

An Analytical Typology of Arguments Denying Genocides and Related Mass Human Rights Violations

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In this paper, I will discuss arguments typically used to deny genocides and other mass human rights violations. My first goal is to provide what I hope will be useful information on various denial campaigns and the remarkable consistency of techniques and arguments used to deny different genocides. My second goal is to offer a comparative typology with logical analysis of the characteristic arguments.

My own particular work is an attempt to add to the groundbreaking insights of the scholars who have pioneered the study of denial in the West, especially Israel Charny. Given that this is not a formal paper but a lecture, for the convenience of listeners/readers, I have listed at the end of the paper sources for elements of the paper substantially incorporating the work of others. But such citations cannot do justice to the work of these scholars, and I encourage those interested to treat the sources as suggestions for further reading.

Selected Cases of Denial

I will assume in this audience at least a general understanding of the history of denial of such 1931-45 Japanese atrocities as the Nanjing Massacre, which itself it can be argued fits a broadly construed United Nations definition of genocide, and the “Comfort Women” System. I would, in fact, be embarrassed to offer a description in the presence of some of the leading experts on this denial campaign. In our later discussion, I hope to further my understanding of this denial, as to date very little has been published on it in English.

In what follows, I will describe briefly certain other cases of denial. The list of cases included is not exhaustive, but does reflect at least from a United States perspective the most prominent instances. Of course, the most active denial campaigns are generally in response to strong recognition movements, and the kind of analysis I am performing leaves out precisely those genocides that are the most forgotten or neglected. But, for such cases, education about the facts of the genocides is the most powerful tool. It is against the most developed denials that this paper’s approach is most appropriate.

In the early part of the 20th Century, the Ottoman Turkish government executed a systematic slaughter of more than 1 million Armenians within its territory (probably 1.5 million). After eliminating approximately 250,000 Armenian men who were serving in the

Ottoman Army, in the early morning hours of April 24, 1915, the Ottoman government rounded up to kill hundreds of Armenian political, religious, intellectual, and cultural leaders. It then worked across the country, region by region, village by village, and in cities as well. In successive locations, any remaining men of fighting age and leaders were taken away, to be killed. Then women, children, and the elderly were marched out in caravans, around the area, usually to the Syrian desert. Sometimes great violence accompanied the round-ups. On the death marches, government-encouraged raiders, local villagers, and special death squads made up of convicted criminals and others with especially cruel characters routinely attacked them. Many were raped and tortured – all were brutalized, denied food and water sometimes entirely, stripped of their clothes (in the hot desert). Many were killed outright, and many starved or died of exhaustion. Those who survived the initial march, often circling around the desert, would typically end up at the death camp at Der-el-Zor.

The evidence of this crime is overwhelming, from numerous photos to volumes of eyewitness testimony by diplomats, missionaries, and others. In fact, the German and Austrian archives are full of contemporaneous reports of the atrocities, and Turkish documents detailing the testimony of witnesses and defendants in the partial war crimes tribunal after the end of World War I abound. The US archives are replete with reports from consular officials “on the ground” in the genocide zones and other evidence. What is more, brute facts attest to the genocide: of the thriving 2.5 million Armenians in the Empire before 1915, only about 100,000 remained after the war, with hundreds of thousands scattered around the world, for the most part destitute and devastated. The evidence is, simply put, compelling, not only because of its great extent from so many sources, but also because of the rigor with which it has been tested for reasons I will soon discuss. The systematic killing of the Genocide is as much a proven fact as any other complex historical event.

Yet, the Armenian Genocide is actively denied. In the United States alone, the Turkish government pours millions of dollars into its negationist campaign, hiring lobbyists to defeat Congressional recognition legislation, public relations firms to put out its “version” of the events in question, and so on. When Bob Livingston was forced from his US House of Representatives speakership after three days, he “retired” to an \$800,000 lobbying contract with the Turkish government, while his partner Stephen Solarz, a former Congressman with an even more impressive record of service denying the Armenian Genocide, received \$500,000. The Turkish government itself, in addition, devotes numerous diplomatic personnel and other government officials to the cause, while funding directly or through proxies denialist research and even chairs for deniers at prestigious universities such as Princeton. Deniers flood media outlets with their claims, and are a typical presence at any public discussion of the Armenian Genocide. The Turkish government exerts pressure against recognition in every way it can: when the French Parliament was considering a recognition resolution in 2001, the Turkish government threatened to cut French interests out of billions of dollars of business contracts. Actions on such a grand scale are complemented by the most petty: as an example, some years ago, local deniers went so far as to raise a clamor about the mounting of a plaque recognizing the victims of the Armenian Genocide in a public park in Springfield, Massachusetts. One need only read US newspaper articles from recent years on Turkish-Armenian relations or ask a US State Department official about the Genocide to confirm how successful denial has been.

Within Turkey, the ban on discussion of the Genocide is enforced through social coercion and governmental action, while academic and political institutions freely rewrite history to omit Armenians or demonize them when the issue cannot be ignored.

The intensity, extent, and state-sponsorship of denial of the Armenian Genocide make it perhaps the paradigmatic instance, but it is certainly not the only one. Its organized pervasiveness in academic and political circles is perhaps paralleled by denial of the Nanjing Massacre and other atrocities, though unlike in Turkey in Japan this is countered by a strong political and academic movement for full recognition.

In North America and Europe, the Holocaust has also been the subject of strong denialist efforts. These have moved from fringe neo-Nazi groups into the mainstream in recent years. Academics such as Arthur Butz and Robert Faurisson, as well as figures such as Fred Leuchter and David Irving, promote denial with scientific and historical arguments. They use internet websites (also used extensively by deniers of the Armenian Genocide), glossy pseudo-academic journals, such as the *Journal of Historical Review* (a tactic also recently used by Turkish deniers, in the form of their *Journal of Armenian Studies*), and even newspaper advertisements on college campuses, such as Bradley Smith's. Denial efforts, while not state-sponsored in the West, are backed by extremely well-funded organizations like the Liberty Lobby.

A disturbing trend has been the rise of denial in the Middle East. While this is in large part a reaction to real and serious systematic human rights abuses by Israel, rather than criticizing Israeli actions in themselves, these deniers are attempting to deny the past suffering of Jews, the problem of anti-Semitism, and the like as a means of strengthening their critique.

Ward Churchill and others have documented the deep denial of genocides of Native Americans. Despite clear material facts – the deportation of most Native Americans in the US, their forced resettlements on residual or completely new reservation lands, the deaths of the vast majority of Native Americans through governmental and para-military massacre, forced labor and marches, imposed starvation, and resulting disease – the prevailing story of US history continues to be the rather accidental and regrettable loss of a set of primitive societies in the face of Western progress. The idea of Manifest Destiny as a genocidal program and the systematic destruction of all the supports of Native American existence, from food supplies to social units, remain beyond the horizon of reflection for most Americans. Twentieth Century policies, such as the removal of Indian children from their peoples and their forced Christianization, as well as widespread nonconsensual sterilization of Native American women, while in the broader context of violence clearly fitting the UN definition of genocide, are dismissed when even mentioned. Even today, neglectful or intentionally harmful policies result in a life expectancy on some reservations dramatically lower than that of other Americans. Estimates of the life expectancy of adult men on the Pine River Reservation, for instance, put it between about 47 and 57 years, a shocking 20 or 30 years below that of males in the general population.

Denial has been embedded in our very national culture. As Churchill shows, the Smithsonian institution has historically grossly underestimated pre-conquest population figures, based on an assumption that all Native Americans in current US territory were hunter-gatherers. Demographic analysis on that faulty assumption – disproved by clear evidence from the period – yields a population for this territory at 500,000, later revised to 1 million. With more

than 2 million full or part Native Americans estimated today, the reality of genocide seems to disappear. Only when better demographic analysis, based on recognition of the prevalence of agriculture and other factors, is employed, with the result of about 10 million pre-Conquest Native Americans, does the dramatic destruction of their population come into clear relief. Our history textbooks, our films, etc., simply erase the Native Americans entirely, demonize them as savages (Cowboy and Indian movies), or soft-pedal their destruction as an inevitable if unfortunate result of contact with Europeans. One telling instance is former Harvard University professor Liah Greenfeld's highly acclaimed 1992 *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity*. The 90-plus page account of US national development, beginning in the very early 1600s, does not once mention the presence of Native Americans, despite extensive considerations of early settlement, westward expansion, and race issues, including slavery. This symbolic erasure reflects the physical erasure that makes it credible.

One could include many genocides on a smaller scale, but of course equally devastating for the victim communities. The German genocide of the Herero in the first decade of the 20th Century stands out, among other things because one of its main planner-executors was Heinrich Goering, father of future Holocaust principal Hermann Goering. Because the 80,000 Herero lived on land desired for German expansion in Southwest Africa in the pre-World War I period when Germany was trying to catch up to Britain and France as a colonizing power, after a one-sided military defeat of spear-armed Herero, the German forces massacred most of the remaining people. Though in the 1980s calls for recognition emerged, this event in history, an important precursor to the Holocaust, is barely known.

Other denied genocides include those of Aborigines in Australia and Tasmania, the Cambodian Genocide, of Mayans in Guatemala, and of the Ache in Paraguay.

Denial does not just happen regarding past genocides. The most striking case is Rwanda. As has been extremely well documented in a variety of works, principle outside parties, including the United Nations, Belgium, France, and the United States, each refused to recognize what began in early April 1994 as genocide. Despite about 10,000 people being killed each day in a pre-planned (the United Nations was well-apprised of these plans months before they were executed) extermination campaign that was confirmed on Radio Miles Colonnes (Rwandan state radio) continually by the genocidal incitement by government officials, UN, US, and other officials publicly denied that genocide was occurring, spinning it instead as a further extension of a supposedly intractable, long-running Hutu-Tutsi ethnic conflict. It was not until most of the 850,000 genocide victims were actually dead that these officials began admitting that genocide was occurring. In this way, they effectively forestalled the intervention required by the UN mandate and violated the "Never Again" principle so casually stated as US and other governments' policy. What is particularly interesting is that the perpetrators were calling for the killings of Tutsi's blatantly, without any real cover-up. It was bystanders who denied. It is my position that at least 500,000 Rwandans and possibly nearly all victims could have been saved by swift recognition and action. In the case of an on-going genocide, denial means death.

Though perhaps less dramatic, a similar external negationist campaign aided the Khmer Rouge in their genocide of about 2 million Cambodians, Vietnamese, Buddhists (I separate out these Cambodians because they were killed on religious grounds), and others. Likewise, in the former Yugoslavia, external misrepresenters in press and political circles supported perpetrators'

denial efforts.

In 1975, Indonesian forces invaded the just-freed former Portuguese colony consisting of the eastern half of the island of Timor. In the years that followed, they and their proxies killed about 250,000 of the 700,000 in order to destroy the basis for East Timorese sovereignty. During this time, the Indonesian government was joined by US and other diplomats in the United Nations and elsewhere in denying what was happening and in preventing intervention by the world community through the United Nations or otherwise. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, in later remarks, admitted that as a US representative in the UN he was charged with preventing consideration of East Timor, and he fulfilled his duty very capably.

THE HISTORICAL TRADITION OF DENIAL

Though in this paper I focus on the similarities in the denial arguments used across genocides, these similarities are not simply analogously coincidental. In the case, for instance, of genocides that the United States has perpetrated or supported, it has been the same government, academic community, etc., that have had roles in the denials. Thus, it is no coincidence that some rationales for support of genocide in East Timor sound similar to those of genocides of Native Americans: the arguments and attitudes behind them have long been embedded in US governmental and other circles. Likewise, one might see similar arguments by the Indonesian government regarding East Timor as were used regarding the mass killing of putative “communists” in the mid-1960s.

Distinct perpetrator groups are also often related in this way. Hitler’s recognition of the success of the initial phase of Turkish denial of the Armenian Genocide has received much attention. In a famous remark to his general staff on the eve of the invasion of Poland in 1939, Hitler ordered maximum destruction of civilian life. To address the unease of his generals at such a blatantly intentional commission of war crimes, he said simply “Who today speaks of the extermination of the Armenians.” His meaning was clear – if a perpetrator destroys a group and never looks back, the world will soon forget and it will get away with the crime. Though speculative, it appears rather obvious that the success of the Armenian Genocide, as well as Native American genocides (Hitler apparently loved American Western movies), emboldened Hitler to embrace the idea of extermination of the Jews.

Given the manner in which denial of genocide and other mass human rights violations have become routine, it is clear that any political entity engaging in such practices typically follows the dominant pattern. Surely Milosevic did not invent denial of on-going genocide.

Though beyond the scope of this paper, it is my belief that, with the growing ease of information exchange across the globe through the internet, mass media, movements of people, and other avenues, genocide deniers are more and more learning from one another. Though prejudicial antagonisms might limit direct exchanges, at the least there exists a “culture of denial” in which the types of arguments analyzed below are passed around in academia, via the internet, and in the political realm – they are, in a sense, now part of the cultural and intellectual environment in which political discourse takes place.

In recent years, as genocide has been recognized to have a long history filled with countless instances and the field of comparative genocide studies has developed beginning in the 1970s, the negationist correlate of “universal genocide denial” has emerged. Some individuals, such as Princeton University’s Norman Itzkowitz, now advocate historical theories that tend to call into question all genocides, not just particular cases.

At the risk of perpetuating a Euro-centric view of global political history, one might identify the roots of denial in the rise of democracy and human rights themselves, which began globally in the 18th Century, especially with French Revolution and philosophical changes in the concepts of individual dignity, worth, and autonomy (one might see Kant as an important figure in this development, at least within a European context). It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the global trajectories of such changes, but certainly 19th and 20th Century anti-colonial movements around the world had a profound impact.

In basic terms, both within and across racial, ethnic, national, religious, and political group boundaries, raw power became less and less an automatic justification of itself. As the belief in individual autonomy and worth grew, even oppressive domination required justification in terms of democratic or at least popular terms. (For instance, German romantic nationalists sidestepped the practical issue of democratic representation of individual views by assuming underlying the “German people” a basic, shared interest and corporate will.) One might also cite John Stuart Mill’s innovative progressivist justification of British colonialism for the benefit of the colonized in India, China, and elsewhere as a response to the new need for justification of domination as something other than domination. Where in some ways the new necessity for popular legitimacy of power drove an actual democratization, in others it fostered a disconnection between idealistic rationale and brutal practice, between rhetoric and reality.

Genocide and related mass violence were no longer accepted as self-evidently legitimate discharges of strength by the powerful and conquest was no longer viewed as legitimate simply based on a differential of power between conqueror and subjugated. We can see this in the role of rationalization among genocide perpetrators, often through attempts to portray the victims as the true victimizers of the perpetrators (Armenians, Jews, Tutsi, etc.). Even in the 19th Century, the putative savagery and aggression of Native Americans, supposedly manifested in such things as the Little Big Horn “massacre” (Custer’s Last Stand), was used to justify real hyper-savagery by US governmental forces and paramilitary groups of settlers.

With this, genocide denial has become more and more important, both during genocides and after. Unlike in past ages, genocide is usually unacceptable by the stated (though not actual) legal, political, and ethical standards of the perpetrators themselves, and thus must be denied. It is denied through a use of rhetoric that obscures reality, even as it claims to be the best possible path toward the truest understanding of reality.

LEVELS AND MOTIVES OF DENIAL

As with genocide itself, which is typically driven by a mix of ideological, economic, political, militaristic, and personal motives and differing levels of involvement, distinct participants in a denial campaign often have diverse motives and different levels of

participation. Even within one participant, a complex of conscious and unconscious motives might be at work. What follows are breakdowns of the different levels of individual participation and of the variety of motives. In practice, only some of these might have substantial roles in a given genocide denial campaign, while some might be more prominent than others.

Here I am writing about active denial, in which the participant at the minimum asserts the unreality of a claimed genocide or related human rights violation. Those who passively deny, by for instance accepting denialist arguments, I view as secondary victims of denial themselves. Their understanding of the world is manipulated and they are prevented from proper access to accurate facts and analyses. Such passive deniers become culpable only at the point where (1) without adequately testing the lies they have been fed, they begin to contribute to their public perpetuation or (2) they refuse to engage seriously evidence exposing the falsity of negationist claims when they are presented with it.

Where appropriate in the passages on the argument forms of denial, I discuss different aspects of the target audiences of deniers.

Levels of Denial

An initial breakdown of deniers by level of knowledge might be useful. This is important in a moral evaluation of deniers. There is a continuum of culpability based on a denier's status (power) within a society and opportunity for exposure to accurate information and critical thinking principles. The general continuum for those within a perpetrator society from greater to lesser culpability runs thus:

- (1) those who know fully yet deny,
- (2) those who should know but still deny: these are individuals who are exposed to but reject information on a genocide, such as educated members of a society, especially those with access to perspectives on their history from outside of their society,
- (3) those who actively reject claims of a genocide without an opportunity or capacity for serious study of the issue, and
- (4) those who are propagandized into a nearly automatic rejection of claims of a genocide.

These categorizations tend to hold both during a genocide and after it, into subsequent generations.

Outside the perpetrator society, active deniers break down more or less into three groups. There are those who deny with full knowledge, those who deny with limited knowledge, and those who deny out of ignorance. Those who deny with limited knowledge are culpable because they should not take a definite stand on an issue as important as whether or not a genocide took place without doing adequate research on the issue. In most cases, the evidence in the form of scholarly presentations and analyses of relevant historical data are readily available and compelling, especially when compared critically with negationist texts. There are also some few who help perpetuate denialist views out of a more understandable ignorance. An example in the United States might be an Africanist trained by professors and through books

that never mention the Herero. It is understandable that such a scholar would not mention the Herero Genocide where it would be appropriate. At the same time, as above, such a scholar would become culpable for negation at the point where he or she became aware of claims of the Herero Genocide and refuses to take them seriously.

Motives for Denial by Members of the Perpetrator Group, Including Later Generations

Within the perpetrator group, including later generations underage during or born after the genocide being denied,

(1) deniers who are fully aware of the truth (type 1, above) are either practically motivated, ideologically driven, or both.

(a) Governmental leaders might deny a genocide out of concern about the consequences of admittance, such as requirements to give reparations, a restricted ability to engage in military action, the loss of ability to act on prejudices against victims, and any other obstacles to promotion of perceived “national interests” recognition of a genocide might entail. Clearly in the case of an on-going genocide, as in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, denial can be an attempt to block international intervention. For recently completed genocides, it can be an attempt to prevent punishment of the perpetrator group, with consequent reversals of its political and economic gains through genocide. These motives might also apply to a long past genocide, as in the United States’ 40-years refusal to ratify the United Nations Convention on Genocide. This was in part due to concern that it would be applied to genocides of Native Americans, undermining denial efforts and opening the door to land and other reparations.

While some deniers might not condone genocide per se, at the same time their moral reservations are outweighed by practical interests, especially in cases where the genocide is long past. Most in such cases, however, deny out of a cynical realpolitik, which includes approval of genocide as a tool of state policy despite recognition that genocide is not accepted by most official political and ethical standards.

I have characterized this motive as practical, but this does not mean that prejudice against victims does not have a role. Any moral calculation that results in approval of a past genocide depends on assumption of the low status of the victims and the acceptability of their suffering. What is more, the willingness to advance national interests at the harm of or even directly against a victim group seems to require deep prejudice. If the Indonesian government acted out of economic and political interests in its genocide in East Timor, a denier in effects condones the decision that East Timorese should not have oil-derived wealth nor political self-determination and thus assumes the inferiority of the East Timorese.

(b) In some cases, commitment to denial might entail knowing that the genocide happened but denying it anyway in line with an ideological agenda. The most obvious would be a defensiveness about one’s nation-state, such that the denier refuses to allow any room for criticism that might diminish its image. Here the role of prejudice against the victims is prominent. Such a denier recognizes that a genocide happened, but considers the victims of so little consequence that the genocide should not be allowed to undermine in any way the status of his or her country.

(c) In other cases, a person might deny what he or she knows to be true out of a personal interest. The only way to succeed in the Turkish diplomatic corps in the United States and Europe is to deny the Armenian Genocide. Similar interests hold in academia and other circles. Recognizing archeological sites in present-day Turkey as Armenian, and thus confirming the substantive presence of Armenians in the area as well as their contributions to Turkish history, will undermine any Turkish archaeologist's career.

(d) Finally, some might deny out of fear of the consequences of not denying or under the general pressure of his or her peers and environment. As denial becomes normalized in segments of a society and its government, not participating in denial can set one apart for condemnation, ostracism, loss of livelihood, and even violence.

(2) A closely related group of active deniers does not believe a genocide in question to have occurred, despite being exposed to the truth, because it conflicts with his or her national self-image or desire for a superior national identity. Here, instead of doing the hard work necessary to improve his or her national culture away from a relationship to genocide (a genocidal attitude typically becomes normalized in a population that participates in a genocide, and this society must in some way be rehabilitated), such an individual follows the easier path of simply disbelieving that the genocide occurred. This motive is especially prevalent in individuals and societies where personal identity is tied closely to national identity, and might even be a basis for it. The fragility of personal or national identity is also a contributor, in so far as denial might be a defense against a perceived threat to an individual's self-image. One can see this mechanism in contemporary Turkish individuals, particularly educated elites, whose propagandized over-estimation of the importance, power, and decency of Turkey now and historically comes into conflict with the realistic appraisal of Turkey as a US client state with a poor human rights record and rather undistinguished role in the development of world culture. To add the claim of the Armenian Genocide into the mix is often too much to bear, as it transforms the few residual national heroes such as Talaat into figures on a level with Hitler. The irony in this case is that many leaders and commoners within Turkish society displayed tremendous moral fortitude in resisting the Armenian Genocide, and a proper recognition would provide Turkish individuals reacting defensively to challenges to their frail national self-image with an alternative cultural history worthy of admiration and emulation not just among Turks but around the world.

This is especially prevalent in many circles in the United States, as second-tier deniers assert that a systematic, popular genocide of Native Americans could not have occurred because it runs counter to "American ideals" of fairness and respect for individual life and liberty.

(3) Denial among those who do not believe a genocide to have occurred yet who have been exposed to the truth is often motivated by a less complex psychological mechanism, namely the same basic prejudice that supported the genocide in the first place. Here, the victim group is seen as the cause of any problems with the actual perpetrators (so, if anyone was harmed, it was those of accused of genocide), as inherently deceitful (and so lying about genocide), and so forth. Such prejudices operate even three or more generations after a genocide. In the United States, the prejudice among many who deny that Native Americans have been victims is often blatant, to the point of, ironically, calling for harm to Native Americans (it did not happen, but

we wish it did). In other cases of widespread denial, many participants show such prejudice. Even among scholars and others adopting a more professional or cultured tone, one will find condescension toward and even demonization of the victim group, for instance the Turkish University of California at Berkeley professor who a few years ago taunted Armenian students commemorating the Armenian Genocide with, “It didn’t happen, but you Armenians really deserved it.”

(4) There are also those in the perpetrator society who perpetuate denial out of a blind loyalty to their government or other leadership. Despite exposure to claims of genocide, they choose to believe whatever their government or supporting deniers say, without any critical analysis. The more sophisticated in this group rationalize this as evidence of the ultimate form of good citizenship through absolute service to one’s state. This allows them to demonize as traitorous or anti-patriotic any within the perpetrator group who raise the issue of genocide – who might be properly termed the true patriots, to paraphrase a 2001 remark by Professor Tokushi Kasahara.

(5) Finally, there is the borderline group of those within the perpetrator society who are heavily propagandized with only limited exposure to information about the genocide that is denied. Though they are just as loyal as the previous group, they have much less choice in being so. At the same time, even such individuals have some culpability, especially to the extent their denialist views are intertwined with prejudice against the victim group.

Motives for Denial Outside the Perpetrator Group

For those outside the perpetrator group of a particular genocide being denied, participation might mean advocacy of denial viewpoints or merely promotion of equal consideration of both historical truth and denialist falsity. For the first type, motives are often similar to those within a perpetrator group.

(1) The main proponents of Holocaust denial around the world are not members of the perpetrator group, but many are motivated by anti-Semitism. Thus, prejudice against the victim group can motivate genocide denial.

(2) Similarly, identification with the perpetrators or perpetrator group might also serve as a motivation. Norman Itzkowitz, a denier of the Armenian Genocide, has referred to himself as a Turk in spirit and his histories of Turkey as well as biography of Atatürk are clearly written from an adulating perspective.

(3) As within the perpetrator group, career and other interests often drive participation. Marginal academics such as Heath Lowry have been handed great careers (tenure at Princeton University) as reward for their negationist efforts, while the path to success in the US State Department with regard to Turkey requires denying the Armenian Genocide.

(4) Particularly where denial is a governmental policy, a group outside of the perpetrator society might be motivated by geopolitical or other goals. For instance, a mix of political (support for Indonesia as a pro-American, anti-communist country) and economic (access to oil) motives drove US efforts to deny the East Timor Genocide as it occurred.

(5) As Samantha Power shows, political ideology can even have its role, as in the case of people on the American political left who publicly rejected evidence of the Cambodian

Genocide because they could not accept the idea of genocide by a leftist government opposed to the discredited United States in the Vietnam War era.

The second type of third-party support for denial is more complex and has a significant impact. Those in this group often accept denialist claims as legitimate, based on otherwise credible critical thinking principles.

(1) For instance, a liberal white or person of color in the United States might be sympathetic to Turkish denialist claims based on a progressivist commitment to supporting apparently marginalized or Third World groups.

(2) An academic, journalist, or other might misapply critical thinking principles to always look for and legitimize “the other side of the story,” which in the case of genocide is denial. He or she might act out of a misguided commitment to “balance,” which in other circumstances might be appropriate.

(3) Finally, an outsider might present “both sides of the story,” that is, the truth and denialist falsity, in order to avoid controversy. This is especially a problem in educational and journalistic circles. By presenting both views, such a person can claim not to be taking a stand and thus excuse him- or herself from valid criticism from proponents of the historical truth and attacks by deniers, even if these still come. Of course, such a “balanced view” in the face of a clearly important issue marks such a person’s ultimate lack of regard for the victims, as he or she is unwilling to experience some unpleasantness in order to bear witness to the reality of their suffering. I will revisit this type of denier below.

AN ANALYTICAL TYPOLOGY OF DENIAL ARGUMENTS

In the remainder of my paper, I will examine the different argument forms used by deniers.

The default position is omission. Though this is not strictly speaking a form of lying, it is falsification in so far as the omissions occur in writings and discussions that should focus some attention on a given genocide. Of course, omission only works to the extent that a genocide is not publicized, and the obvious response is to promote awareness of a genocide that is being covered up. The more successful this promotion, the more that explicit denial comes into play. Omission is also a tactic in some more developed denial campaigns, as recent textbook controversy in Japan shows. In such cases, it attempts to block further dissemination in a population of information on a genocide or to erode gains already made against denial.

Explicit arguments fall into two general categories. The first type falsifies the facts of a genocide, while the second uses faulty logic to undercut acceptance of those facts as true or important. There is also a set of very important and prevalent border forms that sit in the intersection of these two categories. Arguments against the facts work not only by falsifying or warping evidence, but also by manipulating standards of evaluation of that evidence.

Below, I will list the forms with brief explanations. Due to length constraints, I will present the argument forms with concrete content only for purposes of illustration and clarification. (I am presently working on a comprehensive typographical catalogue of actual denial arguments regarding a range of genocides.)

Falsification of Facts

(1) First is the claim that what appears to be a genocide was or is in fact a mutual conflict. The Rwandan Genocide was presented in US political and media circles as a civil war between Hutu and Tutsi, a civil war extending a “centuries old” tension. The Armenian Genocide is frequently misrepresented as a civil war between opportunistic Armenians and the general Muslim population, while the Nanjing Massacre was and is claimed to be an extended battle between the Chinese and Japanese armies. The Serbian genocidal campaign against Bosnians was also presented as a mutual conflict, in part playing on the fact that during World War II Croat fascists and others in Yugoslavia worked with Nazi German forces to commit a genocide of about 200,000 Serbs. Native American genocides were and are often referred to as the Indian Wars, belying their one-sided nature. Similarly, East Timor was and is claimed to be a battle between indigenous forces for and against joining Indonesia. Needless to say, each of these claims flies in the face not just of factual details, but the basic situations: how could an unarmed civilian Armenian population of mainly women and children approximately one-tenth the size of the Turkish population take on that population, especially when it was supported by a well-armed military? This argument works not just by falsifying facts, but also by manipulating standards of evaluation, such that resistance to genocide is balanced against genocide itself.

(2) Some arguments take the inversion further. They blame the victim by claiming that it actually provoked any retaliation by extreme acts against the apparent perpetrators. If the perpetrators might be blamed for their excesses, they were ultimately driven to whatever they did by the apparent victims themselves. Such arguments can go as far as claiming that the victims actually committed mass violence against the accused perpetrators, as when deniers of the Armenian Genocide counter it with the assertion that Armenians actually committed a genocide against “Muslims.” This argument is often central in motivating broad participation in the genocide itself, as in Nazi Germany. It is also used frequently, often by drawing attention to instances of self-defense or even retaliatory excess by the victims while ignoring the overall context of overwhelming systematic violence against the victims. Thus, the Armenian defense of Van in the face of genocide becomes an example of Armenian insurgency and provocation. As in (1), this form manipulates the framework through which one evaluates evidence, by focusing excessive attention on victim actions, such that even assertions of basic civil rights (pro-democracy agitation, as in East Timor) become a provocation or culpable attack on the perpetrator group.

(3) A third form is the claim that what appears to be a genocide was or is in fact merely spontaneous localized violence, not a systematic, centrally planned and directed campaign of extermination. The death and destruction is attributed to a vague and uncoordinated “mob violence” or localized excesses. Again, this argument is used in many of the cases cited above and is especially effective for genocides perpetrated over longer periods of time or by a disparate set of perpetrators. But, it is used for tightly coordinated genocides such as the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide as well. We see it in the case of the Nanjing Massacre, which is presented as the result of excesses by troops on the ground, without involvement of superiors. We see it in the claim that “West Timorese” and pro-Indonesian East Timorese, rather than Indonesian regulars, were the main agents of any violence against East Timorese.

We see it especially in the case of Native Americans, the overall campaign of genocide of which involved multiple perpetrator groups operating over hundreds of years and across a huge territory. Though there is a clear trajectory of US governmental policies against Native Americans, most salient perhaps in the policies of President Andrew Jackson, the set of all policies toward indigenous peoples was extensive and complex. But, in the context of a consistent dehumanization of Native Americans and ideological belief in the legitimacy of theft of their land by any means necessary (the semi-official principle of “Manifest Destiny”), these policies drove the systematic destruction of native group after native group. The central organization of these genocides was around prejudice and colonialist ideology, not a single specific set of leaders or policy. Indeed, it is best to view US policy and governmental decision-making as derivative of this underlying bedrock of constant of anti-indigenous prejudice and expansionism. Evidence of this abounds. Ward Churchill (pp. 244-45) quotes the remarks of L. Frank Baum, later to achieve fame as author of the classic children’s book (and populist political allegory) *The Wizard of Oz*. Giving voice to the exterminatory beliefs of his fellow Americans, he asked in the *Aberdeen Saturday Pioneer* newspaper shortly after the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre “Why not annihilation?” – why not annihilate every last Native American, whether pacified on a reservation or not.

In a similar way, this framework causes us to miss a key feature of the Armenian Genocide. The core perpetrators were in fact supremely adept at fostering, inciting, and directing pockets of chaotic hyper-violence against Armenians. They did this in a number of ways, including turning squads of released violent criminals on Armenians, force-marching Armenians through areas containing incited Kurdish tribes or Turkish villages, and so on. Thus, much of the actual violence of the Armenian Genocide does have the external appearance of spontaneous, uncontrolled mob violence; what was centrally controlled however – and this is part of the dastardly brilliance of the Young Turk method of genocide – was where, when, and how Armenians would be inserted into the pockets of chaos or it would erupt against them.

The overemphasis on the tightly controlled industrial model of the Holocaust mistakes a particular feature of Nazi German culture for a feature of genocide; the centralized, hierarchical nature of the Holocaust reflects the perpetrator group’s characteristic manner of acting, while the directed chaos of the Armenian Genocide is in turn characteristic of the history and social organization of the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, in the case of the Native American genocides, it is often taken as evidence against central intent that much of the destruction was by individual people and groups operating under their own direction, not under governmental control. But, as they were just as much operating toward a central goal of the elimination of Native Americans from US territory, their activities should be seen as part of an overall genocidal program. The fact that they were operating with a measure of local autonomy is a mark of US culture, which emphasizes individual autonomy and initiative, producing what might be called a “democratic” form of genocide. This feature makes it, in fact, a quite disturbing case, given that with little external compulsion many average Americans participated enthusiastically in the destruction of Native America.

As the foregoing suggests, this form relies not just on falsification, but also on imposition of a certain meaning of the concept “centralized intent,” an idealized and particular concept that fails to cover the variety of organizational practices in a range of genocides.

(4) In many cases, deniers dismiss admitted deaths of victims as a function not of genocide but of “natural” and unintended forces such as disease and famine. This is a dominant form denial in the case of Native Americans, but is used even in the case of the Holocaust. Rates of death due to disease in the concentration camps is used as evidence that most Jews died because of unfortunate spread of diseases and insufficient supplies of food, not murder. But, as Churchill points out, one must look at why diseases were so rampant among victim groups. The claim that Native Americans simply did not have immunity to commonly carried European pathogens does not hold up in the face of evidence that figures such as Lord Jeffrey Amherst intentionally attempted to spread diseases such as small pox among Native Americans. What is more, starvation occurred because victims were denied food – this is clear in the cases of the Armenian Genocide, Holocaust, and Native American genocides – and epidemics resulted because people were being starved and thus had dramatically compromised immune systems. This argument form passes off the effects of intentional policies aimed at victims’ deaths as if they were actually the (natural) causes of those deaths.

Justin McCarthy, denier of the Armenian Genocide, goes so far as to equate Muslims who died of disease in areas in which Armenians were being death-marched with Armenian victims of disease. He neglects to mention that one of the main reasons why so many Muslims died of disease is because there were so many rotting Armenian bodies along roads and especially in rivers, contaminating the area generally and in particular the water supply.

(5) Another approach is to dismiss claims of genocide as wartime propaganda (victors’ write the history) or the function of some agenda of the putative victim group. This happens especially in reference to genocides and other atrocities during World Wars I and II, but in other cases as well. Those in Japan are presumably well familiar with claims that the Japanese military’s war crimes convictions were the result of “victor’s justice,” while evidence of the Holocaust and evidence of the Armenian Genocide are similarly dismissed. This of course neglects the fact that much if not most key evidence of these genocides and human rights violations comes from the records of the perpetrator group and/or its allies, and it is fully consistent with if not even more revealing than evidence from military opponents and surviving members of the victim group.

In some cases, assertions of the Holocaust are dismissed as “Zionist propaganda” meant to elicit sympathy for Jews and as a tool for gaining Israel. Even if one were to claim that the Holocaust is sometimes misused in this way, which I do not believe is a significant occurrence, any more than with any other group, this does not change the fact that the Holocaust did happen.

(6) Related to this is an outright dismissal of survivor and eyewitness testimony as inherently unreliable. This is one of the simplest and most direct forms of denial. It is based on two methodological manipulations. First, deniers using it try to get their target audience to forget that there are other types of evidence, evidence that is overall strikingly consistent with survivor and eyewitness accounts, which are among themselves remarkably consistent in cases where there is no chance collusion has taken place. Second, deniers assume that survivors are less legitimate sources of information than others, such as diplomats and officials of the perpetrator government. This reflects a kind of naivete regarding the veracity of government officials et al, as well as unjustified devaluation of and condescension toward survivors and

eyewitnesses. It can even be viewed as a renewed assault on the victims. Indeed, deniers sometimes characterize survivors in similar terms as actual perpetrators did – as deceitful, out to get the perpetrator group, and so on.

Intersecting Forms

(7) A key approach in many cases is what some have called the “numbers game.” Deniers manipulate population figures and/or final casualty figures in various ways. Above I described this approach to Native American genocides. This method is more effective when used in conjunction with other arguments. By lowering, say, the size of the drop in the Native American population, deniers make the arguments from disease and starvation, from spontaneous localized violence, and others more credible. In the case of the Armenian Genocide, initial population figures are lowered and then the percentage of Armenians killed are lowered, to yield a number of 600,000 dead. This number is then identified with certain regions in which many civilian Muslims died of privations in the war. These numbers are inflated, in part through a conflation of Arabs and other non-Turkish Muslims with Turks. Deniers claim that the number of Armenians killed is consistent with the general devastation of World War I in the relevant areas, and hence not to be explained by appeal to the extraordinary mechanism of genocide. They neglect the fact that many Muslim deaths were due to diseases resulting from the killing of Armenians, as described above, and, by grouping all Muslims together, the fact that Arabs engaged in military conflict against each other during World War I.

Among other things, the importance given to such numerical analysis sometimes depends on the false presumption that the numbers of those killed is the key to determining a genocide. Even if “only” 100,000 Armenians died, however, if they died in an event fitting the UN definition of genocide, then this genocide happened. While responsible debate over numbers is an important part of fine-tuning our understanding of a genocide, in itself it is not central.

(8) Deniers often claim that evidence is insufficient, which in the first place involves simply ignoring the wealth of good data for so many cases of genocide. They do this sometimes by posing logical doubts as if they were reasonable doubts. No matter how much evidence there is proving that a genocide happened, no matter how compelling this evidence, it is always logically possible that the genocide did not happen. But a mere logical doubt is not necessarily or even usually a reasonable doubt. If there is a wealth of evidence strongly supporting that a genocide happened, then a reasonable person will conclude that the genocide happened. A reasonable person will doubt this only when presented with strong and credible evidence to the contrary that truly balances, in amount and quality, the data on a genocide. While he or she might recognize the logical possibility that such evidence might emerge and be responsible for taking account of it if it does, this does not require, in the absence of actual credible counter-evidence, actively doubting that the genocide in question happened.

The manipulation of standards is clear here. If such an extreme “absolute positivism” were applied to some of what passes as our most basic knowledge, even it would have to be doubted. We would have to suspend judgment on whether the earth is flat or round, on whether or not it is dangerous to jump in front of a fast-moving bus, whether we are really in Japan right now, and so on. Historically, the logical positivists met with such difficulties, finding their method

of proof so demanding that virtually nothing could be justifiably said. This argument is a misapplication of sometimes legitimate critical thinking principles, for instance as developed in Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*. There, Descartes takes this kind of absolute doubting as his beginning point, and proceeds to build back all sorts of knowledge. Deniers attempt to get their target audience to take such logical doubts as their ending points, rather than as a challenge to reflect further on the available evidence.

The second subtype of this argument form works by rejecting key pieces of evidence, often in a piecemeal fashion, such that individual items are dealt with disconnected from other evidence. It becomes much easier to raise doubt about items in isolation, when their triangulated consistency with other pieces of evidence is not considered. Any individual piece of evidence isolated from other evidence appears as likely fake as genuine, and those without much knowledge of the evidence of a particular genocide are likely to view such an individual, challenged piece datum as uncertain at best. It is only by looking at different pieces of evidence together that mutual reinforcement (which rises exponentially with each new piece of consistent evidence) tips the balance decisively in favor of recognition that a genocide did take place.

A correlate is to challenge scholars of a genocide to prove each basic piece of evidence of the genocide, in the face denialist challenges. The idea is to claim that this or that individual scholar is erecting a house on an unstable foundation. This does two things. First, it requires discussion of a denied genocide to remain endlessly at the most basic level, rather than rising to more advanced and valuable considerations. Even if the proofs are given it is difficult to rise above this level: one is so focused on the basic facts of a genocide that one is prevented from developing a full understanding of it. This tactic is especially effective against a lecturer, rather than a written work, though it is used as a response to writings as well.

Second, and similar to the piecemeal denial of individual data just described, this undermines the normal and necessary form of scholarly enquiry. It means, for instance, that I as a philosopher am barred from discussing the issues I am discussing here this evening because I have not written a work proving all the basic points (that the Holocaust happened, that the Bosnian Genocide happened, etc.) I appear to be assuming. But, no scholarly work, particularly a historical analysis, can progress if each scholar must start from the beginning him- or herself. Scholars must rely on the expertise of other scholars, just as activists for political recognition must rely on the work of scholars. Deniers imply in essence that reliance on the expertise of others means that a particular individual has not confirmed that the genocide in question actually occurred, but is accepting this on faith. This is a bit like saying that no person should drive a car unless he or she has built it from basic elements, including forging all the metal in it, drilling and refining the gasoline used in it, invent the wheel, and so on. While it is true that giving blanket credibility to any putative expert is irresponsible, it is not the case that one must dismiss expert testimony altogether, especially where so many experts agree on the facts of a genocide and their work can be examined and tested publicly. To impose the demand that it be redone or retested each time a scholar wishes to say something more is in effect to prevent scholarship on genocide.

(9) Another strategy is to relativize the suffering of the victims. This includes the assertion that, because members of the perpetrator group also suffered during the period of a claimed

genocide, the view that a one-sided genocide occurred is wrong. In addition to dependence on factual misrepresentation as well as, typically, the “numbers game,” this form attempts to distract its target audience from attention on how and why members of the different groups died. Certainly, Germans ultimately suffered a great deal during World War II, and perhaps 3 million died, but this is irrelevant to the issue of whether their government waged an extermination campaign against Jews and others.

Deniers sometimes make this approach vaguer, by historicizing it: history is filled suffering, and this or that case of putative genocide is just another chapter. Why give it special status? Or, as Norman Itzkowitz’ work suggests, in history the fortunes of different groups ebb and flow, rise and fall. What is considered a cataclysmic event (genocide) is just one of the low points, which should be balanced against the high points.

The inversion of this strategy is the argument that many groups engaged in the kinds of excesses of which a perpetrator group is being accused, yet these other groups’ actions have not been subject to condemnation, so why should the accused be singled out. Japanese deniers point out the Dresden bombing, the firebombing of Tokyo, and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as balancing such things as their version of what happened in Nanjing. This is especially popular for genocides that occurred during wars. The obvious response is to point out the fallacy: that other groups also committed crimes against humanity does not mean that the accused group should not be held responsible; on the contrary, all the groups in question should be held responsible for what they did.

(10) An argument that plays on the national allegiance or the exaggerated national self-image of its target group is the idea that a claimed genocide or other human rights violation is not consistent with the accused group’s culture or general history, and so could not have occurred. Though this is a weaker argument than many of the others, it does have appeal within certain segments of a perpetrator group, during a genocide and even generations later. It is used frequently in the United States, as I described in part (2) of “Motives for Denial by Members of the Perpetrator Group.” It depends on the fallacy that an event that appears to be an aberration or to run counter to the stated ideals or national self-image of a society is unlikely to be true, irrespective of the actual data. This argument also works as an on-going strategy that dismisses each claimed historical or present mass human rights violation as an aberration or false. Similar to the argument for insufficient evidence, this strategy works through a piecemeal denial of individual events, such that the full set of historical evidence showing a pattern of violations is never considered.

(11) The final border form is definitional denial, which applies to genocides. Definitional denial has two main types. The first approach is to exploit limitations or ambiguities of the reference definition of genocide (usually the UN) or of the facts of a genocide itself, such that the genocide appears not to be one according to the reference definition. This is routine in the case of indigenous American genocides. There are a number of points of purchase for deniers. One argument claims that the goal of an alleged perpetrator group was not extermination of the victim group but merely the settlement or taking control of their land, as in the case of the Paraguayan government and the Aches. The violence necessary to dispossess an indigenous group of its land, in combination with the economic and social effects, such as starvation and dispersion, of depriving indigenous people of their land in this type of context, would

appear to constitute genocide by methods (a), (b), and (c) of the UN definition. However, the UN definition also requires specific intent to destroy a group. The case of the Ache appears ambiguous on this point. The perpetrators claim that their ultimate goal was not destruction of the Aches, but merely theft of their land. At the same time, it is quite possible to argue that the destruction of the group is linked necessarily to the land theft – that the act of land theft in this context and genocide are inseparable. In this type of case, the two aspects of the UN definition are in tension. Definitional deniers exploit this tension by emphasizing the letter of the aspect that suits their purposes.

The second type of definitional denial occurs through the falsification of data and/or the misrepresentation of the reference definition. The first case is that of a past genocide. Those who wish to deny or cover up a past genocide usually present manipulated historical data against a standard definition of genocide. For instance, in the case of the Armenian Genocide, some deniers reject the veracity of the small number of historical documents directly exposing the organizing leadership of the Young Turk government. Using Form (3) above, they then claim that the events of 1915 were local massacres and spontaneous inter-communal violence rather than a centrally directed mass extermination.

This has a greater effect than is at first apparent. An objective observer might recognize that the difference between what deniers claim happened and what actually happened is rather small – on either account, there was great violence against Armenians that caused tremendous, far-reaching harm and which sprung from a significant level of prejudice and oppression. By explicitly preventing the use of the term genocide, however, deniers insinuate into the minds of outside parties a subtle fallacy: because what happened to Armenians is supposedly not as bad as what is claimed, it is thus not bad on an objective scale. This demotion in turn makes it easier to construe the events as mutual conflict rather than one-sided killing. The use of definitional denial is striking in this instance, because the Armenian case fits the UN definition very tightly. It is one of the rare instances of genocide that involves all five methods described in the UN definition, and there do exist some documents showing the direct intent of the perpetrators, which is also rare for a genocide.

In some instances, deniers misrepresent the definition of genocide. For instance, in an 1996 review of Ara Sarafian's United States Official Documents on the Armenian Genocide, Volumes 1 and 2, D. Cameron Watt argues that what happened to Armenians was not a genocide because Turks coveted Armenian women and took many into "Turkish harems." For him, the fact that not all Ottoman Armenians were targeted for death, contrary to European Jews in the Holocaust, shows that this was not a genocide. This ignores a prominent feature of the UN definition, which clearly includes the possibility that a victim group might be targeted only "in part." Leaving intact a segment of the victim group does not disqualify the event as genocide – especially when the segment is relatively small, as in the Armenian case. The fact that these women were sexually enslaved with the same attitude that Armenian sheep were incorporated into the herds of Turks, as dehumanized objects rather than to save them from the Genocide out respect for their lives, shows how minor this exception was relative to the general genocidal intent of the perpetrators. Watt also states that the Armenians did not suffer genocide because their persecution was based on "religious" not "racial" prejudice. This, of course, ignores an equally obvious element of the UN definition, that the target of genocide can be a religious

group. By thus misrepresenting the definition of genocide, Watt in fact transforms a recognized feature of the Armenian Genocide into apparent evidence that the events in question did not constitute genocide.

Definitional denials are also applied to ongoing genocides. For example, during the Rwandan Genocide of April to June 1994, officials of the United States and certain European countries as well as most representatives on the UN Security Council refused to characterize the mass violence as genocide, despite the clear evidence they possessed showing it to fit the UN definition.

Observers had been predicting genocide, based on the extensive state-sponsored propaganda calling for the extermination of the Tutsis. The initial killing should have obviated doubts as to whether the perpetrator group was going to act on the stated intention. Once hundreds of thousands or even tens of thousands had been killed by order of or at the direct instigation of the government, there should have been no doubt that the intent to commit genocide was being fully actualized. Instead, US and European governments and UN Security Council members refused to acknowledge publicly the obvious fact of genocide in Rwanda. When pressed, they claimed that the facts were still unclear and so it would be hasty to call the situation a genocide. There is some evidence that it was a conscious policy in the US administration and on the Security Council to avoid use of the term genocide.

The objective of these definitionalist maneuvers was to forestall intervention. The motivation, which is a special case that could be added to typology above, was indifference and a devaluation of black African lives. Denial succeeded brilliantly. It is possible to argue that the entire genocide could have been prevented once the initial intent was clear, if the UN or some other outside power had intervened decisively, which would have required commitment of just a few thousand troops who would probably have not had to fight at all. Even more compelling is the argument that once tens or hundreds of thousands were killed there could be no reasonable doubt that a genocide was transpiring; the failure to acknowledge the events as genocide at this point prevented intervention that would have saved on the order of 500,000 of the 850,000 victims. In Rwanda, the stakes of definition could not have been higher: the consequence of definitional denial was mass death.

In retrospect, the events in Rwanda have been universally recognized as an absolutely clear instance of UN-defined genocide. In 1998, President Clinton publicly apologized for his own and others' failure to intervene. Yet, he still begged out of responsibility by reiterating his administration's original definitionalist claim that in April and May 1994 they really did not understand that what was happening was genocide. Figures such as Glynne Evans, then of the UN Human Commission on Human Rights, have repeated such definitionalist evasions of responsibility subsequently.

Logical Fallacies

(12) The first fallacious argument is that there are "two sides to every story" that should be given the same credence. Certainly there is always more than one perspective on any historical or current event, but the mere existence of multiple perspectives does not imply their equal value. Deniers often contend that their views should be disseminated alongside the facts of a

genocide, in fairness. While it is true that getting multiple perspectives on an event or issue is sometimes useful or indispensable, in the case of genocide denial, the “other side of the story” has already been exposed as faulty. To grant it equal credibility out of some misguided desire for “balance” or merely because a credentialed academic might be advocating it is to conflate objectivity and neutrality. Being objective does not mean giving equal weight to every view on an issue or event. On the contrary, such neutrality regarding a genocide gives *de facto* support to denial, by granting it a legitimacy it would not otherwise have. Objectivity does not lie halfway between truth and falsity, but rather requires siding entirely with the truth, even if it is contained in only one view among many.

Journalists in the United States who stress presenting “the other side of the story” balanced against the primary view commit this fallacy, which in their instance might be termed “journalistic relativism.” Holocaust denier Bradley Smith has used this argument to convince college newspaper editors to publish his negation of the Holocaust, even though the editors typically do not believe his view is correct. Again, by presenting Holocaust denial as another position to be considered, these budding journalists confer on it a legitimacy it would not otherwise have. In this situation, those engaging in this fallacy do not actually believe denial to be true. In other circumstances, those faced with a claim of genocide and its denial, third parties really adopt a neutral position. I term the view that whenever credentialed academics hold contradictory views on issue, both views are taken as equally credible “academic relativism.” It is prevalent in the United States today. Academic relativists do not advance beyond this initial point, failing to do the hard critical analysis necessary to evaluate the positions and determine the truth. At the extreme, this approach reflects adherence to “historical relativism,” the view that all perspectives on a given history are automatically equally accurate representations of that history, including those of apparent victims and apparent victimizers.

In some cases deniers go so far as to present themselves as critical thinkers going against the dominant viewpoint. This appeals especially to those in the target audience with iconoclastic tendencies, who doubt any apparently dominant narrative (such as that the Holocaust happened). In order to disseminate propaganda, the deniers actually take on the guise of marginalized truth seekers fighting against propaganda.

(13) A second fallacy is the argument that, because a genocide happened in the past, it should be put behind the victim and perpetrator groups. This might be called the “forget and forgive” argument. There are two main problems with it. First, the mere fact that a genocide happened long ago does not mean that its impact has lessened. Once a victim group has been harmed, this harm remains until repaired, at least as much as it can be. For a genocide to be forgotten simply allows the perpetrators or their progeny to consolidate the gains made through the genocide. The progeny of perpetrators continue to enjoy the fruits of the genocide. Successful negation yields a stalemate that prevents a return of lands and other material assets seized by a perpetrator group, where applicable. It also checks the compensation necessary to the revival of the remnants of the victim group. Deprived of reparations, some groups, such as most if not all Native American nations, continue to be affected by their experiences of genocide. What is more, land and other material wealth taken are not just static losses that can be replaced at some future date. They also originally represented the full or partial basis for the subsequent development of the victim group that would have occurred if the genocide had not.

Not only have these things been lost, so have the compounding gains that would have been built on them.

Successful denial solidifies the inferior status of the victims resulting from the genocide, and normalizes a world-view for both perpetrators and victims that the victims are fit targets of denigration and violence. Simply forgetting a genocide leaves intact the status shift it produced.

There is also the material effect of negation on the political situation of the victims. Shockingly, trivialization of the Cambodian genocide outside Cambodia and denial within allowed the Pol Pot-led Khmer Rouge to become a partner in the later government formed under U. N. auspices in the 1990s, after decades of struggle to mitigate the devastation of Cambodia produced by this very Khmer Rouge. Successful denial has meant that Turkey has been able to escape international condemnation for its decade-old blockade of the independent Armenian Republic, exert other military and political pressure against it, and continue to assault the rights and security of its own small residual Armenian population. The effects on Native Americans have been singularly devastating. Denial has allowed the U. S. government to continue to mistreat Native Americans. The presumption that if both groups forgive and forget the past things will be better for all is simply false.

Ultimately, this approach means that the perpetrator society is not rehabilitated away from the attitudes that led to genocide in the first place, which allows it to remain an active threat to the victim group as well as others. A proper reconciliation that solves the problems constituting the legacy of a genocide depends first on a proper reckoning with the history. For the history to be overcome, it must be fully acknowledged and engaged.

(14) Another fallacy is based on the claim that some or an inordinate percentage of members of the victim group are actually morally suspect. This fallacy depends on the linking, which is widespread in the United States, of a victim group's image with its status as victim group. If a victim group resists genocide, especially successfully, it will not be seen as a helpless victim and thus not as a clear victim at all. Or, if a group or some members of it display behaviors or attitudes that run counter to the ideal of the perfectly pure victim, their victimization comes into question. For instance, at least two scholars in the United States have recently written about ways in which Native Americans negatively impacted nature, through burning of fields and so forth. For some time, the updated "noble savage" fantasy, the "environmental Indian," has been a prominent idealization. The legitimacy of Native American presence on American land, their entitlement to that land and thus the wrongfulness of the policies that pushed them off of that land through deportation and extermination, depends for many people on this idealization. The assertion of Native American environmental destructiveness implies that they have no more special claim on the land than the European invaders, if even as much, and thus that their deportation (and extermination) were not particularly wrong.

The appropriate response is clear: the moral status of a victim group is irrelevant to whether it was the victim of a genocide or not. Every member could be morally objectionable, but it would still be wrong to target all or a substantial part of the groups for elimination based on their membership in the group. Certainly members of a victim group should be faulted for any wrongdoing or character flaws, but such failings should never in any way be taken to justify genocide.

(15) A fourth fallacy involves playing genocides off against each other. Some deniers go to great lengths to support recognition of one or more other genocides, in order to convince their target audience that they accept as facts genocides when they really happen and so their rejection of claims of the genocide with which they are actually concerned appears more credible and based on an analysis that would have found the genocide to have happened if it really did. Quite often the Holocaust is used as the other genocide. For instance, 10 years ago major Armenian Genocide denier Stanford Shaw wrote a book on Turkish efforts to save Jews during the Holocaust, following a long tradition of beneficent Turkish treatment of Jews. Setting aside the factual point that Turkey's record during the Holocaust is as mixed as those of many other bystander countries, Shaw's approach also tries to impose or depends on the assumption that Turkey's treatment of the Jews is somehow the key indicator of its treatment of Armenians. A second apparent motivation of Shaw was to intervene against the growing advocacy of recognition of the Armenian Genocide by Jewish academics, activists, and others.

(16) The final fallacy works especially within the perpetrator group. It claims that recognition of a genocide by the members of the perpetrator group is somehow disloyal. This allows marginalization of those within that society pushing for recognition. Particularly where xenophobia is prevalent, the "loyalty fallacy" can lead to outright persecution of the victims. I have already discussed this form of denial in the "Motivations" section.

CONCLUSION

Although countering denial falsifications with facts is indispensable, alone this strategy does not address the ways in which deniers manipulate evidence standards and rely on logical fallacies. If these are left unchallenged, their success undercuts the effectiveness of factual refutation. This can result in a stalemate of endless claim and counterclaim, as deniers continually replace discredited claims with new fabrications, and even simply reassert the old ones. In a climate of denial, the truth depends as much on disseminating the facts as exposing these other aspects of denial arguments. What is more, exposing the problems with denialist argument forms can cut off entire avenues of negation.

Educating students, journalists, and members of the general population about the forms can also sensitize their target audience to the manipulations of denial and the pitfalls of otherwise credible-sounding arguments. As such, it represents an additional avenue of critical thinking supplementing and supporting proper use of more traditional forms (including those distorted by deniers). It gives students and others hopefully helpful tools for approaching the study of history and current events that is so filled with violence and its denial.

Finally, showing how deniers of distinct genocides use the same argument forms can help discredit them. To see that a Nanjing Massacre denier uses the same approach as a Holocaust denier, for instance, can foster a more critical attitude toward deniers of the Nanjing Massacre. When denials of a broad range of genocides and mass human rights violence are viewed together in their dramatic consistency with one another, we can recognize each individual instance of denial as part of a general global problem and fight particular denials as part of a broader struggle.

Sources and Suggestions for Further Reading

The following is a list of some main sources, which are also suggestions for further reading. General sources for basic information about the various genocides treated in this paper, as well as some aspects of their denials and denial in general:

Charny, Israel W., ed., *Encyclopedia of Genocide*, Vol. 1-2 (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 1999).

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Aghjayan, George M., "Genocide Denial: The Armenian and Jewish Experiences Compared" (Worcester: Armenian National Committee of Central Massachusetts, 1998).

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Theriault, Henry, "Free Speech and Denial: The Case of the Armenian Genocide, in Looking Backward, Moving Forward: *Confronting the Armenian Genocide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Press, 2003).

Additional sources on the Armenian Genocide and its denial:

Dadrian, Vahakn, *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucasus*, 3d rev. ed. (Providence, RI: Berghahn Books, 1997).

Hovannisian, Richard, ed., *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1986).

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Smith, Roger, Eric Markusen, and Robert Jay Lifton, "Professional Ethics and the Denial of the Armenian Genocide," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 9:1 (Spring 1995).

Additional source for Native American genocides and their denials:

(*) Churchill, Ward, *A Little Matter of Genocide: Holocaust and Denial in the Americas, 1492 to the Present* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1998).

Additional source for the genocides in Rwanda, Cambodia, and Yugoslavia and their denials:

(*) Power, Samantha, *"A Problem From Hell": America in the Age of Genocide* (Basic Books, 2002).

Additional source for the East Timor Genocide and its denial:

(*) Jardine, Matthew, *East Timor: Genocide in Paradise (The Real Story)* (Odonian Press, 1996).

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