1. Introduction: Confronting global trouble

Nothing could be more irresponsible than the immodest self-certainty of one who rests content in the good sense of a responsibility properly assumed.

(Thomas Keenan, 1997)

In July 1995, the Dutchbat soldiers of the UN “Safe Area” Srebrenica left the enclave after Serb forces had conquered it and massacred thousands of its former inhabitants. Four years later, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan concluded in a report that although “the primary and most direct responsibility” lies with “the architects and implementers of the attempted genocide in Bosnia” there were others to blame as well:

The international community as a whole must accept its share of responsibility for allowing this tragic course of events by its prolonged refusal to use force in the early stages of the war. This responsibility is shared by the Security Council, the Contact Group and other Governments which contributed to the delay in the use of force, as well as by the United Nations Secretariat and the mission in the field. … Through error, misjudgement and an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us, we failed to do our part to help save the people of Srebrenica from the Serb campaign of mass murder. … Srebrenica crystallized a truth understood only too late by the United Nations and the world at large: that Bosnia was as much a moral cause as a military conflict. The tragedy of Srebrenica will haunt our history forever.

In the report Annan encouraged the Member States “to engage in a process of reflection and analysis, focused on the key challenges the narrative [on Srebrenica] uncovers.”

The Dutch government, whose soldiers were stationed in Srebrenica when Serb forces overran the UN enclave in 1995, initiated several investigations and a parliamentary inquiry in order to account for what happened. The most extensive investigation was commissioned by the Dutch government in 1996. It was set up as a historical research project conducted by

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3 Ibid.
the Netherlands Institute of War documentation (NIOD). Six years later, on 10 April 2002, the research team published its report.4 The report comprises nearly four thousand pages and four supplementary studies. It was presented as an analytical explanatory report without political judgements. According to the report, the political judgements should later be formulated in the public and political arena.5 Six days after the presentation of the NIOD report, and seven years after the fall of Srebrenica, the Dutch cabinet resigned. However, the explanation of the resignation was ambivalent in terms of an acknowledgment of responsibility: Prime Minister Kok stated in his resignation speech that the resignation was meant to make “visible” a “political co-responsibility for the situation” in which Srebrenica could happen, but he also emphasised that it did not imply a Dutch responsibility for the “horrible murder of thousands of Bosnian Muslims in 1995.”6

Three months later in July 2002, the Dutch government commissioned a parliamentary inquiry which aimed to provide the Parliament with information that would “fill the gaps” of the NIOD report and another earlier Dutch investigation on the problems of military missions.7 The findings were meant to enable the Parliament to make “a final political judgement on the performance of the Parliament, the Dutch government and the civilian/military personnel in charge, before, during and after the events in Srebrenica.”8 During the hearings, former Minister of Defence Joris Voorhoeve stated that it “was a peacekeeping mission that has tragically failed. One can only conclude that it ultimately was a tragic and horrible failure, in spite of all efforts by the Netherlands to move others to hold

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4 Hans Blom and Peter Romijn (eds.) et al., Srebrenica een ‘veilig’ gebied: Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area, 2002, p. 31. Available at http://www.srebrenica.nl. The English version of this NIOD report is also available at www.srebrenica.nl: Hans Blom and Peter Romijn (eds.) et al., Srebrenica a 'Safe Area'. Reconstruction, Background, Consequences and Analysis of the Fall of a Safe Area., 2002

5 Hans Blom and Peter Romijn (eds.) et al., Srebrenica een ‘veilig’ gebied: Reconstructie, achtergronden, gevolgen en analyses van de val van een Safe Area, Proloog p. 31. (Prologue not available in English version of the report.)

6 Wim Kok, “Integrale tekst van de verklaring van premier Kok”, De Volkskrant, 16 April 2002.


8 Ibid. (My translation)
The former Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans van Mierlo refused to qualify the mission as a failure and doubted whether the Dutch could have saved a human life, whilst on the other hand he did acknowledge that “we absolutely have fallen short of reaching our goals.” The parliamentary committee concluded from its findings that the Dutch cabinet had rightfully resigned, because of its “political responsibility for the failing of the national and international politics in Srebrenica” at the time. Nonetheless, in line with the Prime Minister Kok’s resignation speech, the committee refused to speak of “guilt” and the need to apologise to the survivors of Srebrenica. In its conclusions, the committee also praised the Dutchbat soldiers, because “the members of Dutchbat III had performed their tasks in good faith” in very difficult circumstances, and, although there were some points of critique, they could not be blamed for the failure of the mission. In June 2003, Parliament accepted the main results of the official inquiry, which meant that the question of Dutch responsibility for the events in Srebrenica was formally settled.

Nonetheless, the results of the report and the political debate were not generally accepted as the final judgement on the Dutch role in Srebrenica. Journalists and non-government organisations kept on drawing public attention to the question of international responsibility in relation to the failed peacekeeping mission. Moreover, the question of (co-) responsibility of the State of the Netherlands and the United Nations surfaced again in several lawsuits against the Dutch state. In 2004, the former UN translator Hasan Nuhanović who lost his family after the fall of the UN “Safe area” and the relatives of Rizo Mustafić, a Bosnian electrician who worked for Dutchbat and was killed after the fall of Srebrenica, started a case against the State of the Netherlands. In 2007, the organisation Mothers of Srebrenica, who are representing a group of 7930 survivors, accused the Dutch state of a co-responsibility for the events in Srebrenica.

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9 Ibid., p. 411 (My translation)
10 Ibid., p. 413
11 The chair of the committee, Bert Bakker, later explained that apologies would be an empty gesture without, for example, paying damages to the survivors. Theo Koële, "Falen rond Srebrenica is collectief", De Volkskrant, 5 June 2003.
12 Parlementaire Enquêtecommissie Srebrenica, Missie zonder vrede: Eindrapport p. 454
13 For example the Bosnian organisation Women of Srebrenica, the Dutch IKV-Pax Christi, Stari Most and The Netherlands-Srebrenica Working Group, the international organisation Srebrenica Justice International and the affiliated British Srebrenica Justice Campaign and French Soutien aux Survivants de la Vallee de Drina - Srebrenica, the St Louis based Committee of the Dispossessed from Srebrenica and Zepa (US) and the Swiss based organisation Podrina Srebrenica.
course of events in Srebrenica and filed a legal complaint against the Dutch state. The survivors ask the Dutch government and the UN to acknowledge this co-responsibility and for the payment of damages. Besides these cases, the public prosecution department decided in August 2010, to investigate a criminal complaint by Nuhanović and the relatives Mustafić. They have accused the former Dutchbat commander Thom Karremans, his deputy Rob Franken and second-in-command Berend Oosterveen of colluding in genocide by handing over their relatives to the Bosnian Serbs. Also, Dutchbat soldier Dave Maat went to court accusing the Dutch Ministry of Defence of being responsible for the Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSS) he developed as a result from the Srebrenica mission; furthermore he requested and the publication of documents that would reveal the coordinates of a mass grave on the former Dutchbat compound.

It is not very likely, though, that these legal actions will finally succeed in bringing closure to the question of responsibility either. In the lawsuit of the Mothers of Srebrenica against the Netherlands and the UN, the representatives of the Dutch state denied liability. In 2008, a Dutch court ruled that the Dutch government was indeed not a party in these proceedings on the grounds that the mission was a UN mission and not a Dutch mission. Likewise, the European Court of Human Rights in 2007, dismissed cases about injuries of civilians caused by states involved in the Kosovo intervention. The Court found that it was not competent to review the acts respondent states carried out on behalf of the UN as it saw the actions undertaken by the Member States as “directly attributable to the UN, an organisation of universal jurisdiction fulfilling its imperative collective security objective”.

Notwithstanding the growing impact of cosmopolitan thinking – in which human rights play

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14 Van Diepen and Van der Kroef lawyers, "Writ of Summons (for the Mothers of Srebrenica against the State of the Netherlands and the United Nations before the Court in The Hague, The Netherlands)," (2007).
15 Ibid.
16 NRC Handelsblad, "OM begint feitenonderzoek na aangifte nabestaanden Srebrenica,” 19 August 2010.
19 This concerns the cases of Behrami and Behrami vs France, App. No. 71412/01 and Saramati vs France, Germany and Norway, App. No. 78166/01, European court of Human Rights Grand Chamber, Decision on Admissibility (31 May 2007), see Anne Orford, "The passions of protection: sovereign authority and humanitarian war,” in Experiencing War, edited by Christine SylvesterRoutledge, 2011.
an important role - state sovereignty is still an important cornerstone in both legal and political reasoning. The lack of accountability for military UN missions is part of this problem. According to Orford, in legal reasoning on UN interventions the intervening states are seen as “agents of a broader universalism that transcends any particular political order.”

And indeed, in the Srebrenica case the UN has stated that the organisation was “protected” by the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations which was adopted in 1946. It says that the UN “shall enjoy immunity from every form of legal processes except insofar as in any particular case it has expressly waived its immunity.” Dutch state lawyers have defended this UN position of immunity. Whether the UN can maintain this position is still part of the legal proceedings at the time of this writing. Nevertheless, on 5 July 2011, The Hague Appeals Court ruled that even though the Dutch soldiers were operating under a U.N mandate, they were under the "effective control" of top Dutch military and government officials in The Hague when they ordered hundreds of Muslim men and boys out of their compound. The ruling said that the three men were among the last to be expelled and by that time the Dutchbat peacekeepers already had seen Bosnian Serb troops abusing Muslim men and boys and should have known they faced the real threat of being killed. "Dutchbat should not have turned these men over to the Serbs," a summary of the judgment said.

According to lawyer Liesbeth Zegveld, the legal cases by the Srebrenica survivors would not have been necessary if the representatives of the State of the Netherlands had apologised and talked to the victims earlier. “Nobody was keen at all to instigate proceedings. Not Mustafic’ family, nor Mr. Nuhanović.” Without wanting to underestimate the importance of dialogue and apologies, I will argue that the lack of closure of the history of the Srebrenica mission has more dimensions than that. Striving for closure may not even be an appropriate nor a possible aim in this matter. By exploring the strategies that aim to do so, I propose to open up some new lines of thought on the question of responsibility. I will introduce my argument with some fragments taken from Robert Musil’s book The Man

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20 Ibid., p. 19.
21 Worsnip, Patrick, "UN says immune from legal action over Srebrenica. " Reuters, 8 June 2007.
Without Qualities, because those fragments demonstrate very aptly some broader dimensions of establishing responsibility.

Constitutive trouble

In Robert Musil’s book Man without Qualities a man and a woman are walking on a street in a big city when suddenly, a road accident happens in front of them. Musil describes the couple as belonging to a privileged section of society, their good breeding being apparent in their clothes, their bearing and their manner of conversing. They had their initials significantly embroidered on their underclothing. And likewise – that is to say, not outwardly displayed, but, as it were, in the exquisite underlinen of their minds – they knew who they were and that they were in their proper place in a capital city that was also an imperial residence.²⁴

The couple approached the scene and

peering over heads and bent backs, contemplated the man lying on the ground. Then they stepped back and stood hesitating. The lady had a disagreeable sensation in the pit of her stomach, which she felt entitled to take for compassion; it was an irresolute, paralysing sensation.²⁵

Apparently, the lady was disturbed by what she saw. Her partner responds to this disturbance by describing the event as the result of a technical problem:

“These heavy lorries they use here have too long a braking-distance.” Somehow the lady felt relieved at hearing this. And she thanked him with an attentive glance. Though she had doubtless heard the expression many times before, she did not know what a braking-distance was, nor had she any wish to know; it was sufficient for her that by this means the horrible happening could be fitted into some kind of pattern, so becoming a technical problem that no longer directly concerned her.²⁶

Moreover, the gentleman describes the event as part of a normality:

“According to American statistics,” the gentleman observed, “there are over a hundred and ninety thousand people killed on the roads annually over there, and four hundred and fifty thousand injured.” “Do you think he is dead?” his companion asked, still with the unjustified feeling that she had experienced something exceptional.²⁷

The handling by “the proper institutions” further relieved the bystanders from their concerns:

And now the shrill whistle of an ambulance could be heard, and the promptness of its arrival was a source of satisfaction to the waiting crowd. How admirable these social

²⁵ Ibid., p. 5.
²⁶ Ibid.
²⁷ Ibid., p. 6.
institutions are! The casualty was lifted on to a stretcher and then slid into the ambulance. Men in a kind of uniform attended to him. The inside of the vehicle, glimpsed for a moment, looked as clean and tidy as a hospital ward. People walked on with the almost justifiable impression that what had occurred was an event within the proper framework of law and order.  

Musil’s text confronts us with some problems that are relevant when we consider the question “What happened in Srebrenica?” It demonstrates that describing the event not only serves to reconstruct what happened (in order to seek truth and to find out who’s responsible for the injuries of the victim), but the description also affects our perception of the identity of the narrator and the bystanders. Moreover, it shapes our thoughts about the workings of society. Firstly, it is important to note that the lady seemed to accept the gentleman’s authority to explain to her what happened at face value. That by itself made that the gentleman seemed to be in a position to speak. Secondly, although the gentleman’s theory about the braking distance of the lorry may have been a well-informed guess, we should be aware of its function to relieve “the disagreeable sensation in the pit of the stomach.” The explanation excludes the agency and thus responsibility of the lorry driver. Maybe the driver was drunk. Or it might even have been an assassination. Moreover, the technical explanation implicitly denies the horrible finality of death. As opposed to the inevitability of death, technical problems are problems that can be solved, which, of course, is a much more convenient idea. In this way, the response serves to secure the identity of the bystanders who are facing human vulnerability and the possibility of death. Another strategy that the gentleman uses to ease the pain is to categorise the victim as part of an American “normality” that comprises hundred and ninety thousand people killed on the road annually and four hundred and fifty thousand injured. In other words, there is nothing “exceptional” to worry about. The bystanders also found relief in the prompt arrival of the “social institutions.” The ambulance, the men in “a kind of uniform” and the cleanliness were interpreted as signifiers of a proper framework of law and order, which also proved the “normalcy” of the accident since the handling of it was institutionalised. Meanwhile, the victim has literally vanished out of sight. The meaning of victimhood was effectively replaced by the operations of technology, statistics and institutions. These explanatory mechanisms are what Susan Stewart calls a taxonomy of death. The taxonomy, or analysis, can be seen as an antidote to emotion and surplus meaning. The natural inevitability of death is replaced by a series of mental, rational, or scientific operations that deny death, and thus seek to reactivate life by situating death in a larger historico-temporal process, such as the universality of the human species, the continuity

28 Ibid., pp. 5, 6.
of scientific research which seeks to reduce the causes of death, the eternity of life on another metaphysical plane of existence, and so on.  

The gentleman’s description of the event as a technical problem that is part of a normal pattern not only serves as an antidote to emotion and “normalises” the incomprehensibility of death, the account is also an affirmation of his own detached social position. He uses the opportunity to display his knowledge of technology and statistics (his “exquisite mind”) and he feels satisfied because of the working of the “social institutions” which affirms his privileged position of living in a “proper place in a capital city that was also an imperial residence.” It is no question for the gentleman why, in the assumed well-governed place where he feels part of, something can go so fatally wrong.

Although very different in time and scope of human grief, the fragments of Musil’s text may serve as useful metaphors to appreciate that analysing the much graver and more complex events in Srebrenica is a dangerous project. It demonstrates that references to technology, institutions and normality are not just neutral descriptions of an event. It further demonstrates that the identity of the narrator (in Musil’s case the gentleman) is related to his seemingly objective comments on the confrontation with an injured (or possibly dead) person.

Thus, Musil’s fragments made me realise that when looking for answers on questions of responsibility for the failed peacekeeping mission in Srebrenica, other issues need to be considered too. Firstly, analysing Srebrenica and fitting the events into some kind of explanatory pattern, carries the risk of denying its horrific uniqueness and makes it into something that need no longer concern us. The analysis itself may distract attention from the victims and relocate bystanders as detached outsiders. There is a strong tension between making Srebrenica recognisable in conventional norms as a “true disaster” and representing the violence in the illegible horrific uniqueness of individual experiences.

Secondly, not recognising the political nature of the act of analysing itself may cover up specific responsibilities of the international community. However direct, objective, neutral and factual the reports about Srebrenica may appear, they all necessarily interpret, classify and categorise the violence in a specific way. Reporting is an interpretative process that implies the framing of the violence. This framing does not only concern the angle or perspective on the events; it also concerns the choices of what is portrayed and what is not. Hence, the framing determines what is actually seen as an event and what is not. In chapter 3,

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we will see how Srebrenica reached a world audience, and that it only got the status of a “global accident” long after many tragedies had already taken place. Thus and so, the “accident” is isolated from the preceding violent episode by categorising that episode as a mere “humanitarian problem” and not part of the “actual genocide” that took place after the fall of the enclave. Therefore, my analysis aims to highlight the presumptions of what is essential to the event and how they have established the possibilities of assessing them. These presumptions are, in other words, the discursive frames that enable us to “see” what happened in Srebrenica.

Thirdly, the question whom we are giving a voice, needs attention. It is important to realise that power relations are constructed and reaffirmed by those who we allow to describe the world for us. I have emphasised the fact that the gentleman was in a position to speak since the lady accepted his comments on the accident. On a global scale, and in relation to Srebrenica, the position of the gentleman is that of the media from which we accept news on certain events as facts. In practise, many voices are excluded in this process and not in the last instance the voice of the victims and survivors. Of course, in the example of Robert Musil’s story, the victim was most likely dead and thus could not give his version of the events. This is equally the case in Srebrenica, but very often victims and survivors are not being heard for other reasons. The voices of the inhabitants of UN “Safe Area” Srebrenica were scarcely being heard in the outside world and there were only very few Western journalists who reported about the events in Srebrenica before August 1995. Even now, it is not so much those who have suffered that define the meaning of Srebrenica in world history. Many have been interviewed, but only very few were in a position to put their own questions to the relevant persons. This is not to claim, though, that reports by victims would necessarily be more accurate than reports by “bystanders.” The often-heard conviction that one is only able to judge a situation fairly when one has been part of it, has adequately been disproved by Hannah Arendt. She notices: “The argument that we cannot judge if we were not present and involved ourselves seems to convince everyone everywhere, although it seems obvious that if it were true, neither the administration of justice nor the writing of history would ever be possible.”30 The outsider voice is not necessarily false, but other – and possibly softer - voices are indispensable to open up in-depth perspectives and alternative dimensions of what happened.

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A fourth aspect, which is crucial to my analysis, is the implicit construction of agency in the process of defining and describing, or in other words; the process of subjectification. In Musil’s story, the gentleman’s discursive interventions affect both his own subjectivity (a knowledgeable man belonging to a privileged section of society who is in a position to formulate what happened) and the framing of the accident - in this case as a “normal” and thus acceptable accident for which no one in particular bears responsibility. It illustrates what Judith Butler calls a performative understanding of subjectivity, in which discourse functions to a certain extent “to produce that which it declares.”\textsuperscript{31} In this case, responsibility for the possible causes of the accident, and thus human agency, is transferred to the realm of technical failures, statistics (normality) and institutions. Moreover, the creation of this discursive realm provides the stage on which the gentleman can display himself as authority and as a knowledgeable person in a well-managed society. A set of already operative conventions (statistics and norms) that are “grounded in no other legitimating authority than the echo-chain of their own reinvocation”\textsuperscript{32} are reworked to control emotions.

In particular, the probability of facing death and its incomprehensibility provokes a crisis of representation. The gentleman counters this crisis with his theories. Since his subjectivity is a discursive effect of this performance, the representational crisis resulting from the accident can be conceived of as a constitutive trouble. It should be noted though, that the gentleman’s subjectivity is not completely determined by the effects of discourse. According to Butler,

> for discourse to materialize a set of effects, “discourse” itself must be understood as complex and convergent chains in which “effects” are vectors of power. In this sense, what is constituted in discourse is not fixed in or by discourse, but becomes the condition and occasion for further action. This does not mean that any action is possible on the basis of a discursive effect. On the contrary, certain reiterative chains of discursive production are barely legible as reiterations, for the effects they have materialized are those without which no bearing in discourse can be taken.\textsuperscript{33}

I will return later to the problem of materiality and discourse, but first, I will relate the relevance of Musil’s text to the subject of this thesis.

As a result of the processes of globalisation, our confrontations are no longer restricted to local trouble. We also position ourselves in relation to global problems. Security and


\textsuperscript{32} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p.187.
foreign policy have always been closely linked in traditional theories of international relations, but poststructuralist theorists of world politics have acknowledged a more radical implication of the relation between the identification of global trouble and its constitutive effects on political orders. Cynthia Weber, for example, studies the formative effects of “global trouble” on global subjects like “sovereignty” and “states.” Using Butler’s concept of performativity for her analysis, she concludes that “foreign policy is a response to a fundamental ‘trouble’ or crisis of representation and that sovereign states are discursive effects of ‘foreign policy trouble.’”34 Thus, if we consider Srebrenica as an example of “global trouble,” it is interesting to find out how the perceptions of (and responses to) Srebrenica have a constitutive effect on political subjectivity.

The fall of UN “Safe Area” Srebrenica has turned out to have been a forceful incentive to all kinds of investigations by journalists, activists, academics, lawyers and politicians. However, the configurations of responsibility that can be found in their investigations do not only describe the forms of responsibility, they also shape the preconditions for individual and communal responsibility through the ways in which they problematise the events in Srebrenica. Political subjects like “Srebrenica,” “the UN” and “the Netherlands” are never pre-given political subjects or problems. Their significance is constituted in discourse. Moreover, their significance needs to be performed and affirmed repeatedly in discourse in order to retain more or less stable identities. Analysts and commentators of foreign policy do not only analyse or comment on foreign policy, but constitute it as well. The configuration of “insiders” and “outsiders” of political communities and world problems, and thus the identification of those who can be reckoned to be responsible and those who cannot be responsible, takes place in the definitions and subjectification of world problems. Hence, the focus of this analysis is on the politics that takes place before traditional conceptions of politics get into place and on a responsibility before traditional conceptions of responsibility have been articulated. It is an analysis of the assumptions that have closed off the options for alternative forms of decision-making and responsibility for the events in Srebrenica.

In sum, the question of responsibility keeps haunting the survivors as well as Dutchbat soldiers, Dutch politics, the UN missions and many others. My study is a response to this haunting. I is my aim to mark the contours of what is lost in the narrative reconstructions of the failed peacekeeping mission in Srebrenica and to explore its constitutive effects in politics.

and law. In doing so, I will focus on the complex relations between responsibility and subjectivity. I will analyse a variety of accounts by those who have reported on Srebrenica and brought Srebrenica into being as an object of debate and research and, simultaneously, have shaped responsibility in particular ways. The proceedings at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the Dutch NIOD report play an important role in this. I did not strive to cover the entire debate comprehensively, but the themes as selected by me do play a key role in the narrative framing of responsibility. They include the ethics and effectiveness of international intervention, the conceptualisation of the violence as genocide, ethnic identity and community, the foreseeability of events, and the role of witnesses and bystanders to the crimes.

In every chapter, I will depart from the accounts on Srebrenica. Subsequently, I will explore the theories that are implied by the descriptions of what happened. In these explorations a critique of political and legal analysis of global problems and its relation to the paradigm of positivism becomes visible. The analysis shows that positivist perspectives play an significant role in the foreclosure of the conditions of possibility of ethical and political decision-making and thus have a strong depoliticising effect on the question of responsibility. Moreover, it demonstrates how the accounts not only relate to the political problems of the past, but also shape preconditions of present and future responsibilities.

In general, this thesis is a call for more recognition of the politics in those domains that are often presented as the counterparts of it, such as academia and the legal courts. This argument is definitely no plea for more politically “biased” approaches of investigations, but - as some would say - it is an argument for doing more justice to the political.35

Outline

The thesis is outlined as follows. In chapter 2, I will argue that the traditional positivist theories of International Relations that have informed the Srebrenica investigations have a very limited understanding of the concept of responsibility. I will elaborate on how a poststructuralist approach to global politics can open up new perspectives on responsibility by emphasising the intertwinedness of political subjectivity, responsibility and ethics and introducing the concept of heteronomous responsibility. As opposed to an autonomous

35 I borrowed the phrasing “doing justice to the political” from Sarah M. H. Nouwen, and Wouter G. Werner,, "Doing Justice to the Political; The International Criminal Court in Uganda and Sudan," European Journal of International Law, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2010).
conception of responsibility in which we are supposedly free to choose whether to be responsible or not, an heteronomous responsibility always precedes the conceptualisation of “the autonomous individual”, “the state” or any other responsible entity. From the perspective of a heteronomous and thus relational responsibility it can be better understood how responsibility is limited by its symbolisation. My point of departure is the public debate on Dutch responsibilities in relation to Srebrenica. I will discuss its constitutive effects on the (political) subjects and its related understandings of responsibility for global affairs.

Chapter 3 I will reconstruct the first stage of the transformation of Srebrenica from a “local problem” into an “international problem.”36 I will identify a battle about definitions of violence that transgresses the problem of mere “fact finding”. Different definitions are related to different interpretations of the context of the war in Bosnia. It shows that this battle of definitions was highly political. It had direct consequences for both the conditions of possibility of massive violence to take place and for an adequate response to the violence.

Chapter 4 discusses the accounts that deny that the crime of genocide was committed in Srebrenica. The revisionists frame the events in Srebrenica as a staged legitimation of liberal/capitalist interventionism that can and must be contested. The analysis of these accounts shows how the vulnerability of positivist analysis to revisionism and touches upon the more philosophical question of how to make truth claims and moral judgements from the ungrounded perspective of poststructuralism.

Chapter 5 elaborates on what is lost in the instrumentalist view on military action and international diplomacy. A strict division between means and ends is typical for discourses on military strategy and diplomacy. However, it positions military action in an instrumental and thus a-political and pragmatic domain and denies that military acts are also productive of political subjectivity and political and legal possibilities. This division plays an important role in a couple of academic accounts that have influenced other publications - including the NIOD report.

Chapter 6 explores the political role of fact finding in the historical and juridical reconstructions after the fall of the enclave.37 The NIOD report reconstructs the fall of

36 An earlier version of this chapter was published in Dutch. (Erna Rijsdijk, "Srebrenica, genocide en de reterritorialisering van internationale verantwoordelijkheid," Vrede en Veiligheid, Vol. 32, No. 3 (2003). )

37 An earlier version of this chapter will be published in the Review of International Studies as part of a Special Section on Mobilisations of Uncertainty and Responsibility in International Politics and Law. Erna Rijsdijk, "The Politics of Hard Knowledge: Uncertainty, Intelligence Failures and the ‘Last Minute Genocide’ of
Srebrenica as a “surprise attack” and as an “intelligence failure”. Its understanding of tactical uncertainty has led to a call for more intelligence in UN operations. I will argue that the report builds its claims on a problematic epistemology of the role of “hard knowledge” within intelligence studies. A similar epistemology of military-technical operations can be identified in the proceedings of the war crimes tribunal in The Hague (ICTY) in the legal approach to proving criminal intent. Although political responsibility to prevent genocide and legal responsibility to punish those who have committed the relating crimes have different implications for what can be qualified as relevant foreknowledge or criminal intent, both the prevailing juridical and the political approaches close off paths for the mobilisation of histories that are more sensitive to the productive workings of language and images and thus to their bearing on possible futures.

In chapter 7, the political relevance of the identification of trauma in relation to the Srebrenica mission will be explored. “Srebrenica” has become a subject that is not only referred to as Europe’s worst massacre since the Second World War, but as “a national trauma” for the Dutch. I will endeavour to show that the talk of national trauma touches upon the core values of social order, and furthermore, that politicians try to close off the traumatic space in order to defend present orders, instead of approaching the subject matter as a possible sources for political change.

In chapter 8, I will analyse the political effects of the representations of trauma memory. I will discuss the various strategies that are deployed to script and codify witness accounts. They do so in order to get a better understanding of what happened but also they also aim for healing and closure. The researchers of the NIOD report on Srebrenica shunned emotional accounts on Srebrenica purporting to present an objective report. Other researchers, however, believe that the only truthful way to reconstruct what happened in Srebrenica is by listening especially to the emotional accounts of the survivors. I argue that forms of mythologisation are necessarily present in both approaches, but often are not recognised as such.

In chapter 9, the importance of a deterritorialised and non-essentialist conception of responsibility is emphasised. The accounts on the failed peacekeeping mission in Srebrenica not only constitute particular historical subjects and responsibilities, they also have a bearing on our own identity and on the images and possibilities of the future. Especially the

essentialised premises of authenticity, unity and closure may produce new forms of enclaval politics that are potentially violent in its exclusionary effects. This links the role of the Srebrenica accounts to political options and impossibilities for the future. Not in a determinate way, but always incomplete and unstable, nevertheless touching upon the most pressing questions of responsibility, identity and community.