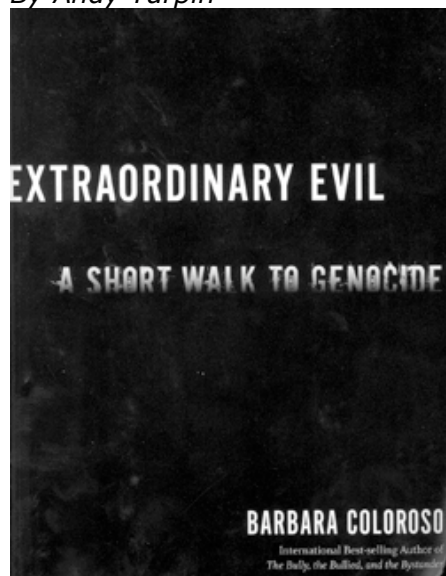


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**A PLAYBOOK FOR MORALITY****'Extraordinary Evil: A Short Walk to Genocide'  
Lays the Anatomy of Genocide and the Battle  
Plan for Combating it**By *Andy Turpin*

WATERTOWN, Mass. (A.W.)—If every buck private, UN peacekeeper and armchair general were to read Barbara Coloroso's logistical history of the genocide process in *Extraordinary Evil: A Short Walk to Genocide* [Nation Books, 2007] they would have an invaluable tool and manual to combat the process from resurfacing at such short intervals in recent history.

Coloroso brings home the nuts and bolts of the origins of genocide, and some of the best hard facts and recent scholarship on the Armenian, Rwandan, Jewish and Roma (Gypsy) genocides in a way that is understandable to the masses.

Seldom do you find a book on comparative genocide that you could thrust into the hands of an uneducated 18-year-old being shipped off to Iraq, or to a grad student in Harvard Square, and say to them both: "If you read this, you'll have no excuse to say you don't know about genocide and what it means to cross the line in combat."

Coloroso is a speaker and educator on bullying, as detailed in her most well known book, *The Bully, the Bullied and the Bystander*. After a speaking visit to Rwanda in the years following the genocide there, she began researching how genocide is the same as bullying, yet on a grandiose and heinous scale.

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"Conflict, when not resolved nonviolently, can escalate to armed conflict and to all-out war. Conflict does *not* escalate to genocide," she writes in *Evil*.

Coloroso covers much-treaded territory when explaining the Armenian genocide, though still manages to throw in some facts that intrigue the reader. "The first president of the American Red Cross, Clara Barton, mobilized sophisticated relief teams to the Armenian provinces of the Ottoman Empire," she writes—an amazing fact considering that during the genocide, Barton was well on in her antebellum pre-Medicaid years to energize such efforts, though she clearly believed in the cause.

Akin in chapters to Hannah Arendt's seminal work *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, Coloroso cites both the banality of evil and banality of good when she writes about the record number of Jews saved by the Danish citizenry during the Holocaust: "Just as there is ordinariness about those who commit extraordinary evil, there is an ordinariness of those who commit extraordinary goodness. By studying the words and actions of those who not only did not succumb, but railed against it, we can begin to see a way out of the morass of contempt."

"The more one does good, the easier it becomes to do more good. The more one acts cruelly, the easier it becomes to be cruel again," she adds.

Coloroso writes of the ineffective UN mandate to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, and of how presence of such bureaucracy hindered the work done by the peacekeepers. She notes the harm of imposing conflict-resolution models on genocide, and how such behavior never serves those being killed.

Instead, she defines the six criteria for involvement as: "the pre-existence of a ceasefire; a commitment to a peace process between the parties in conflict; co-involvement of regional or sub regional organizations; the formulation of a precise mandate; the existence of a clear political goal; and the reasonable assurance of the safety of UN personnel."

"All of these criteria make sense if dealing with warring parties willing to come to the peace table; none of these make any sense in the face of

genocide," she writes.

Coloroso ends her work with an example of biblical language—without being preachy—in order to cite the modes of facing and combating genocidal behavior: "Hope for humanity is bound up in a relationship of caring. This relationship is premised on what philosopher Martin Buber called 'meeting one another as an I and a Thou.' To see another as a 'Thou' is to honor our uniqueness and our individuality, and at the same time to recognize our common bond, our solidarity and interdependence."

Don't be surprised if you can't find a copy of *Evil* at a bookseller near you. Though the true merit of a book isn't how fast it flies off the shelves by some people, rather how many important people would have it fade away.