history of genocide and mass violence against a minority group in Eastern Europe or the Near East. But he was also investigating how the experience of persecution related to the formation of a religious and ethnic minority’s national consciousness. His use of nationalist Armenian and Serbian histories, as well his description of the national question in “Jews in Poland,” support this type of reading.⁵⁹ His ideological investments in his writings on Africa were of a different nature. His main goal was not to expose a budding national consciousness among a persecuted people. Rather, it was to critique the seemingly “less civilized” colonial rule of the Germans and Belgians. Indeed, as Moses has noted, “Lemkin, like Las Casas, did not oppose colonization or empire per se.”⁶⁰ Rather, he was against its violent implementation by Imperial Germany or King Leopold II of Belgium. These were two European powers, which in Lemkin’s mind, had failed in their responsibilities as “civilizing powers.” That is, they had failed to “uplift” their subjects’ moral, cultural, and social standings, and thereby had failed in advancing the larger interests of civilization.⁶¹

To develop his critique of the perverted form of colonial rule, as practiced by the Germans or Belgians, Lemkin’s task was threefold. First, he had to detail the physical brutality of their rule. Second, he had to detail how the “natives,” under the tutelage of the Germans and Belgians, had

⁵⁶ Ibid., 26.

⁵⁷ See Raphaël Lemkin “Belgian Congo,” n.d., Raphaël Lemkin Papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 2, Folder 7; Raphaël Lemkin, n.d., “Germans in Africa” and “Hereros,” Raphaël Lemkin Papers, MS-60, AJA, Box 6, Folders 9 and 12, respectively.

⁵⁸ Lemkin, *Germans in Africa*, 48.

⁵⁹ Scholars remain divided on the degree to which Zionist politics and thought informed Lemkin’s work on genocide.

While Moses and Irvin-Erickson characterizes Lemkin’s political position as being close to a Bundist or a cosmopolitan universalist, James Loeffler has argued otherwise. He has recently emphasized the role that Polish Zionist politics had in Lemkin’s early political and intellectual formation. See James Loeffler, “Becoming Cleopatra: the forgotten Zionism of Raphaël Lemkin.” *Journal of Genocide Research* 19, no. 3, (2017), 340-360.

⁶⁰ Moses, *Empire, Colony, and Genocide*, 11.

⁶¹ For more on the “civilizing mission,” or the French Empire’s *la mission civilisatrice*, see Alice L. Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize: The Republican Idea of Empire in France and West Africa, 1895-1930* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 1-37. To be clear, the British and French held slightly different understandings of what defined the “civilizing mission.” However, two core assumptions of this ideology – one, an assumption of the “backwardness” of indigenous populations, and two an assumption of European power’s responsibilities to “uplift” these populations – were shared by both.

not reached a higher moral or social standing and thereby had not supported "civilization's" advancement."⁶² And third, he had to document how the Herero or the Congolese – under different circumstances – would have in fact willingly welcomed the benefits of being brought into the folds of civilization.

The inclusion of African testimonies played a key role in developing all three components of his argument. Therefore, across Lemkin's writings on colonial violence in Africa, we find numerous examples of testimonies that describe the "physical and mental anguish" of the Herero or Congolese.⁶³ Alongside these accounts, we find ones that emphasize these communities' social and cultural "degradation" following their persecution.⁶⁴ And we also find testimonies, in which their authors recount their sympathy for alternative forms of colonial rule, such as the "indirect rule," as practiced by the British. In his chapter on the Herero, for instance, Lemkin introduced the petition that a number of Herero Chiefs had submitted to the "British Governor at the Cape" in 1876.⁶⁵ Historically, the petition testifies to the presence of early resistance among the Herero against the imposition of German rule. In Lemkin's narration, it certainly served this function. However, it also illuminated how the Chiefs had welcomed the extension of British rule. "We want to see our children grow up more civilized than we have any chance of being, and so, after many meetings among ourselves, we have agreed most humbly to ask Your Excellency to send something to rule us and be the head of our country," Lemkin cited the petitioners writing.⁶⁶

While Lemkin was committed to using the voices of the Congolese or Herero as proof of their physical and psychological persecution and as a testament to the Belgians' and Germans' moral failings, he was uninterested in using them in the same manner as he had the testimonies of the Armenians, Serbs, or Jews. He did not read Congolese or Herero testimonies as evidence of how Congolese or Herero had, like the Armenians and Jews, faced their own "meaning-making struggles." Nor did he develop how these testimonies might reveal a broader set of cultural and social practices by which these groups had come to terms with their persecution. We can best perceive Lemkin's differential approach to victim testimony, in accordance with the author's proximity to the Western world, in his presentation and analysis of "The Complaints of the Akwa

⁶² As Moses notes, Lemkin adhered to a view of History, which was explicitly progressive and implicitly supported the diffusion of Western culture, by way of liberal imperial rule. Moses develops this point by outlining Lemkin's readings of Malinowski and detailing how Lemkin's training and career in international law aligned him with a legal tradition, which viewed the extension of imperial rule as critical to the larger progress of "civilization." See Moses, *Raphaël Lemkin, Culture and the Concept of Genocide*, 19-30. For more examinations that detail how the "civilizing mission" or the "colonial encounter" shaped the discipline, practice, and ideology of international law, see Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea, 1815 to the Present* (New York: the Penguin Press, 2012); Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty, and the Making of International Law* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁶³ For his use of the testimony of the Akwa Chiefs describing their floggings, see Lemkin, *Germans in Africa*, 13. For the citation of a Congolese man comparing his status to a slave, see Lemkin, *The Belgian Congo*, 43. The inclusion of a quote that explicitly compared the worker's position to that of a slave might have been a strategic choice on Lemkin's behalf. As Frederick Cooper notes, in the early twentieth century the specter of the slavery – and concept of free labor – served as a means of distinguishing the civilized world from its uncivilized counterparts. On the ideology of free labor, see Frederick Cooper, "'Conditions Analogous to Slavery' Imperialism and Free Labor Ideology in Africa," in *Beyond Slavery: Explorations of Race, Labor, and Citizenship in Postemancipation Societies*, eds. Frederick Cooper, et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 107-149; Kevin Grant, *A Civilized Savagery: Britain and the New Slavery in Africa, 1884-1926* (New York: Routledge, 2005).

⁶⁴ For example, in his chapter on the Herero, Lemkin includes a section on "Immortality and Degradation," in which he cites a group of "leading and intelligent Herero," describing the various social afflictions that had come to plague their community after their persecution. These afflictions include prostitution and venereal disease, as well as the dismantling of local power structures. Lemkin, *Herero*, 16. See sub-section entitled "Immortality and Degradation."

⁶⁵ In his republication of Lemkin's manuscript, Jacobs cites the author as "Samuel Kamahero (1854-1923)." I assume that Jacobs was referring to Samuel Maharero (1856-1923), who was one of the leaders of the 1904 rebellion against the Germans. However, I believe that Lemkin here was referring to the petition that Chief Maharero, Samuel's father, along with fifty-seven other chiefs, submitted to William Coates Palgrave (1833-1897) in 1876. Palgrave was then a special commissioner of the Cape government and Samuel Maharero did not gain chieftainship until 1890. For a partial republication of the petition, see Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewalds, eds., *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 25. For more on the succession of Herero chiefs, as well as Samuel Maharero's political career, see Jan-Bart Gewalds, *Herero Heroes: A Socio-political History of the Herero of Namibia, 1890-1923* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1999).

⁶⁶ Lemkin, *Hereros*, 2.

Chiefs," which he included in his chapter on the "Germans in Africa."⁶⁷ Lemkin introduced and cited the document in the following manner:

The 'Complaints of the Akwa Chiefs' is too long to quote in full, but it contained statements about innumerable cases of flogging and ill treatment. The imprisonment of sixty chiefs and heads of families, the appropriation of tribal lands, forced labor, disregard of treaties, and the rape of native girls by high officials. The complaint concluded: 'We beg most humbly for immediate help on the part of the illustrious German Reichstag; for such a continuance of abominable treatment of our King is a great and unendurable disgrace us.'⁶⁸

In introducing the poem of Mohammad ben Mohammad aben Daud, Lemkin invited the reader to read the poem in full. Doing so, he argued, enabled the reader to confront the varied nuances that characterized the "typical Moslem response." Here, a rather different set of goals defined Lemkin's presentation style. In paraphrasing the Chiefs' description of the violence, Lemkin further exposed the depravity of the Germans. And in quoting the Chiefs' request he developed his depiction of Africans as being relatively compliant. Both characterizations supported Lemkin's argument about the depravity of German rule and its moral failings as a "civilizing power." However, neither one demonstrated the degree to which the Akwa Chiefs – like their European counterparts – had psychologically responded to their persecution on their own terms.

Scholars remain divided on what we should make of Lemkin's writings on colonial violence in Africa and, more specifically, whether we should attribute them to Lemkin's hand. While Schaller has taken the most overtly racist remarks visible in Lemkin's manuscript – such as his introduction of the Hottentots as "half-breeds" – as evidence of Lemkin's own prejudices, Irvin-Erickson has argued otherwise. Emphasizing the role that Lemkin's research assistants played in the construction of *History of Genocide*, Irvin-Erickson has suggested that a hand – other than Lemkin's – must have written the problematic sections of Lemkin's global history.⁶⁹ A great deal of ambiguity continues to characterize scholars' reception of Lemkin's writings on colonial violence in Africa. And Lemkin's introduction and use of "The Complaints" demonstrates how this ambiguity stems, in part, from Lemkin's own idiosyncrasies as a global historian of genocide. In his manuscript, Lemkin cited only the line – beginning with "We beg most humbly for immediate help..." – as coming from his source material, which in this case was a 1920 publication of the British Foreign Office entitled, *Treatment of Natives in the German Colonies*. However, upon further investigation, we find that his citation poorly reflects how extensive his reliance upon this source really was.⁷⁰ Lemkin in fact

⁶⁷ In his manuscript, Lemkin does not detail the provenance of "The Complaints of the Akwa Chiefs." But I assume he and his sources were referring to a petition, which King Dika Mpondo Akwa and multiple other chieftains, submitted to the Reichstag in 1905. King Dika Mpondo Akwa presided over a territory in current day Cameroon. In the petition, he and his fellow petitioners demanded the dismissal of Governor Jesko von Puttkamer and his government on account of their brutality. For more on this petition, see John S. Lowry, "African Resistance and Center Party Recalcitrance in the Reichstag Colonial Debates of 1905/06," *Central European History* 39, no. 2 (2006), 244-269.

⁶⁸ Lemkin, *The Germans in Africa*, 18-20. See section entitled "Abasement Chiefs."

⁶⁹ Irvin-Erickson, *Lemkin and the Concept of Genocide*, 208, ft 65. In my own research, I have not come across any correspondence that suggests Lemkin's research assistants specifically penned these chapters. All the writings I examine in this article I attribute to Lemkin. However, it is quite possible that his research assistants played a role in their construction. Irvin-Erickson has noted that Donna-Lee Frieze is "leading an effort to authenticate" these research essays on colonial violence in Africa. I reached out to Dr. Frieze with a detailed description of why I attribute all the typed and handwritten notes examined in this article to Lemkin.

⁷⁰ Government of Great Britain, *Treatment of Natives in the German Colonies, handbooks prepared under the Direction of the Historical Section of the Foreign Office*, no. 114 (London: H.M. Stationary Office, 1920). Note: this volume stood as part of the Foreign Office's *Peace Handbooks* collection, which the Foreign Office produced to prepare British delegates for the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. As Susan Pedersen's work on the Mandate System and the League of Nations remind us, there were great political and economic advantages to suggesting in Paris that the answer to German atrocities in Southwest Africa was the extension of British rule. Unsurprisingly the volume of the *Peace Handbooks* that Lemkin consulted reflected these larger ideological commitments. On the Mandate System, see Susan Pedersen, *The Guardians: the League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). For more on the Foreign Office's role in Paris, see: M.L Dockrill and Zara Steiner, "The Foreign Office at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919," *The International History Review* 2, no.1 (1980), 55-86.

lifted the entire passage, including the comment regarding the document being “too long to quote in full,” from the Foreign Office’s publication.

How should we read Lemkin’s citation and use of “The Complaints” in light of the recognition some parts of this passage are not Lemkin’s original prose? And what should we make of its significance alongside Lemkin’s calls for “psychological relativism”? Three possible readings present themselves to the contemporary reader. The first suggests that in his introduction to this document Lemkin blindly followed the practices of his source and thus parroted the presentation style of African testimony as employed by the Foreign Office, as well as other British publications.⁷¹ The second contends that perhaps Lemkin agreed with the Foreign Office’s instrumental, yet dismissive, use of the “The Complaints” and that his calls for “psychological relativism” made him wary of reading any examples of African voices in a psychologically attentive manner. And the third invites us to consider the incompleteness of Lemkin’s manuscript overall. Lemkin’s three chapters on colonial violence in Africa offer us a roadmap of how Lemkin was preliminarily framing his investigations on the topic. They do not, however, represent the final version of what Lemkin wished to publish. In reading his presentation of “The Complaints,” we should consider why Lemkin did not introduce the political appeals of the Akwa Chiefs as he had those of the representatives of the “Mosaic persuasion.” We should also question how his depictions of African subjecthood reflected the ideological investments of his sources. Yet our conclusions regarding how these depictions reflected Lemkin’s final ambitions for *History of Genocide* will have to remain speculative.

Nevertheless, irrespective of which reading stands as the most compelling one, in examining the status and function of the victim’s voice across Lemkin’s *History of Genocide* we find that a certain unevenness characterizes Lemkin’s presentation and use of victim testimony. The voices of the Armenians, Jews, and Serbs often served as evidence of their authors’ psychological agency and emotional interiority. Those of the Congolese and Herero did not. Their voices, unlike those of their European counterparts, did not stand as evidence of a larger set of “meaning-making struggles” and strategies. This uneven attribution of emotional interiority – and thus humanity – stands as the central tension in the first *History of Genocide*.

Testimony and the “Perpetuation of the Psychological Scar”

In his reflections on *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Dominick LaCapra has argued that two processes unite the victim and historian in her efforts to reconcile herself with the trauma of the past: the processes of “working through” and “acting out.” For LaCapra, the fundamental distinction between the two is the degree to which the historian and/or victim is able to “gain a critical distance” on her traumatic past; while the former encourages the development of such a distance, the latter prohibits it.⁷² These registers of “working through” or “acting out” serve as a useful means of evaluating Lemkin’s uneven approach to victim testimony beyond that of “persisting Eurocentricism.” Lemkin lost over forty family members during the Nazi genocide of European Jewry.⁷³ As a refugee from and a historian of this persecution, he occupies both positions of the victim and historian that LaCapra describes. In this capacity, we can certainly see Lemkin’s

⁷¹ Lemkin drew mostly upon British publications for his writings on colonial violence in Africa. A few examples of his sources include: Africanus, *The Prussian Lash in Africa: a Story of German Rule in Africa* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1918); A. Conan Doyle, *The Crime of the Congo* (London: Hutchinson, 1909); E.D. Morel, *The Future of the Congo* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1909). He also consulted Roger Casement’s famed “Congo Report” (1903), which was published in excerpts in the *West African Mail*. For the more on how racialized logics frequently defined British publications’ uses of testimony, see Robert Burroughs, *African Testimony in the Movement for Congo Reform: the Burden of Proof* (New York: Routledge, 2019). On the vexed relationship between British humanitarianism and the liberal imperial project, as it relates to the Congo Reform Association, see Grant, *A Civilized Savagery*, 11-78; Dean Pavlakis, *British Humanitarianism and the Congo Reform Movement, 1896-1913* (London: Routledge, 2017).

⁷² Dominick LaCapra, “Interview for Yad Vashem (June 9, 1998),” in *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 141-180.

⁷³ I draw this number from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum’s profile on Lemkin. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Coining a Word and Championing a Cause: the Story of Raphaël Lemkin,” USHMM, accessed October 8, 2018, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007050>.

repeated – and failed – efforts to write this global history as part of his own efforts to gain a “critical distance” on the phenomenon that caused such a profound personal and collective toll.

Lemkin’s unpublished notes further emphasize the close connection between his global framing, psycho-cultural approach, and personal biography. For example, in one note entitled, “This I Believe,” Lemkin recounts the moment in which he pronounced his life’s commitment to outlawing and studying the crime of genocide.

In the forest, I pronounced to the dead and living that if I will survive, I will devote the rest of my life exclusively to outlawing genocide. I reviewed my history through memories of my eyes. I believe that memory stimulates conscience. Looking at the stars, I asked myself. The same sun burned the bodies of the Moslems, and warms me. Shone over the gallows of the Huguenots at St. Bartholomew’s night, and Catholics in Japan 17th century and shines over Warsaw where neighbors from the frontier came to murder my people.⁷⁴

Written in the late 1950s, the note undoubtedly stands as part of Lemkin’s efforts to document genocide’s universality and transhistoricity, a task that served his larger lobbying work on behalf of an anti-genocide law. However, while perhaps evidence of Lemkin’s strategic self-presentations, the note also calls our attention to how both the topic and form of *History of Genocide* reflect the burdens of his traumatic past. The murder of his neighbors in Warsaw and that of the Huguenots in France are all part of one global history of mass persecution. Furthermore, Lemkin’s memories are what led him to see these histories as *connected* histories. An additional note on “Memory” similarly underscores how Lemkin’s personal memories and experiences relating to the *History of Genocide* might have compelled the development of his particular form of historical exposition, a form that gave voice to the “suffering of the victims” by way of the readings of their testimonies.⁷⁵

Yet, if “This I Believe” and “Memory” offer insight into why Lemkin – beyond political reasons – set out to tell the *History of Genocide* in a global frame and employed a psycho-cultural method to do so, they do not account for his differential treatment of victim testimony. For this, we need to turn to his essay on the “Perpetuation of the Psychological Scar,” which Lemkin penned in five pages of handwritten prose and which is included in his unpublished notes.⁷⁶ Overall, the essay is a reflection on trauma, genocide, and more specifically, how the trauma of genocide is transmitted to future generations of the victimized group. Lemkin’s central thesis is that the trauma of genocide is hereditary; it is passed on to the future generations of the victimized group so that they come to know the trauma of the genocide as if it were their very own.⁷⁷

Many of the insights Lemkin develops in this essay – insights concerning a process that we would now call the transgenerational transmission of trauma – confirm the practices that he deployed in his global history. For example, Lemkin argues that the transmission of trauma occurs in two forms: first, through “word of mouth between parents and children,” that is, through the sharing of memories, and second, through the “media of song, literature, and music.” And he also argues that this process – this “perpetuation of the psychological scar” – is a universal phenomenon.

⁷⁴ Raphaël Lemkin, “Notes (unsorted),” n.d., Raphaël Lemkin papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Reel 3, Box 4, Folder 2. See note entitled “This I Believe.”

⁷⁵ Under the title “Memory,” Lemkin writes: “Genocide is of such a nature that when we read history we must secure through its pages the sufferings of the victims their implicit and silenced appeals for help and their best will addressed to all mankind that these things should – never – happen again.” Lemkin, *Notes (unsorted)*. See note entitled “Memory.”

⁷⁶ Raphaël Lemkin, “Perpetuation of the Psychological Scar,” n.d., Manuscripts and Archives Division, NYPL, Box 2, Folder 4, Reel 3.

⁷⁷ The prose that Lemkin uses to describe the pain entailed in this process suggests that he might have had experienced it first hand. He writes: “The psychological impact of genocide on the victimized group is enormous. It permeates every cell in the psychological fiber of the individual. Its psychological affect on the group is even bigger than on every individual, because every individual being influenced by genocide conveys to members of his group his feelings. Every collectivization of emotions is more than the mathematical sum of those emotions. It creates a new and stronger emotional essence. To that must be added the refinement of pain, sorrow, perception of injustice, and above all, the indescribable frustration of the impossibility of bringing back to life those who died. This collective grief is hereditary.” *Ibid.*, 1.

It is just as present among the descendants and survivors of the Armenian genocide, for example, as it is among the descendants of the survivors of the Spanish conquest of the New World.⁷⁸

However, if Lemkin presents the trauma of genocide in universal form, as in *History of Genocide*, he also draws certain distinctions in the degree to which some communities of victims – over others – can respond to their persecution on their own terms. Notably, in “Perpetuation of the Psychological Scar,” Lemkin argues there is only one form of “psychological protection” that is available for the “survivors in generations to come.” It is found in the act of commemoration and history writing. Or, as Lemkin puts it, it is found in the vow: “lest we forget.” After describing this vow as a form of protection, Lemkin moves on to recount how both the Armenians and Jews have taken up the task of documenting and historicizing their persecutions in their aftermaths. “The Armenians have tried to assemble names and historic facts relating to every community where genocide took place,” while “the survivors of the massacres of Jews under the Nazis have been engaged since the end of the war in the same painstaking and pain-perpetuating process of collecting data on the dead and obliterated communities.”⁷⁹ To be clear, for Lemkin, this vow of history writing and remembrance came with its own pain. Refugees of Nazi persecution, living in the United States, he notes, are overwhelmed with the feelings of “shame and grief.” Still, in his account, this vow – “lest we forget” – is the only form of psychological protection available to the victims of genocide, and it is only available to the Armenians and Jews.

Of course, Lemkin’s reflections on the psychological scar do not alone explain why an unevenness came to characterize his use of victim testimony in *History of Genocide*. Nonetheless, they do call attention to how Lemkin’s personal biography might have shaped his readings of the victim’s voice and why he might have attributed a testimonial tradition as having more significance among some communities of survivors than others.

Lemkin’s Legacy amidst the “Global Turn”

In 2002, Moses called for an investigation into the “conceptual blockages and definitional dilemmas” within Holocaust and Genocide Studies’ disciplinary development.⁸⁰ Central to Moses’s argument was his insight that the alternative parameters of studying and defining genocide, used by two groups of scholars, has ensured that the field finds itself in an “unproductive intellectual and moral stalemate,” and that within this stalemate the suffering of some victims of mass violence and genocide is perceived to be more recognized and thereby more valued than the suffering of others.⁸¹ Or, as Moses writes, some have argued that “the moral caché of indigenous survivors of colonialism is consequently diminished in comparison of that of Jews.”⁸²

In noting the significance of this discourse over the competition of victimhood, Moses finds himself in good company. Many others have noted how – in both popular and academic circles –

⁷⁸ To make this second point – regarding the universality of trauma – Lemkin references the work of Mexican composer and conductor Carlos Chávez (1899–1978). Lemkin includes his description of Chávez’s work within his broader discussion of how the Armenian and Jewish communities have been caught in this process of the “perpetration of the psychological scar.” “Carlos Chávez, the famous Indian composer, would never be able to convey the refined and stirring feelings of grief,” Lemkin writes, “if he himself had not been an Indian, a great grandchild of those who perished from genocide.” For more on Carlos Chávez’s work and how contemporaries cast him as an essentially Mexican composer, see William Robin, “Carlos Chávez, Mexican Modernist,” *The New York Times*, July 30, 2015, accessed October 8, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/08/02/arts/music/carlos-chavez-mexican-modernist.html>; Ibid., 1. Note: while Lemkin introduces Chávez as a descendant of the survivors of genocide, he does not specify which genocide. Lemkin might have assumed Chávez to be descended from the Aztecs.

⁷⁹ Lemkin, *Perpetuation of the Psychological Scar*, 2.

⁸⁰ A. Dirk Moses, “Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas in the ‘Racial Century’: Genocide of Indigenous Peoples and the Holocaust,” *Patterns of Prejudice* 36, no. 4 (2002), 7–36.

⁸¹ Ibid., 10. Moses defines these two groups as “liberal” and “post-liberal.” In his account, the liberals emphasize the import of intent and the agency of the state in the implementation of genocide, while the “post-liberals” emphasize the significance of structural forces. In his view, the liberals focus on the Holocaust or other forms of totalitarian genocide, with some among them maintaining the Holocaust’s “uniqueness.” The “post-liberals,” in contrast, focus on colonial genocides taken against indigenous populations. For more on these two opposing groups, see A. Dirk Moses, “Toward a Theory of Critical Genocide Studies,” *Online Encyclopedia of Mass Violence*, April 18, 2008, accessed October 8, 2018, www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/toward-theory-critical-genocide-studies.

⁸² Moses, *Conceptual Blockages and Definitional Dilemmas*, 9.

the memory of the Holocaust is treated as a hegemonic force and thus as a force that occludes the recognition of indigenous or postcolonial forms of suffering.⁸³ However, Moses's centering of the field's disciplinary conventions separates his analysis from those of his peers. In short, he made the field's practices the object of his analysis and in doing so, revealed how intra-academic debates over definition or intent-versus-structure can, in fact, perpetuate a paradigm in which victimhood is characterized as a zero-sum game, as well as a conversation in which charges of Eurocentricism and diminished humanity run rampant.

Moses's intervention is invaluable for the attention it gives to current disciplinary conventions and for its suggestion that they too have played a role in constructing certain hierarchies of subjecthood and victimhood. And yet, if Moses's focus on definitions and contemporary conventions is important, Lemkin's *History of Genocide* reminds us they are only one part of the story. To fully investigate how scholarship penned in Holocaust and Genocide Studies might have implicitly valued some instances of suffering more than others, we also need to consider the broader historiographical conventions under which our histories of mass violence and genocide have been written and how they might have implicitly reaffirmed a hierarchical relationship between the "West and the Rest."

By attending to Lemkin's psycho-cultural approach and detailing his uneven handling of victim testimony, we recognize one example of such an occurrence. Yet, recent works in Jewish and colonial history caution us from concluding that Lemkin's differential treatment of the victim's voice to be an outlier to the norm. They document the manifold ways in which the logics of racial difference and civilizational hierarchies have defined the status and function of victim testimony over the twentieth century.⁸⁴ And they also reveal how these logics have not been peripheral to these historiographical practices for documenting instances of mass violence and genocide, but rather central to their formation.⁸⁵

⁸³ On how presumptions over the competition of victimhood have developed in American and French circles see, Carolyn J. Dean, *Aversion and Erasure: the Fate of the Victim after the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010). On anti-victim discourse in America, see Alyson M. Cole, *The Cult of True Victimhood: From the War on Welfare to the War on Terror* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007). On the Holocaust's "hegemonic effect," see Aleida Assmann, "The Holocaust – a Global Memory? Extensions and Limits in a New Memory Community" in *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices, and Trajectories*, eds. Aleida Assman and Sebastian Conrad (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 97-118.

⁸⁴ For works that document the various ways in which "native" testimony was seen to be less reliable than those of Western eyewitnesses, see Lisa Yun, *The Coolie Speaks: Chinese Indentured Laborers and African Slaves in Cuba* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009); Innes M. Keighren, et al, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015); Robert Burroughs, *Travel Writing and Atrocities: Eyewitness Accounts of Colonialism in the Congo, Angola, and the Putumayo* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Burroughs, *The Burden of Proof*; Carmela Murdocca, "'Matter of Time and a Matter of Place' Colonial Inquiries and the Politics of Testimony," *Law, Culture and the Humanities* 13, no. 1 (2017), 123-144.

⁸⁵ In different manners, J.P. Daughton's and Alexandra Garbarini's investigations on the interwar efforts to document atrocities in Europe's colonies or in Armenia and/or the Ukraine, respectively, reveal how the logics of "civilization" informed victim testimony's documentary functions and thus defined a broader set of practices for writing about and documenting instances of mass violence. Daughton makes this clear in his examination of the ILO Native Labor Section's efforts to document the most egregious accusations of forced labor and colonial atrocities during the 1930s. As Daughton describes, while in theory the organization was humanitarian in its concern for instances of suffering abroad, in practice "liberal notions of 'trusteeship' and the rhetoric of 'civilization'" defined the organization's reports. First-hand accounts of colonial atrocities, offered by those who experienced them, frequently needed to be corroborated with testimonials of European experts. In her work on the the interwar publication of "Document Volumes," Garbarini offers a different example of how the logics of race and civilization have defined victim testimony's shifting documentary and historiographical functions. As Garbarini describes, in preparing their 1917 report on *The Treatment of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, 1915-1916*, Arnold Toynbee and Viscount James Bryce were attentive to victim testimony's critical function. It "proved essential in order to inform, convince, and awaken sympathy among readers," Garbarini writes. However, not all examples of testimony were of equal evidentiary value. Bryce voiced concerns over the reliability of "native testimony." In short, while the testimonies of European eyewitnesses maintained their veneer of objectivity, those of the Armenians did not hold such a value. See J.P. Daughton, "ILO Expertise and Colonial Violence in the Interwar Years," in *Globalizing Social Rights: The International Labour Organization and Beyond*, eds. Sandrine Kott and Joëlle Droux (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 85-97; Alexandra Garbarini, "Document Volumes and the Status of Victim Testimony in the Era of the First World War and Its Aftermath," *Études arméniennes contemporaines* 5 (2015), 113-138.

In recent years, the call to “think globally” has resounded throughout the historical profession. The publication of works on mass violence and genocide, which take a non-national frame, demonstrates that this call will be as fruitful for the field of Holocaust and Genocide Studies as it has been for the larger historical discipline.⁸⁶ However, before proceeding with this worthy endeavor, we should carefully examine what biases or prejudices are woven into our historiographical practices. With respect to our studies on testimony, we should consider if and then how some groups of testimonies – and thus groups of victims – have been perceived to be more legible than others. Taking up this task is critical to developing a more empathetic and equitable historiographical practice, a prerequisite for writing histories in an ever more global frame. But first, we need to go beyond our reductionist visions of Raphaël Lemkin as a “father figure” of Holocaust and Genocide Studies, or as a “racist” historian of mass violence. And we need to take Raphaël Lemkin, as a historian, seriously.

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⁸⁶ For two examples, see Ben Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Norman A. Naimark, *Genocide: A World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

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