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Using the Past to Build a Future: Historic Preservation and Modern Architecture in Rwanda

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Using the Past to Build a Future:
Historic Preservation and Modern Architecture in Rwanda

By

Jennifer Gaugler

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Professor Greg Castillo, Chair
Professor Andrew Shanken
Professor Charisma Acey

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Abstract

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In 1994, a genocide decimated Rwanda and destroyed many existing socio-economic and political structures; it was a devastation so pronounced that many scholars have interpreted its results as a tabula rasa. However, the Rwandan genocide actually left behind a vast field of debris including human remains, damaged buildings, and empty homes. Rather than erase these remnants of the time before it came to power, the Rwandan state has deliberately sought to preserve and presence some of this debris for its own political legitimation. Furthermore, the state has developed museums and heritage sites to solidify a common understanding of Rwanda's history that validates the control of the incumbent party. But at the same time that it looks backward to rewrite history, the state also looks forward to the future. New construction conveys an image of modernization and progress through architectural symbols of modernity including the use of materials such as concrete, glass, and steel, as well as forms and styles based on international precedents. These architectural symbols help to produce a national imaginary of Rwanda as a "modern" nation and enable the Rwandan state to claim legitimacy based on narratives about national progress.

Today, Rwanda is broadly considered an African success story offering an alternative model for modernization in the global South. Most studies of Rwandan development have focused on economic strategies, but have not examined the state's strategic use of historic sites and the contemporary built environment to both sustain *and* subvert a timeline of past, present, and future. This dissertation argues that the Rwandan state has used historic preservation and modern architecture to stage modernity in a way that seems to adhere to global expectations of linear progress, but in fact dissolves the boundaries of past and present, or tradition and modernity, in ways that are specific to both the state's and country's needs. And in this manner, Rwanda can be a model for developing countries in today's world.

As I will explore in this dissertation, the Rwandan state performs a linear progress that is largely based on Western notions of developmentalism. State rhetoric focuses on modern-*ization* as an ongoing process, and development plans are couched in the language of "visions" for the future. In this way, the state keeps modernity as a telos in order to instill hope in a formerly-devastated population. The affirmation of modernity as a future stage to be reached is also a way to claim the *potential* for parity with fully developed nations, even if it has not yet been achieved. Multiple examples of the performance of linear progress will be explored in this dissertation, including the representation of precolonial culture as a distant past; the sequestering of traditional materials into museum spaces; the construction of modern-looking architecture; and the adherence to international genocide commemoration norms. These are all ways in which Rwanda seems to adhere to the construct of a linear time in which the past must be surpassed in order to move toward the future. In this way, Rwanda performs modernization.

However, the Rwandan state also disrupts the construct of the linear timeline in two ways. The first is the temporal palimpsest, or the layering of multiple times in built space, so that past, present, and future are mingled and not necessarily distinguishable. This includes the selective preservation of remnants of the past, as well as the renovation of historic sites without clear indication of new materials. These historiographical manipulations allow Rwanda's present-day elites to mold history in their own interests. The second form of disruption is the dissolution of the binary of tradition and modernity by disproving that one always comes before the other, and by expanding the agency of who is "modern." In other words, Rwanda disrupts the association of tradition with "before" and African, and the association of modernity with "after" and Western. As subsequent chapters will show, there is evidence in Rwanda's built environment that notions of modernity have been shaped by various internal and external agents, and are not just a legacy of colonial or Western influence. The Rwandan state has also explicitly declared that as it builds a path toward a better and more "modern" future, it will draw on its own traditions.

Through a nuanced balancing of historiographical and chronological manipulation with the performance of progress, Rwanda seems to propose a new model for modernization which can lead to developmental success. However, this model is dependent on a lot of staging and a high degree of control. Beneath the veneer of success, there are concerns that a model which is predicated on authoritarian power and risky speculation could lead to a downturn, or worse – a return of ethnic violence. This dissertation will examine the benefits and potential pitfalls of the Rwandan model.

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CHAPTER 1: RECOMPOSING MODERNITY

The Future of Africa

> *In the grand scheme of African development, Rwanda is an experiment, a trial run, a test case for a new type of society. And the experiment is about to be repeated in a country near you.*
>
> *Rwanda is your future, whether you like it or not.*
>
> - Simon Allison, *Mail and Guardian*, 2017

In 2017, an article appeared in the *Mail & Guardian*[1] with the provocative title, "Like it or not, Rwanda is Africa's future." Speaking primarily to an African audience, author Simon Allison contended that Rwanda has become a model for the rest of Africa due to a "homegrown, Afrocentric development plan."[2] Allison argued that every country in Africa has grand development plans, but few of those plans actually seem to work — except in Rwanda, which has risen from a devastating genocide to become a beacon of hope on the continent. Indeed, Rwanda has been lauded as a developmental triumph by its own government,[3] but also external economists,[4] sociologists,[5] world leaders,[6] and the popular press.[7] How is this possible in a country that was shattered by genocide just one generation ago? And what is unique about Rwanda's approach to modernity and development? This dissertation argues that modernity is staged in Rwanda through the performance of a linear progression from the past toward the future, which ostensibly upholds the historical timeline that underpins developmentalism. However, closer examination shows that, below the surface, there is a subversion of this linearity in favor of a temporal layering that dissolves the distinction between past and present, or between tradition and modernity, when a palimpsest is more advantageous.

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[1] The Mail & Guardian identifies as "South Africa's oldest quality news source on the web and Africa's first online newspaper."
[2] Simon Allison, "Like It or Not, Rwanda Is Africa's Future," *Mail & Guardian*, July 7, 2017, https://mg.co.za/article/2017-07-07-00-like-it-or-not-rwanda-is-africas-future.
[3] "Rwanda's Finance Minister on the Secret of the Country's Success," *CNBC Africa*, July 2, 2015, https://www.cnbcafrica.com/news/east-africa/2015/07/02/rwanda-economy-growth/.
[4] Ángel Martín Oro and Marc Bisbal Arias, "Rwanda's Economic Success: How Free Markets Are Good for Poor Africans," Foundation for Economic Education, June 27, 2012, https://fee.org/articles/rwandas-economic-success-how-free-markets-are-good-for-poor-africans/.
[5] Pamela Abbott, Roger Sapsford, and Agnes Binagwaho, "Learning from Success: How Rwanda Achieved the Millennium Development Goals for Health," *World Development* 92 (April 1, 2017): 103–16, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2016.11.013.
[6] "President Kagame Receives UN Secretary General," Paul Kagame, accessed November 20, 2018, http://paulkagame.com/?p=3334.
[7] "Rwanda's Economy: An Unlikely Success Story," *Morning Edition* (NPR, September 16, 2012), https://www.npr.org/2012/09/17/161222794/rwandan-economy-makes-unlikely-climb-in-rank.

In 1994, the Rwandan genocide decimated the population and destroyed many existing socio-economic and political structures; it was a devastation so pronounced that many scholars have interpreted its results as a tabula rasa.[8] However, the genocide actually left behind a vast field of debris including human remains, damaged buildings, and empty homes. Rather than erase all remnants of the time before it came to power, the Rwandan state has deliberately sought to preserve and presence some of this debris for its own political legitimation. Furthermore, the state has developed museums and heritage sites to solidify a common understanding of Rwanda's history that validates the control of the incumbent party. But at the same time that it looks backward to rewrite history, the state also looks forward to the future. New construction conveys an image of modernization and progress through architectural symbols of modernity, including the use of materials such as concrete, glass, and steel, as well as forms and styles based on international precedents. These architectural symbols help to produce a national imaginary of Rwanda as a "modern" nation and enable the Rwandan state to claim legitimacy based on narratives about national progress. Today, Rwanda is broadly considered an African success story offering an alternative model for modernization in the global South. Most studies of Rwandan development have focused on economic strategies, but have not examined the state's strategic use of historic sites and the contemporary built environment to both sustain *and* subvert a timeline of past, present, and future. This dissertation argues that the Rwandan state uses historic preservation and modern architecture to stage modernity in a way that seems to adhere to global expectations of linear progress, but in fact dissolves the boundaries of past and present, or tradition and modernity, in ways that are specific to both the state's and country's needs. And in this manner, Rwanda can be a model for developing countries in today's world.

The contemporary era of globalization is defined by increasing connectivity in a global space of flows, which creates a contradictory pull between homogenization and heterogenization.[9] To compete for commerce and tourism in a global capitalist system, nations must reduce barriers to flows, but also differentiate themselves from one another.[10] Thus, it is strategic to look back toward a cultural past, as well as to claim sites of global historical significance. By keeping particular elements of the past present, nations can better

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[8] See, for example: William R. Pruitt, "Crime and Punishment in Rwanda," *Contemporary Justice Review* 20, no. 2 (April 3, 2017): 193–210, https://doi.org/10.1080/10282580.2017.1311822; Greg Mills, *Why States Recover: Changing Walking Societies into Winning Nations, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 395; Marc Sommers, "Fearing Africa's Young Men: Male Youth, Conflict, Urbanization, and the Case of Rwanda," in *The Other Half of Gender: Men's Issues in Development*, ed. Ian Bannon and Maria C. Correia (The World Bank, 2006), 148.

[9] Manuel Castells, *The Power of Identity* (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 1997); Kevin Robins, "What in the World's Going On?," in *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*, ed. Paul du Gay (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1997).

[10] Nezar AlSayyad, *Traditions: The "Real", the Hyper, and the Virtual in the Built Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 117–18.

position themselves within the capitalist system. They can choose to capitalize on certain traditions in order to achieve parity on the global stage, and can instrumentalize history to move toward a desired future. While postcolonial developing countries often seek to *appear* more modern by building "modern architecture," it is actually the tactical integration of the past, present, and future, as well as the strategic manipulation of their own "Otherness," that can make these countries modern. In this new paradigm of modernity, the global south is not a peripheral latecomer but can instead become a proving ground for new phenomena.

In the past few decades there has been a growing trend across multiple academic disciplines to disrupt the notion of a single universal temporality, as well as to conceptualize multiple or alternative forms of modernity. These two ideas are in fact linked, as the very notion of "modernity" is based on the notion of linear progression conceived by explorers and colonizers who positioned themselves as further along a timeline of human progress compared to the "primitive" people they encountered. Western societies tend to reference a clear chronology in their presentation of the past, in part because Western countries depended on the linear timeline to establish their superiority. However, with the rise of postcolonial and post-development theory, this construct began to be dismantled. Several scholars have suggested that modernity is *not* a stage on a timeline. For example, historian Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued against conventional European historicism which posed modernity as a measure of distance along a single timeline of progress. Chakrabarty asserted that Indian modernity was not "behind" European modernity, but fundamentally different from it, as it was a layering of Indian culture and global capitalism.[11] Political theorist and historian Timothy Mitchell has argued that the experience of modernity was conceived of as a specific relationship between simultaneous time and homogenous space, but this was an artificial and culture-specific construct; Mitchell has suggested that modernity is "not so much a stage of history but rather its staging."[12] I agree with the above, but extend these ideas by arguing that the new form of modernity demonstrated in Rwanda is not just a rejection of the Western timeline or the establishment of an alternative timeline — it is the capacity to actually subvert or manipulate the linearity of the timeline. This manipulation becomes evident in the physical palimpsest of the built environment.

The Rwandan state is extremely sophisticated in the way that it plays into external expectations of linear progress that are largely based on Western notions of developmentalism. It must do so in order to gain international respect and attract aid, trade, and investment after the genocide. Multiple examples of the performance of linear progress will be explored in this dissertation, including the representation of precolonial culture as a distant past; the sequestering of traditional materials into museum spaces; the construction of modern-looking architecture; and the adherence to international genocide

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[11] Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2000).
[12] Timothy Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2000), 23.

commemoration norms. These are all ways in which Rwanda seems to adhere to the construct of a linear time in which the past must be surpassed in order to move toward the future. In this way, Rwanda performs modernization.

However, Rwanda also disrupts the construct of the linear timeline in two ways. The first is the temporal palimpsest, or the layering of multiple times in built space, so that past, present, and future are mingled and not necessarily distinguishable. The Rwandan state subverts the linear timeline by dipping back into the past and bringing it into the present in strategic ways, including the selective preservation of remnants of the past; the use of a traditional building form for a major new convention center; and the adaptation of precolonial mechanisms for contemporary governance. Timelines are also blurred and confused when it is advantageous. Historic sites are renovated without clear indication of new materials; genocide sites which claim to show "evidence" of the true past actually reflect ongoing revisions. These historiographical manipulations allow Rwanda's present-day elites to mold history in their own interests.

The second form of disruption is the dissolution of the binary of tradition and modernity by disproving that one always comes before the other, and by expanding the agency of who is "modern." In other words, Rwanda disrupts the association of tradition with "before" and African, and the association of modernity with "after" and Western. As subsequent chapters will show, there is evidence in Rwanda's built environment that notions of modernity have been shaped by various internal and external agents, and are not just a legacy of colonial or Western influence. The Rwandan state has also explicitly declared that as it builds a path toward a better and more "modern" future, it will draw on its own traditions. This is not unique to Rwanda; many non-Western societies have amalgamated traditional culture with modernity. In exploring notions of "indigenous modernity" or "Third World modernism," architectural and urban historians including Jyoti Hosagrahar and Duanfang Lu have identified various forms of translation, adaptation, and hybridity in the built environment.[13] They have argued that these adapted or alternative modernities are evidence that the so-called Third World is modern in its own way. But as anthropologist James Ferguson has pointed out, "modernity" is not the same as actual development and improvement of quality of life. In many cases, "alternative modernity" still translates to poor socioeconomic conditions.[14] In this context, Rwanda is an exceptional case because it demonstrates that a painful past can be simultaneously put behind *and* kept present in order to position the nation in a way that has led to tangible development. Through a nuanced balancing of historiographical and chronological manipulation with the performance of progress, Rwanda seems to propose a new model for modernization which can lead to actual

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[13] Jyoti Hosagrahar, *Indigenous Modernities: Negotiating Architecture, Urbanism, and Colonialism in Delhi* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005); Duanfang Lu, *Third World Modernism: Architecture, Development and Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011).

[14] James Ferguson, *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006).

developmental success. However, this model is dependent on a lot of staging and a high degree of control. Beneath the veneer of success, there are concerns that a model which is predicated on authoritarian power and risky speculation could lead to a downturn, or worse – a return of ethnic violence.[15] This dissertation will examine the benefits and potential pitfalls of the Rwandan model.

This chapter will introduce the conceptual framework in which my study is situated. I will explore how notions of progress and development have been conceived with respect to both time and space. I will connect the evolution of the notion of a historical timeline of progress to the Western modernist ideal of the tabula rasa. A brief review of scholarship on Africa will show that colonial architects and planners conceived of Africa as a tabula rasa but this was in reality impossible, as colonial and postcolonial Africa came to be a palimpsest of layered ideologies and changes to the built environment. I will argue that the twentieth-century developmentalism imposed on Africa failed largely because it failed to contend with this palimpsest. I will then present my argument that Rwanda shows the potential for a new kind of development in which the postcolonial and post-conflict palimpsest is used as an advantage. Finally, I will present a synopsis of Rwanda's history which further elaborates why it is an ideal case study for this new paradigm, and will conclude with an overview of the organization of this dissertation.

THE TIME AND SPACE OF PROGRESS

In order to explain why Rwanda's development strategy is exceptional, it is first necessary to present the evolution of the conceptual framework of "development." In this section, I will trace the rise of the historical timeline of progress, examine when and why it appeared in Africa, and explore what effect this had on the built environment.

The Great Chain of Being

From the time of classical antiquity to the Renaissance period, chronology was a highly respected study. Chronologies included lists of successive kingdoms, genealogies, or sequences of religious events.[16] One entity or event followed another in a time-ordered list, but there was no sense of an evolution in which something progressed over time. To our contemporary eyes, these chronologies might look like mere sequences with little conceptual weight. But as historian Hayden White has argued, we should not underestimate chronology as a simple task of putting things in time order. The selection of which information to include in a chronology and the formatting of that chronology already begins to tell us about

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[15] "Many Africans See Kagame's Rwanda as a Model. They Are Wrong," *The Economist*, July 15, 2017, https://www.economist.com/leaders/2017/07/15/many-africans-see-kagames-rwanda-as-a-model-they-are-wrong.

[16] Daniel Rosenberg and Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time: A History of the Timeline* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2012), 10.

the way particular people thought about their past, present, and future.[17] However, the notion of "evolution" in the sense of progressive change over a duration was largely absent.

Conversely, pre-Enlightenment scholars and thinkers did generate ranked hierarchies, but these were constructed based on a perception of closeness to the divine, and were not time-dependent. These hierarchies were static and based on innate, immutable characteristics. One of the most widely-known examples, the "Great Chain of Being," was a worldview in which all living things could be ranked according to their closeness to God, with man, who had been created in God's image, at the top (Figure 1.1). The philosopher and historian Arthur O. Lovejoy traced this notion as far back as ancient Greek philosophy, and up through eighteenth-century philosophy.[18] For many centuries, it shaped the way a large portion of the world thought of humankind's position within the larger universe.

FIGURE 1.1. The Great Chain of Being as pictured in "Rhetorica Christiana ad concionandi et orandi usum accommodate…" by Diego Valadés, 1579. The engraving shows the hierarchy of the world from bottom to top: the Devil and demons in Hell, Minerals, Plants, Animals, Humans, Angels, and God in Heaven.

[17] Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," in *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1–25.

[18] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1936).

This view of the world obviously had significant racial implications. Europeans believed that human races were distinguished by certain physical, social, and intellectual traits which, following the ideology of the Great Chain, were innate and unalterable. There was no notion of a timeline of progress. Different societies occupied different ranks in a natural and immutable hierarchy.

The Evolutionary Timeline

In his seminal work *The Myth of the Eternal Return*, historian Mircea Eliade argued that most people throughout early human history defined themselves with respect to what they believed was an eternal, unchanging cosmos. Rituals were a means of reinforcing the regular, cyclical nature of time. But individuals have a linear lifespan (from birth to death), and as mankind developed a growing sense of collective history and gradually shifted from a sacred to profane worldview, time was increasingly perceived as linear. This correlated with the founding of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic religions between the 7th century BCE and the 7th century CE which conceive of time as linear and unidirectional beginning with an act of creation by God. However, this changing perception of time also created more anxiety for modern man, as time was perceived as a linear march of events in which what lay ahead was always unknown.[19] Paleontologist and evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould has styled the linear and cyclical views of time as "time's arrow" versus "time's cycle," with "time's arrow" generally winning – at least in the Western world.[20] The conception of time as linear became dominant in Western thought, and set the stage for later conceptions of progress.

The way that Europeans conceived of time and space began to shift dramatically during the Renaissance (approximately 1300-1600). As argued by political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson, the rise of vernacular printed language after the printing of the Gutenberg Bible (1455) contributed to a sense of imagined community – and made possible the later development of the newspaper, which fostered a shared experience of time.[21] The invention of mechanical timekeeping devices created a sense of time as rational and abstract, while various developments in mathematics, physics, and perspectival drawing created a rational perception of space. As geographer David Harvey has argued, these shifts laid the "conceptual foundations" for the Enlightenment (1715-1789), in which the rational ordering of time and space became integral to the project of modernization.[22] Enlightenment thinkers believed that mankind would be liberated and empowered by a new capacity for scientific prediction which could facilitate command over future actions, and

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[19] Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954).
[20] Stephen Jay Gould, *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle: Myth and Metaphor in the Discovery of Geological Time* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1987).
[21] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr., London: Verso, 2006).
[22] David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1989).

new ideas of social engineering and rational planning which could foster control over the organization of society in space.

As Europeans set out to explore and conquer other parts of the world, they needed accurate measures of space, which turned out to be linked to accurate measures of time. As late as the early eighteenth century, ships from England, France, and Spain still struggled to precisely navigate the ocean due to the difficulty of measuring longitude (east-west movement). In the mid-eighteenth century, an English carpenter named John Harrison invented the chronometer, a device which used time to calculate distance moved through space, to address this problem. Harrison revolutionized both seafaring and precision time-keeping.[23] This undoubtedly contributed to the ascendance of the British Royal Navy, and by extension, the British Empire, which was connected to many of its colonies by sea. The technical capacity for precise timekeeping is thus directly linked to a history of spatial domination.

The notion of "standard time" was further encouraged by the demands of the railroad industry. In the nineteenth century the growth of railroads enabled long-distance travel on a much greater scale, but also necessitated the synchronization of clocks so that trains could keep to an expected schedule all along the lines. One of the earliest cooperative synchronizations occurred in 1849, when most of New England's railroads agreed to adopt a standard time; standard railway time was subsequently established on a national basis in the United States in 1883.[24] One year later, the delegates to an international Prime Meridian Conference voted Greenwich, England as the prime meridian for a worldwide system of twenty-four time zones.[25] Again, movement through space had necessitated the worldwide calibration of time.

As the standardization of time spread throughout the nineteenth-century world, it both reflected and reproduced a global order in which the West imposed its system of timekeeping on the rest. This is not to say that Western standardized time replaced all local conceptions of time, or that its spread occurred evenly and simultaneously in all places; in fact, its adaptation in the colonies and the non-Western world was staggered and piecemeal.[26] However, it did reinforce particular hierarchies and power dynamics, particularly for colonial labor forces and schools.[27] Furthermore, it enabled people to imagine not only a national community but a global one, and thus radically shifted societies' understanding of their

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[23] Dava Sobel, *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time* (New York: Walker and Company, 1995).
[24] Carlene Stephens, "'The Most Reliable Time': William Bond, the New England Railroads, and Time Awareness in 19th-Century America," *Technology and Culture* 30, no. 1 (1989): 1–24, https://doi.org/10.2307/3105429.
[25] Vanessa Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time: 1870–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 26.
[26] Ogle, 75–77.
[27] Ogle, 94.

position in the world.[28] The growing conception of time as linear, universal, and homogenous – in the sense that a clock would tick forward the same amount anywhere in the world – tied together all people in one temporal frame. In addition, the science of map projection had not only made mapping more mathematically accurate, but also allowed for all of humanity to be visualized in a single spatial frame. This encouraged speculation on how populations and political systems were distributed around the globe, each occupying a specific place in the world order.[29] For the first time, people around the world were conceived to occupy the same space and time – so why were their ways of life so different?

As far back as the Age of Exploration (approximately 1450–1700), in the space of encounters with other peoples, the Europeans had begun to claim a unique capacity for modernity.[30] They declared that to be "modern" was to be able to make choices that would lead to personal or collective progress, even if it meant jettisoning old ways that were no longer considered useful. It meant relinquishing traditional beliefs and fears associated with religion or superstition, and instead seeking new meaning in a new, secular and more autonomous daily life. In sum, evolving oneself meant that one could ride the wave of changes brought by modernity because one was not constrained by tradition, but was rather free to change to suit the times. During the Enlightenment, these ideas developed into the ideal of collective progress for the betterment of humankind. But while Enlightenment thinkers suggested that human beings had the capacity to improve conditions on earth through the use of reason and intellect, they did not necessarily believe that *all* human beings had equal capacity.

The Enlightenment idea that humankind could progress over time in a linear direction, combined with an interest in the comparative study of peoples (which would later become the discipline of anthropology), paved the way for the development of the first schemes of social evolution. In the 1790s, the marquis de Condorcet developed a scheme in which every society was in the process of passing through a series of stages of development; each society's experience was similar, if not necessarily identical.[31] In 1808 the French utopian socialist Charles Fourier also published a treatise arguing that human history would last approximately eighty thousand years and progress through four major stages.[32] In this view of the world, human societies were understood to be at different points on a timeline of progress. It was thought, for example, that Africa was "behind" Europe because it was constrained by tradition and thus had not evolved as much as European societies.[33]

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[28] Ogle, 213.
[29] Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.
[30] AlSayyad, *Traditions*, 45.
[31] Rosenberg and Grafton, *Cartographies of Time*, 141.
[32] Rosenberg and Grafton, 142.
[33] There were also thought to be biological and racial factors underpinning the differences between societies. Based on cranial and facial measurements, early Darwinians argued that apes had evolved into the non-white races and then to the apex of human evolution, the Europeans.

Thus, by the nineteenth century, modernity was still defined by a one-dimensional (linear) timeline of progress, but was now also associated with a two-dimensional (geographic) hierarchy of societies. Identity was formed and shaped by differentiation from the Other in both time and space.[34] The Europeans came to see themselves as more advanced than other races, and used this to justify colonialism as a "civilizing mission" that would benefit their colonized subjects (Figure 1.2).[35] Meanwhile, other races and societies were considered behind – or even ahistorical (incapable of historical evolution) (Figure 1.3).

FIGURE 1.2. "The Rhodes Colossus" by Edward Linley Sambourne, published in Punch magazine after Cecil Rhodes announced his goal to build a telegraph line from Cairo to Cape Town.

[34] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).
[35] Camilla Boisen, "The Changing Moral Justification of Empire: From the Right to Colonise to the Obligation to Civilise," *History of European Ideas* 39, no. 3 (May 1, 2013): 335–53, https://doi.org/10.1080/01916599.2012.716603.

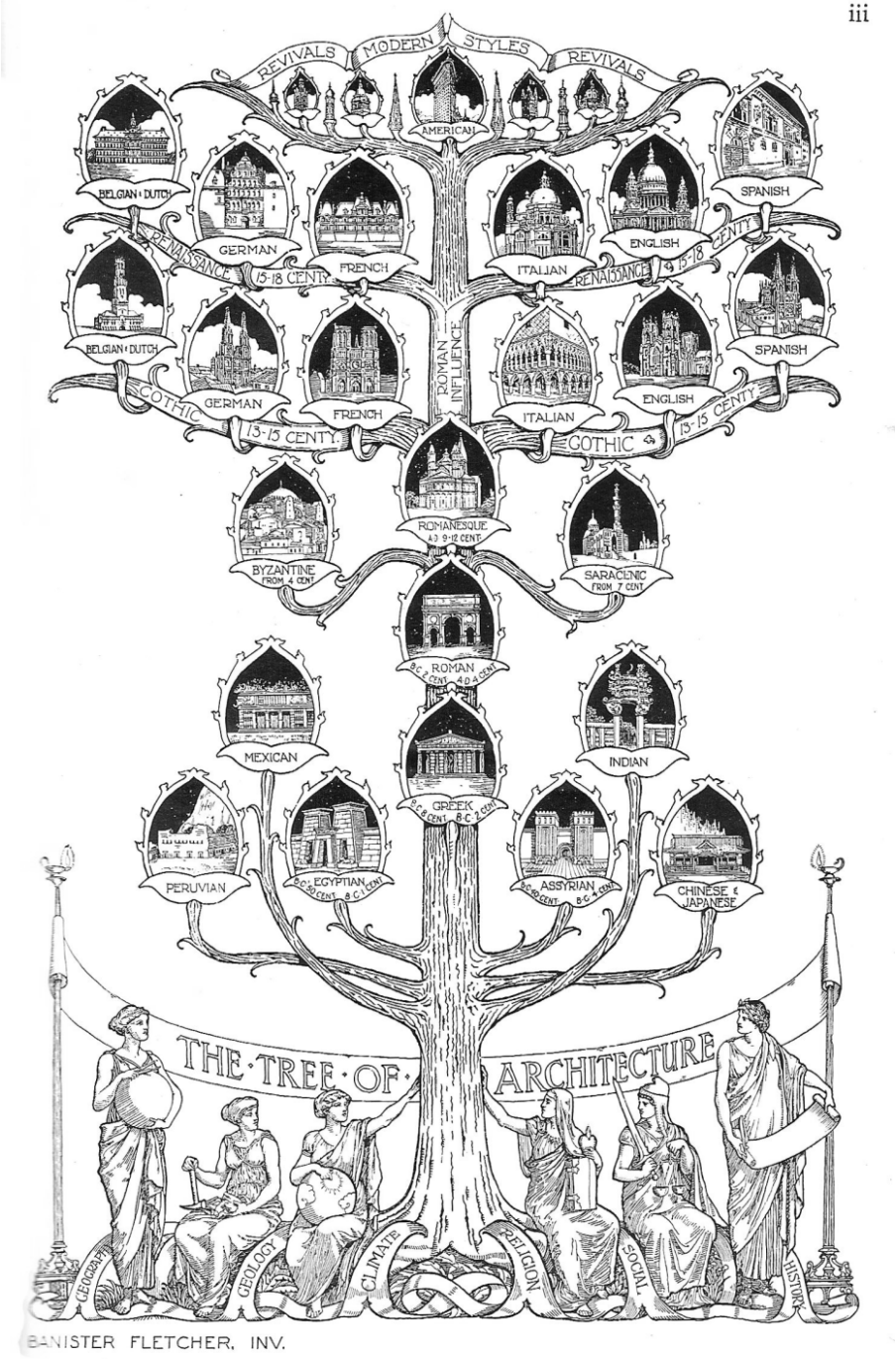

FIGURE 1.3. The "Tree of Architecture" from the 1956 edition of Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method.* The sturdy trunk of European architecture emerges out of a Greek and Roman base, with American architecture at the top of the tree. Peruvian, Mexican Egyptian, Assyrian, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese architecture merit only stunted branches near the bottom. The book was first published in 1896; in the fourth edition (1901), world architecture was divided into "Historical Styles" and "Non-Historical Styles." The "Non-Historical Styles" are the styles that are near the bottom of the tree, and do not evolve into anything else.

By the mid-nineteenth century, increased knowledge of other societies and places joined with innovations in transport and communications to create what David Harvey has termed a "space-time compression."[36] From the telegraph to the airplane to international expositions, the world felt increasingly small. Commerce and railways had necessitated the keeping of an ever more exact homogenous time. Now more than ever, it was necessary to organize space and time in the service of business and communication. At the same time, rapid industrialization and urbanization, as well as the financial crises of capitalism, began to have psychological effects on the population of the West. The world was rapidly transforming, and the "ideological labour of inventing tradition became of great significance in the late nineteenth century precisely because this was an era when transformations in spatial and temporal practices implied a loss of identity with place and repeated radical breaks with any sense of historical continuity."[37] Historic preservation and museum culture were energized in the late nineteenth century, and architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright searched for ways to incorporate local or vernacular motifs into architecture that satisfied modern needs. The universal was in "perpetual dialogue" with localism and nationalism.[38] It was widely believed that progress could occur without jettisoning the past.

However, this would radically change when World War I proved that technological progress did not necessarily mean moral progress. The devastation and horror of war on such a large scale severely damaged Western belief in the evolution of humankind, and created a wariness of modernization's coexistence with localist and nationalist sentiments. After the war, modernists championed global solutions for human welfare. But how could there be universal solutions that would fit all? Only if time and space were the same everywhere – or if they were *made* to be the same everywhere. Modernity became associated with a specific spatial attribute: the tabula rasa.

The "Tabula Rasa"

After both world wars, there was a need to clean up the vast amounts of debris which had been created by bombardment of various cities and towns. In addition, the notion of universal solutions to benefit all mankind had risen to the fore of architecture and urban planning, and this marginalized the role of local site conditions. Twentieth-century modernist projects were conceived to be built on blank slates which did not have to deal with any traces of the past – even if these blank slates had to be artificially created. The tabula rasa was idealized as the ideal condition for mankind to move forward and progress. However, this ideology would have different results in the West than in the colonized world.

In Europe and Japan, modernist architects used the urban devastation caused by World War II as an opportunity to build new large-scale projects that looked toward the

[36] Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*.
[37] Harvey, 272.
[38] Harvey, 276.

future rather than the past. Amidst the recovery efforts in various countries and the need to build large amounts of housing, the destruction of cities was seen by many planners and architects as an opportunity to correct the ills that had existed in cities, and to build large new projects on a blank slate. In a way, the war had created a tabula rasa that would make reconstruction and improvement possible.

The slate wasn't always as blank as it seemed, however. In the aftermath of bombing raids, portions of buildings and infrastructure still stood; and even when destruction was more comprehensive, some debris or trace of the past remained inscribed on the site. There was a great deal of physical devastation in postwar Europe, but the true tabula rasa was often created *after* the war. Bulldozers – which had been used as a weapon of war, to dig trenches and reshape landscapes for battle – often continued working after the war to finish the jobs that bombs started (Figure 1.4).[39] In reality, Western modernists often *created* a tabula rasa for themselves, razing remnants of the past and drawing up clean site plans to implement their totalizing visions.

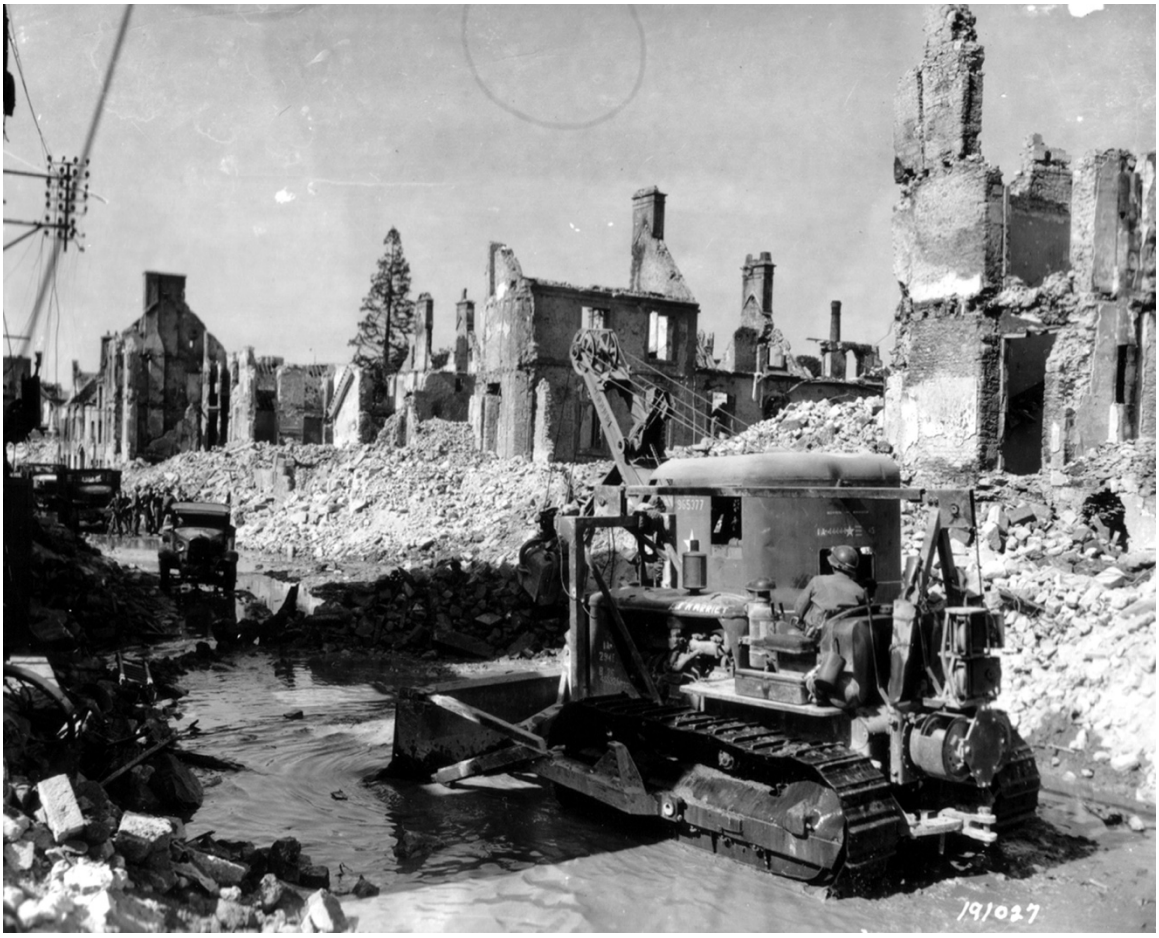

FIGURE 1.4. A bulldozer is ready to clear the rubble of a bombarded Cherbourg, France, in 1944.

[39] Francesca Russello Ammon, *Bulldozer: Demolition and Clearance of the Postwar Landscape* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).

When the debris from destroyed buildings and infrastructure had to be cleared away in order for postwar projects to be built, there was an opportunity to bulldoze away other elements of the city that were not considered desirable. For example, after Sayer Street, a row of small businesses and tenements in a poor neighborhood of London, was blitzed during World War II, the remaining buildings were demolished in the 1960s to make way for a huge new housing development called Heygate Estate. Then in 2014, Heygate was demolished to make way for another, higher-income development.[40] This was a form of creative destruction, in which demolition was used to clear a site that could be built on anew.

But the demolition was not just about removing the unsightly debris of war or the undesirable elements of cities — it was also about what kind of site was theoretically needed for the new types of projects. Western modernist architects imagined a tabula rasa, or blank slate, as their ideal starting point because the postwar modernists were intellectually rational, dismissive of historical precedents, and seeking solutions that could apply to any place or culture. Modernist architects and planners believed that they could help any society to advance along a universal timeline of progress, if they would jettison their cultural baggage and buy into this new, technological, rational approach. In an ideological sense, traditions and customs were thought to be too restricting, and in a physical sense, existing site contents just got in the way. As architect, critic, and historian Kenneth Frampton stated, "It is self-evident that the tabula rasa of modernization favors the optimum use of earth-moving equipment inasmuch as a totally flat datum is regarded as the most economic matrix upon which to predicate the rationalization of construction" (Figure 1.5).[41] A blank (and flat) site would facilitate the construction of a more rational architecture. Conversely, a preexistent site would only get in the way of the theoretical ideal. Modernist pioneer Le Corbusier even took the negatives of building photographs and erased the surrounding site, including other buildings, people, the ground, and the sky, so that the image could better represent his ideas about architecture.[42]

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[40] Peter Watts, "Blitzed, Rebuilt and Built Again: What Became of London's Bomb Sites?," *The Guardian*, September 2, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/sep/02/blitz-london-bomb-sites-redevelopment.

[41] Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-Modern Culture*, ed. H. Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 26.

[42] Beatriz Colomina, "Le Corbusier and Photography," *Assemblage*, no. 4 (October 1987): 6–23.

FIGURE 1.5. A 1944 advertisement from Rodgers Hydraulic Inc., published in *Military Engineer* magazine, predicts the need for earth moving equipment after the end of World War II.

Many projects were conceived as if the blank surface of the drawing board was the actual site condition. Even the literal ground to be built upon was largely ignored. Dorothée Imbert's describes "the perceptual severance of the building from its soil, and the landscape from its heritage" in her chapter from the edited volume *The Architecture of Landscape, 1940-1960*:

Although European reconstruction after World War I still acknowledged regional variations with new and past models, the post-1945 recovery of cities was far more homogenous. … The tabula rasa operation, which is equated with the housing projects of the 1960s and 1970s, proved a convenient antidote to the trauma of war and/or occupation in several countries. With this removal of historical context from the design process came the degrounding of architecture. Site plans displayed housing slabs set against the irregularity of an abstracted green tone.[43]

In twentieth-century Europe, the tabula rasa was *not* an actual site condition — it was in fact an intentional part of the design process. But — for a time, at least — the interwar and postwar modernists saw the blank slate as the ideal canvas on which to design buildings and cities that would better serve humankind through the development of universal solutions (Figures 1.6 and 1.7).

FIGURE 1.6. Mies van der Rohe's unbuilt design for the Bacardi headquarters in Cuba (1957).

FIGURE 1.7. Mies van der Rohe's Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin (1968). When the project in Cuba had to be canceled due to revolution, the design was filed away until it was reconfigured a decade later for a museum in Berlin.

In reality, however, Europe's relationship to the tabula rasa was much more complex. This is particularly well illustrated by postwar Germany. Across Germany, cities had been carpet-bombed during the war; then an additional 30 percent of the country's historic buildings were razed *after* the war to make room for new construction.[44] However, the notion of a large-scale tabula rasa was effectively more of a conceptual idea than a literal one. Underneath the rubble that was cleared away, infrastructure including water, gas, sewage, and electricity remained semi-intact. German cities were still anchored by these elements which were still of use.[45] Furthermore, some of the war-damaged buildings and rubble were

[43] Dorothée Imbert, "Counting Trees and Flowers: The Reconstructed Landscapes of Belgium and France," in *The Architecture of Landscape, 1940-1960*, ed. Marc Treib (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 82.
[44] Romain Leick, Matthias Schreiber, and Hans-Ulrich Stoldt, "Out of the Ashes: A New Look at Germany's Postwar Reconstruction," *Spiegel Online*, August 10, 2010, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/out-of-the-ashes-a-new-look-at-germany-s-postwar-reconstruction-a-702856.html.
[45] Leick, Schreiber, and Stoldt.

preserved in situ. In Berlin, for example, the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church was heavily damaged in an Allied bombing raid, but its spire has been preserved (Figure 1.8). London was also heavily bombed and has preserved some damaged structures, such as the walls of the St.-Dunstan-in-the-East church. Furthermore, the preservation of World War II damage is not limited to Europe. In Japan, the Hiroshima Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall was damaged by an atomic bomb on August 6, 1945, and today it still stands as a memorial.[46]

FIGURE 1.8. The Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, bombed during World War II, has been preserved in its damaged state.

Some World War II damage was initially preserved due to a simple lack of funds, as money needed to be funneled to more pressing reconstruction tasks. But as time passed, there was an increasingly intentional turn toward preserving the evidence of war. When the Reichstag in Berlin was first restored in the immediate postwar years, the bullet holes were covered by paneling, but during a second renovation in 1995, the paneling was removed to

[46] Nick Kirkpatrick, "69 Years after Hiroshima, a Look at the Dome That Survived," *Washington Post*, August 6, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2014/08/06/69-years-after-hiroshima-a-look-at-the-dome-that-survived/.

expose these marks.[47] Also in Berlin, the renovation of the Neues Museum completed by David Chipperfield in 2009 preserved scars and bullet holes on the walls; this was a controversial decision which was met with mixed feelings by the German public, but in the end they remained visible.[48] Chipperfield felt that it was important not to hide the history of the building.[49] However, he was also guided by an aspiration for historical legibility: in his renovation, he ensured that the old is clearly old and the new is clearly new (Figures 1.9 and 1.10).[50]

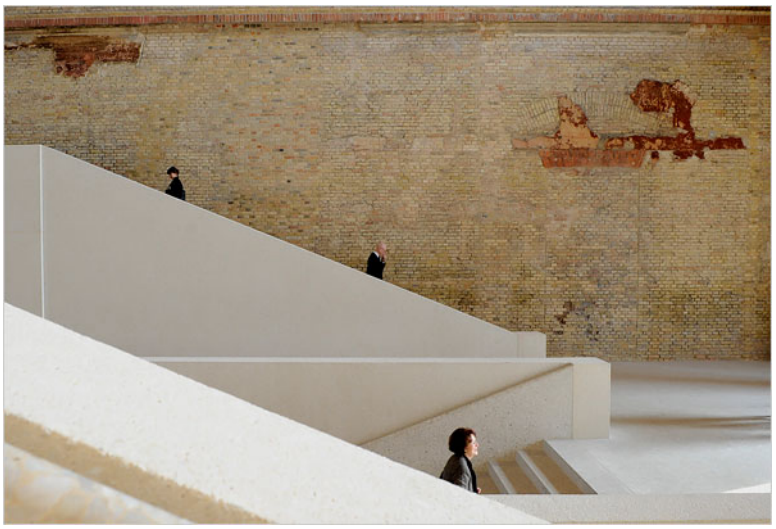

FIGURE 1.9. David Chipperfield's 2009 renovation of the Neues Museum in Berlin preserves visible damage, but in a temporally legible way, with new elements clearly distinct from the old.

FIGURE 1.10. Bullet holes are still visible in the walls of the Neues Museum.

Chipperfield's approach for the Neues Museum restoration is emblematic of a larger paradigm in Western preservation. The Venice Charter of 1964 (based largely on the earlier Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments of 1931) guided much of Western preservation for the latter half of the twentieth century. Passed by a committee of twenty-three delegates, of whom most were European, the Charter endorsed historical clarity in historic preservation, arguing that there should be a clear distinction between old

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[47] Andreas Kluth, "The Graffiti That Made Germany Better," *The Atlantic*, July 3, 2014, https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2014/07/the-graffiti-that-made-germany-better/373872/.

[48] Kluth.

[49] Kester Rattenbury, "Neues Museum by David Chipperfield Architects in Collaboration with Julian Harrap Architects," *Architects Journal*, September 30, 2010, https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/home/neues-museum-by-david-chipperfield-architects-in-collaboration-with-julian-harrap-architects/8606438.article.

[50] Michael Kimmelman, "Modern Makeover With Wounds of War for Neues Museum in Berlin," *The New York Times*, March 11, 2009, https://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/12/arts/design/12abroad.html.

and new. The Venice Charter explicitly stipulated that any restoration work should be differentiated from the old: "Any extra work which is indispensable must be distinct from the architectural composition and must bear a contemporary stamp."[51] The Charter has been perceived as biased toward the modernist belief that history should remain in the past. As architecture professor Samir Younés has written, "The Charter's abhorrence of restoration and reconstruction – with its implicit fear of 'false history' – reflects the Modernist theory of historical determinism, rather than the idea of a living architectural tradition."[52] In true modernist fashion, the Venice Charter implied that there was a universally-appropriate approach to preservation. It also defined the parameters of preservation activity with a temporal specificity: whenever historical material from the past is preserved, there should be a clear distinction of past from present.

Paradoxically, even though one deals with erasure and one with preservation, the tabula rasa and the Venice Charter represent two sides of the same coin: the notion of a linear history in which the past can be separated from the present. This conceptual framework was rooted in Western notions of progress and evolution, but subsequently imported to other places, such as the African colonies. However, the framework did not always meet with success when it arrived.

DEVELOPMENTALISM IN AFRICA

Just as the ideal of the tabula rasa was often stymied by the reality of a complex environment in Europe, the same thing happened in colonial Africa. European colonial authorities attempted to treat Africa like it was a tabula rasa, but in reality, they would find the very opposite to be true.

Colonial Synthesis and Postcolonial Palimpsest

Colonial Africa seemed like an ideal tabula rasa because the European powers considered the existing buildings, settlement patterns, and social dynamics of their colonies to have no value for development plans. From the colonialist perspective, Africa seemed like a clean slate; it had few cities and little infrastructure, was often sparsely populated, and had no existing regulations. A common metaphor found in the literature on African colonial architecture and urban planning is that the Europeans were eager to use Africa as a "laboratory" for experimentation.[53] Here was an opportunity to develop large-scale,

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[51] "The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter)" (The Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, 1964).

[52] Samir Younès, "The Dominance of Modernist Ideology in the Charters of Athens and Venice," in *The Venice Charter Revisited: Modernism, Conservation and Tradition in the 21st Century*, ed. Matthew Hardy (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2008), 34.

[53] See for example Gwendolyn Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

sweeping master plans that could not be implemented back in the metropole. Le Corbusier sketched new plans for cities such as Addis Ababa on blank paper which showed absolutely no trace of existing settlement.[54] German architect and planner Ernst May regarded the African landscape as a tabula rasa where "there was no trace of visible human civilization"; he worked to develop a productive farm-scape "from nothing" for his "primitive" farmhands.[55]

But in reality, architects and planners found that the tabula rasa in colonial Africa only existed on paper, and their visions for totalizing projects remained only visions. Perhaps the Italian Futurist town of Asmara in Eritrea is a fairly complete manifestation of a particular vision, but it is a rare exception. In most cases, colonial projects were a synthesis of native and imported forms. Because colonial administrators were wary of anti-colonial uprisings, colonial architects often mixed modernism and indigenous design as a mode of appeasement and a nod to local culture (Figure 1.11). In *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, architectural historian Gwendolyn Wright argued that French colonial administrators "sought specifically to mitigate the disruption caused by modernist urban reforms by actively engaging traditional architectural forms and attuning themselves to the ways in which various cultural groups typically responded to the city."[56] In the first section of the edited volume *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories,* seven chapters illustrate the ways in which the French, Italians, and British appropriated elements of indigenous aesthetics for public colonial architecture as a means of appeasing resistance and legitimizing colonial rule in Morocco, Libya, Zanzibar, Senegal, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and British Colonial Africa.[57] The notion of a tabula rasa in the African colonies might have been appealing in theory, but in reality, the colonial administrators had to contend with the challenges of imposing their control on pre-existing societies and environments.

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[54] Mia Fuller, *Moderns Abroad: Architecture, Cities and Italian Imperialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 197–98.
[55] Kai K. Gutschow, "Das Neue Afrika: Ernst May's 1947 Kampala Plan as Cultural Programme," in *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories*, ed. Fassil Demissie (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), 374.
[56] Wright, *The Politics of Design in French Colonial Urbanism*, 299.
[57] Fassil Demissie, ed., *Colonial Architecture and Urbanism in Africa: Intertwined and Contested Histories* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

FIGURE 1.11. The Palais de Justice in Casablanca, by French architect Joseph Marrast, 1925. The use of indigenous Moroccan motifs including blue tile and carved woodwork was intended to help quell local hostility toward the French.

The colonial period may not have found a true tabula rasa in Africa, but it did leave behind an indelible legacy. It irrevocably changed colonized societies on a social and cultural level, and it reshaped the world order. It drew the former colonies, which became independent nations, into the global capitalist system — a system based on perennial creative destruction, and the compulsion to strive ever forward, to advance ever farther. These nations were now firmly placed on the timeline of progress they had once been denied — but with a complex social and physical environment to deal with. But although they were firmly entrenched in the linear mindset of progress, they definitely did not have a blank slate. As a reviewer of the edited volume *African Modernism: The Architecture of Independence* expressed, "On the eve of independence African states prepared to inherit universities, libraries, housing blocks, garden cities – the patchy and underfunded skeletons of state infrastructure, much of it designed by modernists."[58] For postcolonial Africa, modernism had created the very opposite of a blank slate – it created a landscape littered with the ideological experiments of Western culture.

The notion of tabula rasa which the Europeans had tried to foist on their colonies was reclaimed by Frantz Fanon, one of the leading anti-colonial philosophers of the era, as a means to get rid of the colonial legacy. In understanding colonization as a violent act, Fanon argued that decolonization in turn had to be a violent act in which, "without any period of transition, there is a total, complete, and absolute substitution."[59] Fanon spoke of the "tabula rasa which characterizes at the outset all decolonization" such that "the proof of success lies

[58] William Harris, "African Modernism," Review 31, accessed November 18, 2018, http://review31.co.uk/essay/view/33/african-modernism.
[59] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961; repr., New York: Grove Press, 2004), 35.

in a whole social structure being changed from the bottom up."[60] Fanon boldly repossessed and idealized the colonial notion of tabula rasa – but in truth, this could only remain a philosophical ideal. In reality, the precolonial and colonial past had to be reckoned with, as the new African nations did not have the resources nor the will to destroy these assets and build completely new facilities and infrastructure. In addition, the space of the city remained permanently inscribed by the mechanisms of surveillance and control — the grid, the *cordon sanitaire*, and racial segregation. Logistically there could be no erasure of the colonial period. In political structures, in economic relations, in social norms, and also in the case of the built environment, there would be no tabula rasa.

Developmentalism

In addition to this colonially-inscribed physical environment, African nations also had to contend with the imposed logic of developmentalism. European notions of linear progress and advancement, rooted in the Enlightenment and strengthened by scientific ideas of evolution, paved the way for developmentalism to come to the fore in the twentieth century. The economic theory of developmentalism upholds development as the key strategy to achieve economic prosperity, which will then lead to social and political progress. In his seminal work on the theory, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, economist Walt Whitman Rostow laid out a series of stages of economic growth through which nations theoretically could progress: from "traditional society" based on subsistence agriculture; through a period of expanded trade and increased manufacturing; and finally the "age of high mass consumption" as exemplified by the United States, in which the economy has become increasingly service-oriented and there is social security and welfare.[61] Seymour Martin Lipset and other sociologists soon added their own argument that economic modernization would also propel socio-political change, as societies would shed their "traditional" (tribal or clan-based) political structures and move toward a more "modern" form.[62] They argued that economic development makes a society more stable, increases the size of the middle class, and fosters economic mobility, all of which reduces the appeal of communism so that political movements would culminate in a democracy and free market. Developmentalist scholars generally argue that this economic and sociopolitical progression is positive and will be observed across cultures.[63] Over the course of this progression, traditional ways of life will gradually be pushed away by newer practices and technologies.

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[60] Fanon, 35.
[61] W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, 3rd edition (1960; repr., Cambridge England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
[62] Seymour Martin Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review* 53, no. 1 (1959): 69–105, https://doi.org/10.2307/1951731.
[63] Kelley Johnson, "Developmentalism Then and Now: The Origins and Resurgence of an Enduring Grand Theory," in *Grand Theories and Ideologies in the Social Sciences*, ed. Howard J. Wiarda (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 19.

For a society to reach the most advanced stage, it must lose all traces of its "primitive" past. In the developmentalist prescription, the past cannot substantially coexist with the present.

Developmentalism became especially prominent after World War II. From the end of the war in 1945 to the wave of decolonization in the early 1960s, there was a sharp increase in the number of new nations in the world. Developmentalists, biased by the experience of their own Western countries, argued that developmentalism should be applied to non-Western countries too. Both academics and policy-makers of the time believed that non-Western populations would be better off if they followed the model, although there were also certainly some self-serving motivations. Former colonial powers encouraged developmentalism because they saw potential trade benefits in opening up the economies of their former colonies. The United States was also motivated by the Cold War to cultivate democratic states with strong economic ties to the West, in order to make them less vulnerable to the Soviet Union's influence. Thus, developmentalism was pushed upon so-called Third World countries because the United States believed that it would draw them into the capitalist world market and away from communism.[64] However, developmentalism was an ideology common across the political spectrum, from fascism to social democracy to communism. The Second World argued that state socialism was actually the best track toward economic and industrial progress.[65] Across the board, more-developed nations were making promises to less-developed nations that their way was the right way. Again, linear notions of progress, expressed here in the form of successive stages of "development," were applied to a geographical hierarchy – in this case, the First, Second, and Third Worlds.

One of the most visible arenas for manifestations of developmentalism was architecture and urban planning. Modernism as a design movement was interested in breaking with the past to move toward a better future, so it was the perfect vehicle for the ideology of developmentalism. In Africa, architectural modernism was employed to showcase rapid modernization. National leaders wanted to display their success by building impressive new buildings and laying out grand new urban plans. In some cases, they sponsored projects that manifested high modernism. But some architects working in the former colonies chose not to base their designs on a tabula rasa condition, but to confront the postcolonial context and attempt to blend native and imported architectural elements. These included African architects who recognized that colonialism had left an indelible legacy which could not be ignored, but which could be appropriated to develop a new form of modernism. There are many examples across the African continent of post-independence architecture which synthesized modernist design principles with local culture

[64] Johnson, "Developmentalism Then and Now: The Origins and Resurgence of an Enduring Grand Theory."
[65] Erik S. Reinert, "Developmentalism," *Working Papers in Technology Governance and Economic Dynamics*, no. 34 (December 2010): 2.

(Figure 1.12).[66] But this promising period of architectural creativity was halted by several factors, including political instability, corruption, and economic hardship – all of which contributed to the failure of developmentalism, as described in the next section.

FIGURE 1.12. The Kariakoo Market was designed by Beda Amuli and built in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 1974. It combines modernism with allusion to local culture.

Post-Development and Alternative Modernities

By the late 1960s, it started to become clear that the sequence of stage-by-stage progression advocated by Rostow and other scholars of developmentalism could not be replicated in the non-Western world. For one thing, it was based on a series of changes which had taken place over a longer period of time for the West, but twentieth-century underdeveloped countries were attempting to develop much more quickly. This was due to a variety of internal and external pressures, including populations who demanded a higher standard of living, structural adjustment policies which were imposed by developed nations, and the potential for technology to enable much more rapid change. But this rate of change was problematic. Rather than producing stable democracies, rapid economic and social change was proving to lead to *instability*. In addition, the non-Western world was neither a

[66] Jennifer Gaugler, "Cosmopolitan Architects and Discourses of Tradition and Modernity in Post-Independence Africa," in *Whose Tradition?: Discourses on the Built Environment*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad, Mark Gillem, and David Moffat (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 236–57.

tabula rasa nor a replica of the West; various countries had their own unique challenges and opportunities to be addressed. Developmentalism's applicability to the Third World seriously began to be questioned.[67]

However, developmentalism was reincarnated in the late 1980s and 1990s when scholars and policy-makers were re-energized by an apparent correlation between economic growth and democratic change in Brazil, Mexico, and Latin America. The "Washington Consensus" was coined in 1989 to describe a set of ten policy prescriptions for developing countries.[68] Like the earlier developmentalism of the 1950s and 1960s, it was based on the idea that economic growth (in the form of capitalism, with free trade and open markets) would propel a country through modernization. But the Washington Consensus was even more aggressively based on neoliberalism, privatization, and deregulation. The Consensus was generated largely by U.S.-based academics and policy-makers, although the meeting at which it was created also included a number of Latin American countries. Like the previous era, this version of developmentalism ran into many of the same problems, including a lack of positive results, and was also called into question.[69]

As it became clear that developmentalism was (again) not working, and that many postcolonial nations were still "behind," "post-development" arose as a way of critiquing the problems inherent with a developmentalist approach.[70] Developmentalism was argued to be ethnocentric, and based on a false premise that universal "laws of economics" could apply to all societies. For anthropologist Arturo Escobar, development was a convenient label for the West's "discovery" of poverty in the Third World as a means of reasserting its moral and cultural superiority in the neocolonial era. As he argued in *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Escobar felt development was both an ideological export and an act of cultural imperialism which poor countries had little opportunity to decline. Its technocratic language and scientifically-derived standards made it a tool of modernity that Orientalized the global South as sites in need of being fixed, although it was really a way for the West to manage the rest for their own gain. Escobar argued that in order to resist the Western development agenda, the first step was to deny the hegemony of singular notions of modernity.[71] Escobar suggested that modernity "should be treated as a true multiplicity, where trajectories are multiple and can lead to multiple states."[72] For

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[67] Johnson, "Developmentalism Then and Now: The Origins and Resurgence of an Enduring Grand Theory," 30–31.
[68] Johnson, 31–33.
[69] Johnson, 34.
[70] Sally J. Matthews, "Postdevelopment Theory," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies*, August 28, 2018, https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.39.
[71] Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).
[72] Arturo Escobar, "'Post-Development' as Concept and Social Practice," in *Exploring Post-Development: Theory and Practice, Problems and Perspectives*, ed. Aram Ziai (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 29.

Escobar, the recognition of the multiplicity of modernity was a crucial step in creating the space for local agency to assert itself. There was nothing "wrong" with the global South; it was simply modern in its own way.

Other scholars in disciplines such as anthropology also suggested that the global South was already modern. Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar has suggested that the concept of "alternative modernities" implies a negotiation between *convergence* – the process of becoming similar to other modern societies through the establishment of regulatory institutions, a market economy, and a bureaucratic state – and *divergence* – the process of developing culture-specific creative adaptations to modernity. In other words, the notion of "alternate" suggests both a capitulation to forms of modernization from elsewhere *and* the retention of a sense of self and uniqueness.[73] The notion of alternative modernities was a way to suggest agency could be taken by the postcolonial states, reject the developmentalist timeline, and address the palimpsest that had been created in these places.

But in an intriguing chapter titled "Decomposing Modernity" from his book *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order,* James Ferguson identified a conundrum.[74] If we take these alternative modernities to be the accomplishment of modernity and thus identify these developing countries as already "modern," then why are these countries still excluded from a higher standard of living? The fact remains that they are still less developed. Developmentalism was wrong to assume that one approach (i.e. democratic capitalism or neoliberalism) could fit all, but it was correct about the fact that economic development improves standard of living. Herein lies the problem: When modernity ceases to be a telos, then inequality becomes a status rather than a stage. Hope is lost. What to do then?

This dissertation argues that Rwanda suggests a possible answer to Ferguson's conundrum. How can a developing country continue to strive for modernity (and developmental equality), but *also* claim the agency to become modern on its own terms? By striving toward a modernity derived from Western origin, but following a model for development that is fundamentally based on its own particular historical and cultural circumstances. By taking ownership of its own timeline, and capitalizing on a non-blank slate. In other words, it is not the tabula rasa, but the *lack* of a tabula rasa -- the historical palimpsest -- which is the key. In response to Ferguson's "Decomposing Modernity," this dissertation proposes that Rwanda is *recomposing* modernity.

RECOMPOSING MODERNITY

Returning to Timothy Mitchell's insight on staging, we can begin to understand the performative relationship between history and modernity: "If modernity is not so much *a stage of history* but rather *its staging*, then it is a world particularly vulnerable to a certain kind

[73] Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities," *Public Culture* 11, no. 1 (1999): 1–18.
[74] Ferguson, *Global Shadows*.

of disruption or displacement" (emphasis added).[75] Mitchell argues that the project of modernity is inextricably linked to representation – meaning the creation of images (or plans, or stagings) in order to shape reality. This occurs in various socio-political practices of modernity, from urban planning to military parades.[76] But if every act of representation is by definition different from the real, and thus open to the possibility of misrepresentation or misreading, then every performance of the modern contains the potential for a "shift, displacement, or contamination."[77] Thus, Mitchell's notion of staging suggests that while modernity originated from a single (Western) root, its multiplicity today comes from the fact that it is perpetually reconstructed by those who engage with it. Mitchell also provides us with the fundamental insight that modernity is not only about the performance of modernity or future visions, but rather depends on the staging of *history*. Modernity might appear to be about looking ahead, but it is also about looking back.

One potential opportunity for the staging of history to allow divergent modernities between the West and the developing world is found in the interpretation of historical time. The staging of history is not just about keeping the past around through preservation, or putting objects in a museum. All societies manipulate their physical, material, and built heritage in self-serving ways, and all societies have "invented traditions."[78] But Western societies tend to reference a clear chronology in their presentation of the past. Even when they idealized the tabula rasa, it was still understood as a clean break of reference to the past, not an actual break on the timeline. This is in part because they depended on the linear timeline to establish their superiority. However, non-Western and developing societies can actually distort that timeline in order to claim their ascendance. And they can do this by drawing upon the tradition, rubble, colonial heritage, and the multitude of other remnants from the past that are part of their environment. As I will argue using Rwanda as an example, these remnant-filled environments offer the opportunity to play with historical timelines in a way that creates narratives of progress but also disrupts previous notions of the global South as "behind." The refutation of linear universal time can be a powerful expression of resistance for developing countries because they were oppressed due to the notion that they were less advanced. But developing countries need no longer be "behind" on the timeline when they can themselves manipulate the timeline, and question the universality of linear time.

The refutation of universal time has been broached by a growing number of scholars who recognize that there is no such thing as one temporal experience shared across the world. In his introduction to *Antinomies of Art and Culture,* art historian Terry Smith asserts that conceptions of "modernity" once divided the world's people into those who

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[75] Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity*, 23.
[76] Mitchell, 17.
[77] Mitchell, 23.
[78] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

lived in modern times and those who did not: "During the period of modernity's dominance, the downside of what used to be called cultural imperialism was a kind of ethnic cleansing carried out by the displacement of unmodern peoples into past, slower, or frozen time."[79] However, the global spread of information and instant communication has changed this: "…the power to force everyone forward…in the same direction has been lost."[80] Now we have multiple temporalities and they can even move in different directions. Smith argues that the experience of modernity has become so fragmented that it no longer has relevance, and has been replaced by what he calls "contemporaneity," meaning the capacity for different societies to have different experiences of time:

> *...contemporaneity consists precisely in the acceleration, ubiquity, and constancy of radical disjunctures of perception, of mismatching ways of seeing and valuing the same world, in the actual coincidence of asynchronous temporalities, in the jostling contingency of various cultural and social multiplicities, all thrown together in ways that highlight the fast-growing inequalities within and between them. This certainly looks like the world as it is now.*[81]

The world is now characterized by multitudinousness, inequity, and no "overarching explanatory totality."[82] Similarly, anthropologist Marc Augé has identified the paradox of our day: "The world's inhabitants have at last become truly contemporaneous and yet the world's diversity is recomposed every moment."[83]

With regard to Africa in particular, philosopher and political theorist Achille Mbembe has suggested that there is a particular quality that distinguishes African time. In his seminal work *On the Postcolony*, Mbembe argued, "Social theory has failed also to account for *time as lived*, not synchronically or diachronically, but in its multiplicity and simultaneities, its presence and absences, beyond the lazy categories of permanence and change beloved of so many historians."[84] For Mbembe, every age, including the postcolonial, is a combination of several temporalities, and African time is "neither a linear time nor a simple sequence," but is in fact "an *interlocking* of presents, pasts, and futures," made up of "disturbances, …unforeseen events, …fluctuations and oscillations" – but not necessarily leading to chaos, as is the stereotype about Africa. Mbembe argues instead for the productive potential of multiplicity, contending that African social formations are not converging toward a single point, but instead have the possibility of a variety of trajectories.[85]

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[79] Terry Smith, "The Contemporaneity Question," in *Antinomies of Art and Culture: Modernity, Postmodernity, Contemporaneity*, ed. Terry Smith, Okwui Enwezor, and Nancy Condee (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2009), 5.
[80] Smith, 5.
[81] Smith, 8–9.
[82] Smith, 9.
[83] Marc Augé, *An Anthropology for Contemporaneous Worlds* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 89, quoted in Smith, 10.
[84] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 8.
[85] Mbembe, 15–16.

African literature also suggests that the postcolonial African subject is not bound by linear chronology. Critic and theorist Bill Ashcroft has argued that the presence of a circular or layered time in African writing is an expression of hope in which the formerly colonized subject can "disrupt the dominance of European history."[86] Ashcroft identifies two ways in which African history has been reinvented within postcolonial African literature:

> *On the one hand we find a history that* interpolates *the master discourse of European history, engaging it on its own terms, a method powerfully represented in the later novels of Ayi Kwai Armah. On the other hand we find the positing of a different* kind *of history, a history that might disregard the boundaries between 'myth' and memory, a history that subverts the tyranny of chronological narrative. This is the history offered by Ben Okri in* Infinite Riches.[87]

According to Ashcroft, the "spiral of time" that is expressed in African poetry is a form of "simultaneous recuperation and projection" which reclaims the African past while moving toward the future.[88] Thus, a subversion of chronological clarity might be interpreted as an authentic expression of the postcolonial African subject.

With regard to the built environment, the destabilization of a historical timeline is a means to counter the prevailing Western framework of authenticity with more locally-sourced understandings. In the latter half of the twentieth century, many non-Western countries were compelled to ratify Western standards of authenticity in order to nominate sites for UNESCO's World Heritage List, which assesses sites in terms of their "universal value."[89] Within this dominant framework, the notion of authenticity continues to be tied to the clear presentation of a linear chronology, as advocated by the Venice Charter. However, this clarity is primarily valued by scholars and practitioners of preservation, and less so by the general public. The "culture industry," a term first coined by Theodor Adorno and Max Horheimer in 1944 to describe the mass production of pop culture, began to commercialize heritage sites at an unprecedented rate in the late 1980s. According to architectural and urban historian Françoise Choay, the culture industry has used "fantastical reconstructions, arbitrary destructions, and restorations that fail to announce themselves" to present heritage in "numerous guises with ill-defined contours," in order to make money off of a public that wishes to consume "history" and either does not know or does not care for accuracy. Choay suggests that this dishonors the "patient work" carried out by those with "respect for the historic heritage."[90] In this conception of heritage, Choay interprets a lack of chronological clarity to be lowbrow, commercial, and deceitful – but she is applying a Western framework

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[86] Bill Ashcroft, *Utopianism in Postcolonial Literatures* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 92.
[87] Ashcroft, 82–83.
[88] Ashcroft, 93.
[89] "Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 1972, https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/.
[90] Françoise Choay, *The Invention of the Historic Monument*, trans. Lauren M. O'Connell (1992; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 144–45.

of authenticity to examples that are primarily European. Is it possible to look at other cultures through a different lens?

There has been evidence in recent decades that a rebellion against "universal values" is gaining ground in the field of historic preservation. A meeting held in Nara, Japan in 1994 was the first effort in thirty years after the Venice Charter to reconceptualize a set of internationally-applicable preservation principles. The meeting was called because the Japanese were concerned that Japanese conservation practices, which included the periodic dismantling and reassembly of historic temples, would be misjudged by the Eurocentric standards that had come to define world heritage.[91] This was a realistic concern; back in 1964, the committee for the Venice Charter had very few non-European representatives, and the Charter had predictably advocated European standards of authenticity.[92] The 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity was groundbreaking in that it suggested that heritage should be judged within the context of specific cultural contexts, and there should be no singular universal definition of historical authenticity.[93] The Nara meeting was followed by three regional meetings to further discuss region-specific issues. One of these meetings was held in Great Zimbabwe on May 26-29, 2000. This meeting did not result in the adoption of a charter, but its report did assert the unique nature of preservation in Africa. Meeting organizer Dawson Munjeri affirmed that "the essence of the notion of authenticity is culturally relative."[94]

Within this context, Rwanda is a valuable case study because it shows that it is possible to play both sides of the fence. The Rwandan state performs a linear progress that is largely based on Western notions of developmentalism. The state keeps modernity as a telos in order to instill hope in a formerly-devastated population. As Ferguson suggested, scholarly arguments that developing countries are already "modern" are not necessarily helpful or relevant to people on the ground.[95] It can be energizing to keep pushing toward modernity as a standard of living, and to uphold the idea that a better future is on the horizon. This also fights against a return to the "Great Chain of Being" in which certain societies are permanently stuck below others. The affirmation of modernity as a future stage which is yet to be reached is a way to claim the *potential* for parity with fully developed nations, even if it has not yet been achieved. In Rwanda, rhetoric focuses on modern-*ization* as an ongoing process, and development plans are couched in the language of "visions" for

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[91] Herb Stovel, "Origins and Influence of the Nara Document on Authenticity," *APT Bulletin* 39, no. 2/3 (2008): 9–10.
[92] "The International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter)."
[93] Stovel, "Origins and Influence of the Nara Document on Authenticity."
[94] Dawson Munjeri, "The Notions of Integrity and Authenticity: The Emerging Patterns in Africa," in *Authenticity and Integrity in an African Context*, 1999, 18, quoted in Stovel, 16.
[95] Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, 185–86.

the future (such as "Vision 2020").[96] The performance of linear progress is particularly evident in the built environment, and in urban plans and architecture renderings which demonstrate Timothy Mitchell's aforementioned characterization of the importance of representations in staging modernity.

However, the Rwandan state also rewrites history or disrupt its timeline as needed for certain narratives. Rather than approaching progress as a simple line with only one direction of movement, this suggests that development can involve dipping back into the past and using it as a resource. Through its "Home-Grown Solutions" (modes of governance based on traditional culture) and other rhetorical practices, Rwanda explicitly draws on its own traditions as a basis for modernization. It also uses — or recreates — physical evidence of the past in order to stage a narrative in which the current state has supposedly restored a precolonial harmony. Rather than clearing away the physical remnants of the past, it allows them to remain, or even highlights them. The state has also distorted perceptions of time at some of its major genocide memorial sites and a number of other historic or heritage sites in order to create particular narratives about the past that serve present interests. But perhaps the collapsing or blurring of time – as seen in both historic preservation that does not clearly indicate the dates of interventions, and in "modern" architecture that blends old and new tropes – is not "wrong," or crassly commercial, as it might be defined by Western preservation standards or architectural design ideals. Perhaps it is authentically Rwandan. On a postcard purchased in Rwanda in 2016, there is a traditional Rwandan proverb: "Umuntu asimbuka iminsi ntasimbuka umunsi," which the postcard translates to "One lives through the day, one never steps beyond the day. There is only the present" (Figure 1.13). Perhaps the devaluation of time's linearity actually reflects a deep-seated, traditional Rwandan concept of time, suggesting that time's cycle can indeed coexist with or even sometimes supersede time's arrow.

[96] Republic of Rwanda, "Rwanda Vision 2020" (Kigali: Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, 2000).

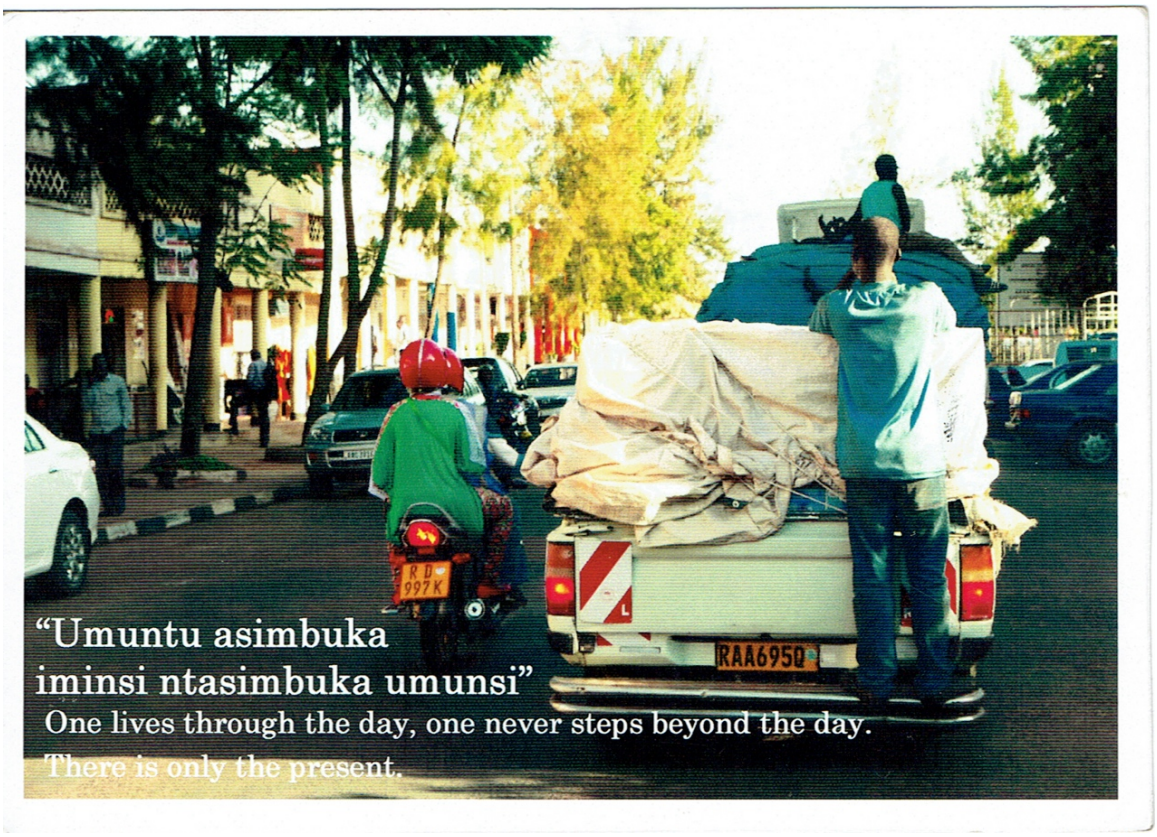

FIGURE 1.13. The English translation on this Rwandan postcard reads: "One lives through the day, one never steps beyond the day. There is only the present."

RWANDA AS CASE STUDY

This tiny landlocked country of farmers in the middle of the African continent seems to be at the forefront of a particular type of aspirational development: that of small countries with limited land area and strong leadership who aim to skip several rungs on the ladder of development. As a very small nation that seeks to transform from an agrarian subsistence economy directly to a middle-income, information technology and service-based economy, Rwanda has been called "the Singapore of Africa."[97] But Rwanda is not only following the precedent of Singapore. It is creating a new model for development based on a particular relationship between the state and business, and also between the state and a deeply traumatic national history. Rwanda's success to date, as evidenced by its ranking as the country which has made the most economic progress in the world since 1990 according to

[97] AbuBakr Ogle, "Rwanda Is Well Positioned to Be the Singapore of Africa," *The New Times*, April 23, 2013, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/65167; Geoffrey Eu, "Africa's Little Red Dot," *The Business Times*, September 30, 2017, https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/lifestyle/feature/africas-little-red-dot; "Africa's Singapore?," *The Economist*, February 25, 2012, https://www.economist.com/business/2012/02/25/africas-singapore.

the United Nations' Human Development Index[98], suggests that this model works: that developing countries can keep the notion of progress but complicate the linearity, and reject the tabula rasa in favor of the non-blank slate. But a high degree of control over both the narration of past history and the vision for future development requires a strong-handed state. Many feel that Rwanda is already on the path toward dictatorship.[99] Rwanda demonstrates both the potential benefits and drawbacks of a strong developmental state.

Rwanda is neighbored by countries such as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo which are mired in ongoing corruption and ethnic conflict, yet Rwanda has managed to progress so rapidly in two decades that it is described today as a development success story. While it may seem paradoxical, as well as morally perturbing, it is actually Rwanda's genocide which has made its progress possible. The genocide was absolutely devastating to the very fabric of Rwandan society, and yet it was also a form of "creative destruction." After the end of the genocide, it was necessary to reconstruct the Rwandan civil administration from scratch. This cleared the way for a new Rwandan state to come to power, determined to foster beneficial external relationships. The genocide also allowed for a new engagement with the international community. Western countries that did not step in during the conflict have subsequently given large amounts of aid in an effort to assuage their guilt for not intervening and rehabilitate their own images. Also, the tremendous gains that Rwanda has made in a short period of time, when compared to the images of devastation that the world remembers, make it seem like a stable, good prospect for development investment. While its neighbors remain stuck in conflicts that bubble just below the surface, the eruption of Rwanda's society actually repositioned Rwanda in a way that made global capitalism much more accessible.

In some ways, the Rwandan genocide itself was also an expression of modernity. As anthropologist Johan Pottier has asserted, the genocide was *not*, as it was initially portrayed in the Western media, based on ancient tribal warfare. It would be better characterized as a class conflict in which pre-existing ethnic tensions were stoked to a point of combustion by politicized intellectuals and elites who felt their power and status were threatened by democracy.[100] Both the 1994 genocide as well as earlier mass killings in Rwanda have been identified as instances of "modern" genocide rather than tribal hysteria, meaning that they were systematically planned and engineered by a state with a specific goal of eliminating a minority.[101] The genocide was a very modern phenomenon based on modern political

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98 "Human Development Index," *The Economist*, March 23, 2017, https://www.economist.com/economic-and-financial-indicators/2017/03/23/human-development-index.

99 Jeffrey Gettleman, "The Global Elite's Favorite Strongman," *The New York Times*, October 19, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/08/magazine/paul-kagame-rwanda.html.

100 Johan Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 33.

101 Louise Mushikiwabo and Jack Kramer, *Rwanda Means the Universe: A Native's Memoir of Blood and Bloodlines* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006).

systems, spread by modern propaganda techniques, and using a modern rational systemic approach. Furthermore, the post-genocide Rwandan state's response to the genocide is an ultimate expression of modernity. As Timothy Longman has argued,

> *… the post-genocide government of Rwanda has undertaken an extraordinarily far-reaching program of social engineering, surely one of the most extensive by any modern state. Using commemorations and memorials, judicial processes, historical revision, re-education camps, curricular reform, popular mobilization, political restructuring, electoral activity, land reform, and many other programs, the government has sought not simply to reshape relations between the population and the state, or even between groups within the society, but to transform the ways in which individual Rwandans understand their own social identities.*[102]

The genocide created the conditions for Rwanda to undertake a program of large-scale social engineering – the kind which was initially envisioned during the Enlightenment to build on mankind's newfound domination over time and space. The difference is that Rwanda enacted this social engineering not by creating a tabula rasa or bulldozing anything in its way, but by using remnants of the past and even time and temporality itself as a medium.

In a predominantly neoliberal age, Rwanda is in some ways a throwback to the developmental state, but with an unconventional framework. The 1994 genocide was stopped by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA), a group of former Tutsi exiles who crossed the border from Uganda and gained control of the country. They organized themselves into a new government controlled by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party, which is still in power today. The RPF-led government has upheld the private sector as the driver of development, and President Paul Kagame has been called "a star pupil of the Washington Consensus."[103] And yet it is somewhat complicated, because there is actually a blurring of state and private interests. Rwanda also demonstrates what has been called "developmental patrimonialism," a form of business-politics interaction in which the ruling elite impose a centralized management of economic rents with the intent to maximize returns over a long timescale.[104] Unlike other forms of developmental patrimonialism in Africa, in which Big Men have lined their own pockets, Rwanda seems to have found a way around this temptation. The RPF owns a private holding company that has played a large role in the Rwandan economy, initially by responding to acute material shortages after the genocide, and more recently by funding investments that might be deemed risky but have high expected social benefits. The profits from the holding companies go toward the party; this supplements the party's ability to finance its own running and campaign costs, thus helping

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[102] Timothy Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 12.
[103] David Booth and Frederick Golooba-Mutebi, "Developmental Patrimonialism? The Case of Rwanda," *African Affairs* 111, no. 444 (July 1, 2012): 385, https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/ads026.
[104] Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, "Developmental Patrimonialism?"

them remain in power and removing incentive for individual corruption.[105] However, development in Rwanda is also inextricably linked to the past. Since 2000, "policy has been driven rather exclusively by the view that economic and social development – underpinned by adequate provision of essential public goods by the state – is the only feasible route to overcoming the ethnic divisions and violent conflicts of the past."[106] Both economic development and state legitimation are bundled together with genocide recovery and the projection of an image that the past has been overcome. This is why the staging of history is so important to Rwanda's staging of modernity.

Within the framework of the developmental state, Rwanda is a special case because it is both post-colonial and post-genocide, so multiple regimes have reinterpreted the past, present, and future in their own interest. It also received a massive influx of aid and investment after the genocide, allowing developmentalism to be widely enacted in a short period of time. Like many developing nations, the Rwandan state seeks to harden complex entangled histories into a unified master narrative of becoming "modern," in order to take their place on the global economic playing field. Toward this goal the state uses a combination of destruction, preservation, and construction of the built environment to present particular evidence of the past and uphold particular claims to progress. The state is motivated to build this narrative in order to legitimize itself as the righteous leaders of Rwanda. The performance of state legitimacy and national unity is particularly critical following an extreme division and collapse of society like the 1994 genocide. Acceptance and recognition of a governing regime or state must be produced both internally and externally: its citizens must accept its rule without revolting, and recognition must be granted by other states. The RPF thus enacts two critical legitimizing practices: (1) bolstering its prerogative to rule by ensuring continued and widespread political support from Rwandan citizens, and (2) upholding the image of Rwanda as a stable, peaceful nation in order to attract foreign recognition, aid, and investment. For more than two decades, the RPF has legitimized its claim to power by strategically manipulating the interplay between past and present, tradition and modernity, and heritage and development to control perceptions of the past and create narratives of progress. These narratives legitimize the state to both insiders and outsiders.

Rwanda is a particularly good case study for the role of historiographic rhetoric in state legitimization because the relationship between tradition and modernity is made explicit in political discourse and policy. In Rwanda's advertising, artwork, and even in the graphic art of Rwandan currency, there is a constant interplay between symbols of tradition and modernity. The government has clearly stated their goal to shape a modern nation without losing traditional Rwandan values through the program of "Home Grown Solutions," which is supposed to apply traditional cultural practices to solve current-day problems. President

[105] Booth and Golooba-Mutebi.
[106] Booth and Golooba-Mutebi, 391.

Paul Kagame has said that these initiatives have largely driven Rwanda's progress, "from Gacaca,[107] our community courts, which has brought restorative justice and reconciliation to a once divided nation; to Ubudehe[108] which supports rural communities to collectively solve problems related to poverty; to Imihigo[109] which enables citizens to keep their leaders accountable; to Umuganda[110] and many others."[111] Kagame has also expressed his belief that "the best way of preserving culture lies in continual creativity that draws inspiration from tradition as well as from modernity. Fruitful and permanent dialogue between generations preserves the bond between past and present and imbeds culture in any sustainable development."[112]

This dialogue between past and present also translates to the built environment, where Rwanda attempts to differentiate itself from its neighbors through visual signs of modernity in architecture, while at the same time ramping up the role of heritage in the tourism sector. Rather than making its historical slate blanker than it really is, the Rwandan state has harnessed the post-destruction messiness for political legitimation, nationalist propaganda, and the promotion of development. The evidence appears in the built environment, where original historic sites serve as both records of historical events but also as tools to script historical narratives in service of stabilizing a particular public history. A combination of historic preservation and modern architecture is used to stabilize narratives about a tumultuous past, weaving both a common history and a shared vision for the future. Rwanda is at the forefront of modernity not because of its shiny new architecture or planned cities, but because of its sophisticated manipulation of multiple eras and temporalities in the built environment. This has made Rwanda a case study that is ripe for analysis by an architectural historian.

RWANDA'S HISTORY

In order to better understand why the Rwandan state has so much interest in legitimizing itself, it is first necessary to understand the identity of the current state as former "outsiders." The Rwandan genocide is widely understood as a conflict between

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[107] A traditional form of justice in which a community and their leaders would gather to discuss and resolve conflict, which has been translated into a contemporary mechanism for post-genocide justice.
[108] A traditional practice of collective action and mutual help to solve problems within a community, which has been translated into a participatory problem-solving and decision-making mechanism, primarily at the village level.
[109] A traditional concept of vowing to deliver, which has been translated into performance contracts for government employees.
[110] A traditional practice of coming together to complete difficult tasks, which has been translated into a mandatory monthly community service day.
[111] "Home-Grown Solutions Are Rwanda's Driving Force - Kagame," *The New Times*, September 27, 2015, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/192950.
[112] Célestin Kanimba Misago and Lode Van Pee, *Rwanda: Its Cultural Heritage, Past, and Present* (Kigali, Rwanda: Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, 2008), 6.

Hutus and Tutsis based on ethnicity. Less commonly recognized is the significance of *perceived indigeneity*. A complex "insider"/"outsider" discourse has evolved over time through the course of the pre-colonial feudal system, the racialized policies of the colonial era, the explosion of ethnicity-based violence in the genocide, and the post-genocide recovery.

Before European colonization, the modern-day nation of Rwanda was a centralized kingdom with a common language and roughly the same geographical boundaries it has today. In the pre-colonial era, the ethnic identities of Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa existed but they were not always clearly defined, and they were neither the sole source of identity nor the sole determinant of social status or wealth. Regional social networks and local ecological conditions also had a significant impact on identity. Clan, lineage, and family ties were as important — if not more important — than whether one was a "Tutsi" or a "Hutu." Although historical accounts typically associate the Tutsi with cattle and the Hutu with agriculture, the distinction between cattle-raisers and agriculturalists was in reality not as dichotomous as it is commonly portrayed.[113] In some areas, Tutsi and Hutu lifestyles were nearly identical, with members of both groups keeping cattle *and* cultivating fields.[114]

After making initial contact with the region in the late nineteenth century, European explorers were quick to categorize the different ethnicities of the people of Rwanda. In the European interpretation, there were three distinct groups with formulaic physical and cultural characteristics. The Tutsi were tall, thin, lighter-skinned cattle owners who had the most economic and political power; the Hutu were shorter, stockier, and darker-skinned, subsisted on agriculture, and were subservient to the Tutsi; the Twa were pygmoid hunters or potters who lived on the margins of society both figuratively and literally, in the forests. The composition of the overall population was roughly 85-90 percent Hutu, 10-14 percent Tutsi, and 1 percent Twa. This was a more rigid characterization than had ever previously existed in the region. In reality, local variations in social structure, lifestyle, and human physical characteristics precluded any precise demarcation of these three groups. Physical features or lifestyles were not infallible indicators of being Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa.[115]

The Rwandan kingdom fell under European control during the "Scramble for Africa." At an 1890 conference of the European colonial powers in Brussels, both Rwanda and Burundi were given as territories to Germany. The Germans relied on a policy of indirect rule and treated the territories as a protectorate until their defeat in World War I, after which a 1922 League of Nations mandate called for Belgium to take over the territory as the combined colony of Ruanda-Urundi. In 1946, a United Nations mandate converted the relationship to a trusteeship, which lasted until independence from Belgium was achieved

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[113] David Newbury, "Precolonial Burundi and Rwanda: Local Loyalties, Regional Royalties," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 34, no. 2 (January 1, 2001): 255–314, https://doi.org/10.2307/3097483.

[114] Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," *Africa Today* 45, no. 1 (January 1998): 10.

[115] Newbury, "Precolonial Burundi and Rwanda: Local Loyalties, Regional Royalties," 258.

in 1962. In neither the 1922 nor 1946 mandates are the ethnicities of Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa mentioned. According to these documents, all "natives" are equal; there is no call for preferential treatment or discrimination based on ethnic categories.[116]

However, unofficial colonial policy was very much based on pseudo-scientific ethnic stratification. The Belgian colonizers adopted a rigid understanding of ethnicity from the early explorers. They believed in the "Hamitic hypothesis," a theory that the Tutsi were descendants of Ham, son of Noah, and thus were neither Bantu nor African in origin. This was thought to explain why the Tutsi had more "European" features than the Hutu or the Twa, and was used to justify a belief in the Tutsis' innate biological superiority and qualification as a more intelligent and civilized race.[117]

Colonialism also fundamentally altered the relationship between ethnicity, territory, and power. In the pre-colonial era, a feudal system existed in which a patron or lord (usually Tutsi) would bestow a client (usually Hutu) the use of a certain number of cattle, in exchange for labor and agricultural products. The European colonizers interpreted the feudal system as a "traditional" power structure in which Tutsi "aristocrats" ruled over Hutu "peasants." Thus, they interpreted the Tutsis as the "natural rulers" of the native people.[118] Therefore, as colonial administrative jobs were delegated almost exclusively to the Tutsi, the Native Authority in Rwanda by the late 1920s was almost entirely Tutsi. Authority had been granted to what was considered the "outsider" or less indigenous group, and the Hutu masses were conditioned to submit to what might be called a dual colonialism, in which "Hutus were schooled and politicised in such a way as to see the Tutsi, and not the colonial state, as their oppressors."[119]

This is a major shift in the conceptualization of outsider/insider. When Rwanda was first colonized, the great divide was between the Europeans who were the "settlers" and the local population who were the "natives," but over time colonial authorities emphasized ethnic differences in the African population and used myths of autochthony to elevate one ethnic group above another for their own political purposes. Although there was a pre-existing pre-colonial socioeconomic hierarchy, the Belgians were the ones who emphasized a ranking based on which ethnic groups were *more or less indigenous* in the territory.

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116 League of Nations, "Mandate for the Administration of Part of the Former Colony of German East Africa Conferred upon His Majesty the King of the Belgians, Confirmed and Defined by the Council of the League of Nations" (1922), http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.cow/zzrw0004&id=1&div=&collection=cow; United Nations, "Trusteeship Agreement Concerning Ruanda-Urandi as Approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations" (1946), http://heinonline.org/HOL/Page?handle=hein.cow/zzrw0009&id=1&div=&collection=cow.

117 Patricia Daley, "Ethnicity and Political Violence in Africa: The Challenge to the Burundi State," *Political Geography* 25, no. 6 (2006): 665.

118 Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," 11.

119 Daley, "Ethnicity and Political Violence in Africa," 667.

As part of a series of reforms passed between 1926 and 1936 in Ruanda-Urundi, the Belgian colonial authorities sought to hardline ethnic divisions as well as restructure the political organization of the colony. The Belgian authorities required ethnic identity cards to be carried by all Africans identifying themselves as Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa. The process of classification, which was also used in the 1933-34 census, was based on three major sources of information: "oral information provided by the church, physical measurements, and ownership of large herds of cows."[120] This classification system served to rationalize and standardize the social order of the colony; once all of the inhabitants of the colony were classified, it was easier for the limited colonial resources to be allocated on a discriminatory basis. Tutsis were allocated the most opportunities for education and administrative positions, while Hutu were treated as second-class citizens, and the Twa were barely allowed anything.[121] While the Belgian colonial authorities did not invent the terms of Hutu and Tutsi, they did manage to "take an existing sociopolitical distinction and racialize it."[122] The outsider/insider line had been redrawn from settler/native to Tutsi/Hutu.

However, in the last few years before independence, the Belgians suddenly switched their favor to the Hutus due to their concern that leftist anti-colonial sentiments were coming primarily from the educated Tutsi elite. They replaced a large portion of the administration with Hutus. Furthermore, popular grievances over land tenure, poverty, and political suppression led to the rise of a Hutu movement calling for the end of discrimination and inequality.[123] This movement was buoyed by a new political consciousness among a newly educated Hutu elite. Thus, by the date it gained independence, July 1, 1962, Rwanda had undergone a complete reversal of ethnic power relations, with the majority Hutu now in control. Suddenly the hierarchy of indigeneity, which was originally used to justify the elevation of the Tutsis as the superior conquering race, was inverted; on the eve of independence, the Hutus were justifying a seizure of power by positioning themselves as the indigenous population with the right to rule over "their" home territory, and accusing the Tutsi of being foreign invaders.[124]

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120 Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 99.

121 Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," 11.

122 Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 99.

123 Peter Uvin, "Ethnicity and Power in Burundi and Rwanda: Different Paths to Mass Violence," *Comparative Politics* 31, no. 3 (April 1, 1999): 256, https://doi.org/10.2307/422339.

124 The situation in Rwanda follows a broader pattern on the African continent as described by Peter Geschiere in *The Perils of Belonging* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2009). According to Geschiere, while most French colonial governments sought to "fix" local populations to the land in order to administer them (through practices such as taxation and forced labor), they actually tended to favor migrants when delegating "native authority" because they were seen as "more energetic and entrepreneurial" (p. 15). However, in the post-independence era there has been a reversal in many African nations, as claims of autochthony – the quality of being "born from the soil" – have been used to assert political rights. This is exactly what happened in Rwanda, as the Hutu based their post-independence claims of right to rule on the fact that they had "been there first."

Over the following decades, post-independence discontent was fomented by the fact that most government positions were held by Hutus from President Habyarimana's district in the north, and most public investments were made in that region. The exclusion of the south and center of the country, as well as dissatisfaction with corruption and slow development, generated increasing discontent with Habyarimana's regime. In 1990, a guerrilla army called the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) invaded from Uganda, sparking a civil war that lasted until 1993. In April of 1994, the death of Habyarimana in a plane crash sparked a genocide in which Hutu extremists killed around 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus over the course of three months, decimating the population. The RPA ended the genocide by defeating the civilian and military authorities who were responsible for inciting the killing; they drove the military out as they advanced south and then west, killing thousands of Hutus (including both troops and civilians) who were deemed responsible.[125]

The RPA was made up of largely of Anglophone Tutsis who had been reared in exile in Uganda. They were the children of the half million Tutsi who fled between 1959 and 1963 during the first anti-Tutsi uprisings. In the process of stopping the genocide and taking control of Rwanda, the RPA explicitly disavowed any hostility based on ethnic distinctions, and from its earliest days proclaimed a nationalist ideology. The RPA upheld the notion that they were saving *Rwanda*, not the Tutsis. As historian and human rights activist Alison Des Forges has argued, "Whether or not born of conviction, the stress on national identity made sense politically for a group drawn mostly from the minority and aspiring to political power in a situation where ethnic differences had been exaggerated."[126]

One of the most famous RPA songs says:

> *It is the white man who has caused all that, children of Rwanda. He did it in order to find a secret way to pillage us. When they [the Europeans] arrived, we were living side by side in harmony. They were unhappy that they could not find a way to divide us. They invented different origins for us, children of Rwanda: some were supposed to have come from Chad, others from Ethiopia. We were a fine tree, its parts all in accord, children of Rwanda. Some of us were banished abroad, to never come back. We were separated by this division, children of Rwanda, but we have overcome the white man's trap.... So, children of Rwanda, we are all called to unite our strength to build Rwanda....*[127]

Here we see a shift to a different outsider/insider construct than the anti-Tutsi one which had been mobilized for genocide. The RPA again portrayed the white man as the invader who caused ethnic division, and upheld the idea that Rwandans of *all* ethnicities (including former exiles and their children born outside of Rwanda, like many of the RPA) are — once and again — peacefully coexisting indigenes.

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[125] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 84–87.
[126] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999), 535.
[127] Quoted in Des Forges, 536.

After the genocide, a new government was organized and fronted by the RPA, now known as the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) party, and political organizing was banned until 2003 when the first post-war presidential and legislative elections were held. The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003 provided for multiple political parties and set up a National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. Rwanda has remained relatively stable since the first elections in 2003. The RPF has been victorious in all subsequent democratic elections. Paul Kagame became president in 2000 when his predecessor resigned; he was elected president of Rwanda in 2003 and he has remained president ever since. A referendum in 2015 amended the constitution to allow him additional terms beyond the previous two-term limit.

Since the genocide, official state discourses are based on nationalism and a total renunciation of ethnicity. The RPF seeks to portray contemporary Rwanda as a post-ethnic nation in order to legitimize its success as a state and uphold an image of a stable, peaceful nation that is worthy of foreign aid and investment. Disruptive or polarizing speech is outlawed.[128] Any mention of violence committed by the RPF – during the war to end the genocide, or afterward – is also firmly taboo.[129]

The 1994 genocide put Rwanda on the world stage. International media had long ignored what was going on in the country, until the violence exploded to a level that shocked the world. In its aftermath, Rwanda received a large amount of foreign aid from Western nations and NGOs. But this aid has decreased with the passage of time, and President Paul Kagame has insisted that he does not want to remain dependent on it.[130] Today, Rwanda seeks other modes of actively engaging the global economy. And it is an issue that is more and more pressing over time. Although blessed with a moderate climate and relatively advantageous conditions for agriculture, the amount of land for each family is shrinking steadily due to population growth and high rural density. At this rate, subsistence agriculture cannot continue to sustain the majority of the population. But Rwanda does not have many natural resources that can be exported to generate wealth. Colonialism introduced tea and coffee as export crops, but their profitability is dependent on fluctuating global prices. Due to Rwanda's lack of mineral resources and low degree of industrialization, it is impractical to focus on the exportation of manufactured goods. For Rwanda to rise out of poverty, avoid famine, and prevent the reoccurrence of social stresses that contributed to the genocide, state leaders have declared it imperative for the nation to look beyond its borders and forge beneficial connections with the global economy. In other words, the state wants Rwanda to

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128 Rwandan Senate, *Rwanda: Genocide Ideology and Strategies for Its Eradication* (Kigali: Parliament of the Republic of Rwanda, 2006).

129 Helen Hintjens, "Reconstructing Political Identities in Rwanda," in *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*, ed. Philip Clark and Zachary D. Kaufman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 77–99.

130 Francois Soudan, "President Paul Kagame's Interview with Jeune Afrique," *The New Times*, March 26, 2009, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/7817.

remain on the world stage – but this time as a development success story, and a model for modernization in Africa.

In order to emphasize the extent to which Rwanda has become more modern under their leadership, as well as to bolster their own legitimacy, the state has manipulated the narrative of Rwandan history in order to accomplish multiple goals: to paint "outsiders" as bad for Rwanda; to recast themselves as insiders (genuine Rwandans); to emphasize their role in ending the genocide and stabilizing Rwanda; and to show evidence of progress and modernization. But at the same time that the ideals of progress and development have been upheld, historical material and history itself have been treated as a malleable resource. This dissertation will look at the role of the state in molding visions of the past and future in the name of present-day development.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The majority of the fieldwork for this research was conducted in Rwanda in 2016-2017, with several weeks also spent at archives and museums in Belgium in 2017. In Rwanda, I was based out of the capital city of Kigali, and undertook excursions as needed to other parts of the country. For site documentation, I visited an array of existing buildings, construction sites, museums, heritage sites, and tourist destinations. I visited a range of both urban and rural locations and documented both vernacular and formal architecture, analyzing form, material, program, and style. At historic sites, I observed the architecture and artifacts present at the site, as well as the presentations of historical narratives by the docents. I also accepted a position at the University of Rwanda to teach a class in the architecture department, and through the interactions with my students, I learned more about their aspirations and what they and their compatriots envisioned for Rwanda's future. I also interviewed a range of Rwandan and expat informants including architects, hotel owners, tour guides, archivists, village residents, and a security guard.

Archival research was both challenging and rewarding. Rwanda's archives have been torn asunder multiple times. In 1959, during the struggle for independence, a significant portion of the archive in Rwanda about the monarchy and the colonial era was destroyed, and in 1994 the National Archives were again partially destroyed during the genocide. However, there is a National Archives of Rwanda collection that is maintained today by the Ministry of Sports and Culture. I visited them on several occasions to collect historical documents. The Belgian archives, which have not experienced the same level of disruption, contained relevant material that was easier to find because it was more organized. I visited both the State Archives of Belgium in Brussels, and the Archives of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium.

This dissertation is structured with two pairs of complementary chapters: the first pair looks at Rwanda's treatment of the past, and how the state and its governing institutions use temporal palimpsest to disrupt the notion of a linear historical timeline. The second pair

looks at Rwanda's focus on progressing forward, and how the binary of tradition and modernity is disrupted when tradition evolves, and when non-Western people express agency for modernization. Taken as a set, these four chapters illuminate Rwanda at the present moment, but also show how it incorporates its past and future.

Following this introductory chapter, the body of the dissertation begins with the aftermath of an event that has come to define Rwanda: the 1994 genocide. While the genocide devastated Rwandan society and wiped out many existing political and social institutions, it also left behind a vast field of debris, including damaged buildings and human bodies. Chapter 2, "Ruins: Staging the Remains of a Cataclysmic Human Event," examines the architectural debris from this cataclysmic event and how it transforms space. Some of these remnants from the past remain visible today as sites for memorialization and mourning, but also to serve as reminders of the violence and of the state's role in stopping it. Rather than being frozen in time at the moment of loss, they have in fact been altered over time to "stage" the genocide in different ways. These memorials are powerful due to the temporal unintelligibility of their layering of multiple times, and the impossibility of separating out the past and present. However, these sites risk losing their connection to the local communities if the state prioritizes the staging of certain narratives over a complex story of real individual loss.

In addition to genocide sites, other historical sites in Rwanda also express the condition of temporal palimpsest. Chapter 3, "Museums: Curating Heritage Sites to Redefine the 'Other'," examines several heritage sites to explore how the Rwandan state has instrumentalized historiography in the service of particular narratives about the past. These narratives help to legitimize the state to both insiders and outsiders. Through three case studies, I examine historiographical manipulations in the portrayal of traditional culture, colonialism, and the origins of the current state. I explore how these manipulations are expressed through physical interventions which both construct *and* distort timelines at the heritage sites. I suggest that these actions are characteristic of a truly modern postcolonial state — one which both distances itself from the past, but also strategically confuses what (and when) the past truly was. These sites also recast the "Other" in Rwanda to align with the current state's version of history.

The second pair of chapters consider how Rwanda disrupts the association of tradition with "before" and African, and modernity with "after" and Western. In Chapter 4, "Materials: Manipulating the Binary of Modern and Traditional," I examine the notion of modernization in Rwanda, with respect to both how it has been defined and how it has changed the built environment of Rwanda. I also focus on how building materials that read as "modern" have helped to shape an image of Rwanda as a modern nation. I argue that ideas of modernity have been shaped by various internal and external agents, so that it is not just a legacy of colonial or Western influence, but a true Rwandan modernity. Although traditional materials have been removed from dwellings and sequestered to certain environments — tourist hotels and bars, museums — because they are not suited to

Rwanda's desired image of modernity, they have also evolved to meet present-day demands for marketable commodities. In this chapter I describe how a traditional product of Rwanda – the woven basket – has evolved in order to appeal to consumers in the global economy. In this way, the traditional is old *and* new at the same time. In sum, this analysis of material use in dwellings and baskets shows how the traditional/modern binary in Rwanda is expressed in some ways, and collapsed in others.

In Chapter 5, "Interface: Cultivating Image and Identity on the Global Stage," I examine the important role that images of cities and architecture play in the master narrative of Rwandan modernity, and in the international perception of Rwanda. I also look at how these images circulate within a larger global economy, with very real impacts on Rwanda's assets. I investigate what Rwandans perceive to be a "modern architecture." I close the chapter with a case study that explores how and why the Kigali Convention Centre has become a national icon and a symbol of modernity. I argue that it is through the simultaneous presence of both "traditional" and "modern" tropes that this building has captured the imagination of the Rwandan public, even if its references to tradition are superficial. The Kigali Convention Centre epitomizes Rwanda's intertwinement of past, present, and future.

Finally, Chapter 6, "Conclusion," reflects on the findings of my research, and notes some of the upcoming developments in Rwanda's built environment which could serve as the basis for future research. I also expand to a broader African context and reflect on future directions for scholarship on African architecture and architectural history.

In this introduction, I have argued that Rwanda recomposes modernity in two ways; first, by establishing and yet disrupting linear time, and second, by upholding and yet dissolving the binary of traditional and modern. In this way, Rwanda treats modernity as *both* a stage and a staging. The following chapters will further illustrate this duality which has led Rwanda to be called the "future of Africa."[131]

[131] Allison, "Like It or Not, Rwanda Is Africa's Future."

CHAPTER 2: RUINS

Staging the Remains of a Cataclysmic Human Event

On a sunny day in March of 2017, I walked up to the gates of the Ntarama Genocide Memorial and braced myself for the horror that lay within. I had spent the drive from Kigali trying to mentally prepare myself for a very dark experience. I passed through the metal gates under the watch of several armed security guards. There was a small group of foreign tourists gathered for the tour. A guide greeted us and told us he would be sharing some of the history of Ntarama. He also asked us to please not interfere with the activity going on to one side of the site. We looked over and saw a few dozen people cleaning, arranging, or carrying loads of something. With a jolt, I realized that they were human bones. People from the surrounding community were washing and caring for bones that were going to be interred at the genocide memorial site during the annual commemoration and burial ceremonies that would be taking place the following month.

To begin the tour, our guide led us into the church in which people had taken refuge because they believed they would be safe from the killers in April of 1994. As we entered, we immediately noticed to our right the shelves of human skulls which belonged to unidentified victims. The interior of the church was filled with coffins containing recently discovered remains that were soon to be buried in the mass graves; some of these coffins were labeled with a name or photo. We proceeded up the central aisle to the altar, where we viewed a collection of weapons and farm tools that had been used to carry out the massacre. After exiting the church building, we then visited the small sacristy next door, a kitchen where people had been trapped and lit on fire, and – perhaps most disturbing of all – the schoolroom where small children had been killed. To end the tour, our guide showed us a concrete wall listing the names of the victims who have been identified – a small fraction of the thousands who died here.

The tour was deeply sad and disturbing; there is no way to visit these sites without being horrified at what took place there. Yet the memorial also seemed animated to a degree that I had not expected. Rather than a frozen diorama of horror, it appeared to be an active site in the life of the community, particularly at this time of year with the annual commemorations coming up. The atmosphere was solemn but bustling, as local residents came together to care for the remains of the dead. Furthermore, the site appeared to have been physically altered over time. Several new elements had been added since the massacre, including the memorial wall of names and a mass grave where the newly found remains were to be buried. A number of architectural interventions had also been made to protect the site from the elements and to make it more secure, such as the guard house at the entrance and the metal canopies over the church and other buildings (Figure 2.1). Architectural preservation is typically carried out in order to repair damage, but in this case the

preservation efforts had been made to *preserve* damage, as the buildings display marks of violence which both tell the story of what happened here and add to the evocative power of the memorial site.

FIGURE 2.1. The church building at the Ntarama Genocide Memorial. The killers created holes in the facade so they could throw grenades inside. The damaged buildings on site are now protected with a metal canopy.

When the Rwandan genocide ended in July of 1994, it left a vast field of ruin and debris across the country: damaged buildings, empty homes, human bodies, etc. (Figure 2.2). Twenty-five years after the end of the Rwandan genocide, much of the debris has been cleaned up, and most of the damage has been fixed. But some bodies of the dead are still unburied. Some of the sites where they were killed still bear the scars of machetes, grenades, and bullets (Figure. 2.3). And pockmarks from shells are still present on the facade of Parliament, the most prominent government building in the country. For the most part, Rwanda is a nation heavily focused on presenting an image of renewal, development, and fastidious cleanliness. Why were some signs of destruction not only left in place, but actively preserved? This chapter will show that there are multiple reasons including: memorialization and remembrance; evidence and testimony; tourism; state legitimation; and participation in international rhetoric of genocide prevention.

FIGURE 2.2. Demolished homes after the 1994 genocide — this kind of debris has mostly been cleared.

FIGURE 2.3. A broken wall at the Ntarama genocide site — this damage has been preserved.

Many scholars have addressed the visible presence of bodies and bones at memorial sites in Rwanda as instruments of memory,[1] but fewer have written about the architectural physicality of the memorial sites, or about the politics of their ongoing preservation. This chapter builds upon the work of anthropologists and social scientists who have studied the affect of the bones, by analyzing the relationship between these unburied human remains and the damaged buildings in which they are housed, as well as new structures added to these sites. I compare my own site analysis to historic records and the observations of other scholars over the past twenty-five years to show that these genocide memorials continue to evolve, as multiple actors have designed various protections and upgrades. When a violent event like the Rwandan genocide is memorialized in situ, we must read the site not just as a moment, but a process. Although in situ memorials attempt to fix the memory of a past traumatic event to a permanent site of mourning, they are in fact perpetually redesigned by various actors in pursuit of present goals.

This chapter will uncover some of those actors and goals, revealing how the agency of genocide memorialization in Rwanda has shifted over time from a form of state-community partnership into a hybrid state-international project. Genocide memorials and sites of violence were initially set aside by local survivors to memorialize the lives lost, but over time, the state has increasingly taken control of the sites in order to both reinscribe ethnicity and legitimize the state. They do the former by signifying who can be remembered at these sites, thereby reinforcing ethnic categories that were previously hardened by the

[1] See, for example: Sara Guyer, "Rwanda's Bones," *Boundary 2* 36, no. 2 (May 1, 2009): 155–75, https://doi.org/10.1215/01903659-2009-009; Rémi Korman, "Mobilising the Dead? The Place of Bones and Corpses in the Commemoration of the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda," *Human Remains and Violence: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 1, no. 2 (January 1, 2015): 56–70, https://doi.org/10.7227/HRV.1.2.6; Laura Major, "Unearthing, Untangling and Re-Articulating Genocide Corpses in Rwanda," *Critical African Studies* 7, no. 2 (May 4, 2015): 164–81, https://doi.org/10.1080/21681392.2015.1028206.

Belgian colonizers and instrumentalized by the *génocidaires*. They do the latter by staging the sites in ways that produce a high degree of affect, obscuring timelines in favor of producing a visceral reaction. The produced affect generates a reaction based on emotion over reason, which helps to prevent questioning of the state. At the same time, international donors, consultants, and the expectations of international visitors also influence genocide memorialization; this has encouraged a turn toward the use of a global vocabulary of commemoration. But this chapter will argue that even as Rwandan memorials show signs of a turn toward a transnational production of memory, their treatment of time as a palimpsest is essentially Rwandan, in that it speaks to both the nature of life in post-genocide Rwanda but also to Rwanda's larger development strategy.

Rwanda's genocide memorials demonstrate the larger paradigm introduced in the first chapter: the past and the present are defined on a linear timeline when it is useful, but that timeline can be blurred when a different kind of staging is more advantageous. In the case of genocide memorials, a defined linear narrative and separation of past from present can most clearly be seen at the only purpose-built memorial in Rwanda, the Kigali Genocide Memorial. This memorial presents a chronological narrative that places the genocide firmly in the past, which parallels the state's rhetoric. The state has established official times and spaces for remembering the genocide, including memorial sites, mourning week, annual commemoration ceremonies (such as National Heroes' Day), and the court system. Outside of these official forums, the Rwandan people have been expected to put the past behind them and deny its existence in their everyday life, even while certain scars of the past can still be seen. To some extent, "forgetting" the past is necessary for coexistence in the same communities; this is not just because of spatial proximity, but also a mutual dependency for collaboration on tasks from carrying the ill to the hospital to cultivating fields.[2] But of course, the genocide can never truly be forgotten. Although they may not talk openly about it, people still remember what was done, and they still know who is which ethnicity. Rather, they enact a kind of forgetting that can be more accurately characterized as what conflict studies scholar Suzanne Buckley-Zistel has called a "chosen amnesia" – a deliberate suppression of memory.[3] Buckley-Zistel identifies this as a conscious strategy to cope with living in proximity to perpetrators of violence or potential accusers, but it is also a reaction to living in proximity to sites of violence and remembrance.

Even though the state has assigned the genocide to the past outside of the official venues for commemoration, in actual lived experience the past is omnipresent in Rwanda. Because killings were so spatially dispersed and massacres took place in spaces of everyday

[2] For centuries — both before and after the genocide — the Hutu and Tutsi have lived among each other on the same hills in dense settlement patterns.

[3] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, "We Are Pretending Peace: Local Memory and the Absence of Social Transformation and Reconciliation in Rwanda," in *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*, ed. Philip Clark and Zachary D. Kaufman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 154.

use (churches, schools, homes), sites of genocide violence are everywhere. Survivors and perpetrators live among each other but also among the sites of violence. Genocide memorials are scattered throughout the country. To this day, bodies numbering in the thousands continue to be discovered and need to be interred.[4] The genocide is formally over, yet in some ways it will never truly end. Various actors have ensured that it remains visible in the present – especially at the in situ memorials, which have been preserved in a manner that does not always clearly distinguish between past and present. Various rounds of preservation, renovation, and addition have made these memorial sites what they are today. Both bodies and buildings are staged, such that temporal illegibility is permitted or even intentionally developed in order to increase affective power. On one hand, this temporal flexibility could allow for the ongoing active engagement of the community, if local residents are sufficiently involved in decision-making processes for the maintenance and development of the in situ memorial sites. The relinquishment of historical or chronological accuracy could expand the potential for people to cultivate a meaningful sense of guardianship and ritual at these sites. Then the reclaiming of these sites by the community could serve as an emotional outlet – a place where chosen amnesia could be suspended in order to more openly acknowledge that the past remains present. But if these sites become too highly controlled by the state, and the emphasis is placed on staging for affect, this may crowd out the potential for local communities to tell their own stories. Memorials function as sites for the reconstitution of society at both the community and state level – but if the state's priorities takes too much precedence, the community reconstitution may begin to unravel.

GENOCIDE MEMORIALS: REMEMBRANCE, TESTIMONY, TOURISM

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, one of the biggest challenges was what to do with all of the dead bodies. Thousands of corpses lay in very shallow mass graves, while many others were dumped down wells or strewn across hillsides in the open air. Traditionally in Rwanda, the dead were buried on or near homesteads, remaining in close physical proximity to their loved ones even after death.[5] According to traditional beliefs, the spirits of the dead would haunt the living if they were not buried properly.[6] But after the genocide, while some of the dead were found by survivors and given a funeral and burial on the family plot according to traditional custom, many other victims were killed in large massacres or while on the run, or had no family left to find them. Their remains were

[4] Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, "Genocide: Over 18,000 Victims Exhumed in Kigali Mass Graves," *The New Times*, September 18, 2018, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/genocide-over-18000-victims-exhumed-kigali-mass-graves.
[5] Major, "Unearthing, Untangling and Re-Articulating Genocide Corpses in Rwanda."
[6] Rachel Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning: Survivor Contributions to Memorials in Post-Genocide Rwanda," *Memory Studies* 3, no. 4 (October 1, 2010): 330–43, https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698010374921.

untraceable. For public health reasons alone, these piles of bodies had to be buried somewhere. Something unprecedented would have to be done. Although the notion of a mass grave has no place in traditional Rwandan culture, numerous mass interment sites were created after the genocide because of the sheer scale of the numbers killed. At first, the state allocated land for re-burial simply as a matter of pragmatism, needing to get the decomposing corpses buried properly. It was survivors, who wanted to provide their lost loved ones with dignity and a place for remembrance, who first pushed for the burial grounds to also function as memorials.[7] These mass graves and the memorials that were established around them have become a new type of space in Rwanda.

There are around five hundred local memorials in Rwanda.[8] These local memorials largely came into existence through the efforts of groups of survivors. In December of 1995, survivors founded a national association called Ibuka (which translates to "Remember") dedicated to honoring the memory of victims and seeking justice and social rehabilitation for survivors. Ibuka has worked with smaller groups to coordinate commemoration activities, and has helped these local groups to construct and maintain the local memorials.[9] However, it was primarily the local groups who spearheaded the fundraising and labored to create the memorials.[10] They lobbied for funding from the national and local governments, and sought funds from foreign NGOs, private donors, and Ibuka.[11] The local memorials tend to be relatively small and scattered around all parts of the country; they are a ubiquitous reminder of the genocide. These memorials serve as sites for commemoration and proper burial of victims; they are places where survivors can go to remember their lost loved ones. Interment continues to take place at many of them, as new remains are still being found. The local memorials typically consist of an underground mass grave or crypt which contains the remains of local victims, and often include a small built structure which displays some bones or skulls. These local memorials are visited mostly by local Rwandans.[12] For survivors who have been able to locate their relatives' remains, reburial provides a sense of relief and healing. It aligns with the value traditionally placed on the fulfillment of their duty to the dead by the living. While traditional religion has almost

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[7] Ibreck.

[8] Rachel Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda" (PhD diss., University of Bristol, 2009), 88, EThOS (British Library e-theses online service), uk.bl.ethos.503868.

[9] Ibreck, 87.

[10] Hélène Dumas and Rémi Korman, "Memorial Spaces for the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda," *Afrique Contemporaine* No 238, no. 2 (December 20, 2011): vii; Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 87.

[11] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 89.

[12] John Giblin, "The Performance of International Diplomacy at Kigali Memorial Centre, Rwanda," *Journal of African Cultural Heritage Studies* 1, no. 1 (October 27, 2017): 53, https://doi.org/10.22599/jachs.17.

entirely been replaced by Christianity and Islam, this sense of duty to lay spirits to rest seems to have persisted.[13]

There are also five national genocide memorials in Rwanda that are sites of major massacres of the genocide. While many victims met their deaths in the fields, at the roadblocks, and other outdoor places, thousands were told that they would be safe if they gathered inside a church, a school, or a stadium — and then these sites acted as collection points where massacres could be carried out on a contained population with maximum efficiency. People thought they would be safe if they hid inside the buildings, but the *génocidaires* bashed holes in the walls so they could throw grenades inside (refer back to Figure 2.3). The victims' bodily remains, along with bullet holes in the ceiling and blood stains on the walls and floor, are still visible today at several major killing sites which are now memorials. Most of these genocide memorials contain exposed skulls and bones, and display clothing and other personal effects of the dead.

The conversion of these sites into national memorials was supported by a range of actors including genocide survivors, but the government and international donors have played a bigger role at these sites than at the local memorials.[14] After its military arm stopped the genocide, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) formed the transitional Government of National Unity in July of 1994. The Government of National Unity began to reestablish governmental institutions, and several of the new ministries undertook memorialization initiatives. In October of 1995, the Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Culture established the Memorial Commission on Genocide and Massacres in Rwanda. This commission was made up primarily of members of the Tutsi diaspora who had come back to Rwanda, including members of the Rwandan Patriotic Front. The commission produced a report that listed the major massacre sites in each municipality and estimated the number of victims at each site. This report became instrumental in the conversion of some of these sites to memorials.[15]

Churches were particularly prevalent as collection points for massacres because they had previously served as sanctuaries during earlier waves of violence in the 1960 and 1970s. In 1994, the killers exploited this tradition to lure their victims into buildings where they could be easily slaughtered. Some clergy, church officials, and parish members also participated in the killing.[16] Afterward, church leaders largely wanted to reclaim the spaces for worship, but the RPF-led state pushed for some of the sites to be turned into memorials. They saw the church as the only other institution in Rwanda that might challenge their newly-won authority, and recognized that preserving the evidence of some church leaders'

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[13] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 93–95.
[14] Ibreck, 158.
[15] Dumas and Korman, "Memorial Spaces for the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda," iii–v.
[16] Timothy Longman and Théoneste Rutagengwa, "Religion, Memory, and Violence in Rwanda," in *Religion, Violence, Memory, and Place*, ed. Oren Baruch Stier and J. Shawn Landres (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 132.

complicity in the genocide would help to undermine their moral influence.[17] Initially, the Rwandan clergy seemed to agree with the idea of converting one church per diocese (seven, in total) into a national memorial to be managed jointly by the state and the Catholic Church. However, negotiations between the Minister of Higher Education, Joseph Nsengimana, and the representative of the Church from Rome, Bishop Julius Janusz, deteriorated after one particularly contentious meeting. After this, local clergy sided with the Vatican, and they largely prevailed; only three churches were removed from use to become memorial sites.[18] In addition to these three churches, the other in situ national memorials in Rwanda are the Murambi Technical School and a hill in Bisesoro on which resisters tried to battle the killers but were largely massacred.

As sites of actual genocide massacres, these memorials can be classified as in situ memorials. In situ memorials are created when sites of staggering loss and violence are removed from everyday use to become official sites of mourning. They are comprised of a "normal" space that is subsequently layered by a space of atrocity and then by a space of memorialization. Through this transformation the site becomes sacred, in the sense of being set apart from the profane spaces of daily life. But sacred does not mean unchanged from the moment of the loss. While it is the atrocity that removes these spaces from everyday use, it is the third stage in the process – the interventions undertaken in the name of "memorialization" – which transform these spaces into sacred spaces. Without these efforts, the sites would eventually decay and disappear. As historian Robert Jan van Pelt has said about Auschwitz, "It's a place that constantly needs to be rebuilt in order to remain a ruin for us."[19] The "preservation" of a site of loss paradoxically requires constant change. But it is this ongoing investment that keeps the site – and thus the absences that it commemorates – present in the minds of the living.

Preservation is important on a pragmatic level because the buildings continue to play a vital role at the memorial sites. The remains (bones, clothing, shoes, personal items) would deteriorate rapidly if they were exposed to the elements, without the protection of the buildings in which they are housed; in order for these remains to be displayed as evidence of the genocide, they must be protected by structures. But the existing structures are more than simply functional. They, too, are a form of evidence. Their scars increase the affect of the memorial sites. This is why, rather than repair these buildings, there have been efforts to preserve and protect their damage as much as possible. These genocide sites were turned into memorials not only because of the number of people killed there, but also because of the communicative power vested in their physical and spatial qualities. Many scholars have focused on the affect of the bodies, but fewer have considered the architectural qualities of the sites. Linguistic anthropologist Susan E. Cook has attributed the powerful affect of these

[17] Longman and Rutagengwa, 138.
[18] Dumas and Korman, "Memorial Spaces for the Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda," v–vi.
[19] Andrew Curry, "Can Auschwitz Be Saved?," *Smithsonian Magazine*, February 2010, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/can-auschwitz-be-saved-4650863/?no-ist.

sites to both human remains *and* spatial elements: "the three dimensionality of a physical location, the sight of hastily dug pits and mass graves, and the smell and look of human remains make the locations where genocide has taken place haunting reminders that genocide is an artifact of human society, not a natural calamity."[20] The in situ genocide memorials thus serve as what I call "visceral memorials": they intend to produce affect through the strong emotions induced by the horrific sight of actual human remains, the damage inflicted on the site in the course of massacre, and the knowledge that one is occupying the same space as these terrible past events.

Why are we disturbed by intentionally damaged buildings? When their useful life is over, buildings are frequently razed clear to the ground to make way for something else, or they may be abandoned and left for nature to take its course. But there is a third and more perturbing fate: they might be partially destroyed by some human action, but left standing with their scars on display. Art historian Alois Riegl observed that we view ruins produced by natural decay as "romantic," but we see the product of intentional destruction as disturbing.[21] Contemporary social psychologists have even linked the viewing of destroyed buildings to increased support for war, dogmatism, and thoughts about death.[22] Human-made ruins are the product of a sudden traumatic occurrence; because their presence forces people to remember a moment when society was ripped apart, they have the power to transform space from that moment forward. Ruined buildings can be a tool to produce a desired affect, even fear, in a way that legitimizes the control of those in power.

The Rwandan Parliament demonstrates the communicative power of a damaged building (Figure 2.4). Sitting atop a prominent ridge, the Parliament building looms over the capital city. The façade of Parliament is scarred by large pockmarks where shells struck the building during the war to end the genocide. This seems odd in a country where newness and a neat appearance are held in high regard, with a government that is pushing for a shiny modern capital (as evidenced by the Kigali City Master Plan). Surely, they would want to repair and cover these cosmetic blemishes, particularly as the Parliament building is in a prominent location on top of a hill and can be seen from many parts of the city. However, I suggest that the state may have chosen to leave these scars in place as a reminder of the violence that could be provoked again, if the incumbent RPF party were to lose power. It is a way of underlining the fact that their army was powerful enough to take Parliament by force in an armed conflict, and reminding the population of the chaos and destabilization that occurred before the current government assumed power and restored stability.

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[20] Susan E. Cook, "The Politics of Preservation in Rwanda," MacMillan Genocide Studies Papers (MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, Yale University, 2004), 296, http://www.css.ethz.ch/en/services/digital-library/publications/publication.html/46644.

[21] Alois Reigl, *Der Moderne Denkmalkultus: Sein Wesen Und Seine Entstehung* (Vienna: W. Braumuller, 1903).

[22] Kenneth Vail et al., "The Aftermath of Destruction: Images of Destroyed Buildings Increase Support for War, Dogmatism, and Death Thought Accessibility," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 48, no. 5 (2012), https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2067583.

FIGURE 2.4. The scars on the Parliament building, which sits atop one of the hills of Kigali, are widely visible throughout the city.

Visible building damage serves as a reminder of this difficult period in Rwandan history. But in addition to damaged structures, the human remains contained at the memorial sites also serve to communicate the events of the genocide. Both local and national memorials in Rwanda display bones of victims, and sometimes other personal effects such as clothing. The remains help the Rwandan state to show outsiders what happened when the international community failed to intervene; "beyond words, coming face to face with bodies and bones emerged as the [international] political ritual for recognizing the genocide."[23] The perceived importance of displaying the bodies was revealed in 1998, when U.S. President Bill Clinton visited Rwanda — or rather, he visited the Rwandan airport. At the time of the genocide, Clinton had decided that the U.S. would not get involved. Four years later, while on a tour of Africa, Clinton came to Rwanda to greet President Pasteur Bizimungu and Vice President Paul Kagame and meet with genocide survivors. He visited for about three hours, but did not leave the tarmac due to what his team referred to as "security concerns."[24] When they learned of his plans, Rwandan authorities decided that if he would not go to the

[23] Korman, "Mobilising the Dead?," 61.
[24] "Clinton Flies to Rwanda to Meet Genocide Survivors," *CNN*, March 25, 1998, http://edition.cnn.com/WORLD/9803/25/clinton.africa/.

memorial sites, a memorial would go to him. They hastily constructed a white concrete memorial at the airport to display some remains of the victims, as well as some examples of the tools (machetes, knives, clubs) that were used to kill them.[25] Out of necessity, it would have to be the bodies and artifacts, rather than the actual site of the killing, that would be called on to convey the truth of what had happened. But to the disappointment of both the Rwandan government and survivor groups, Clinton refused to visit the airport memorial.[26]

It should be noted that the display of bones is not uniformly supported by all survivors. For many, it contradicts their need to bury the dead properly. Some survivors feel a determination to restore the dignity of the dead through proper burial, or a concern that these sites can re-trigger trauma for survivors who lived through the genocide and even for children too young to remember the actual events.[27] In 2011-2012, social anthropologist Laura Major worked alongside teams of survivor volunteers and state officials as they continued the work of exhuming, processing, and reinterring the corpses of genocide victims which continue to be found at sites around the country. Major observed that the survivors who were cleaning, washing and organizing the bones seemed to be engaged in uncomfortable and emotionally disturbing work.[28] However, for many survivors, the proximity to the remains also seemed to bring some kind of relief from what would otherwise be a "haunting sense of absence."[29]

According to a study by political scientist Timothy Longman and journalist and scholar Théoneste Rutagengwa, they also found mixed feelings among the general population about the memorial sites. Some respondents said that the memorials were a "moral obligation" and that they needed to be impressive so that people would realize their significance, while others (on both sides) objected to the memorials because they kept painful feelings alive for survivors and perpetrated an aura of guilt and shame for the Hutu. Longman and Rutagengwa observed a tendency for the Hutu, more than the Tutsi, to support "forgetting" what happened. Many people (again on both sides) were also concerned that the memorials might damage the process of reconciliation because they kept the events of the genocide present and continued to emphasize an ethnic divide.[30]

However, many survivors also accept the idea that the remains are a necessary form of testimony to the trauma of the genocide that can transcend language barriers and

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[25] "Row over Memorial as Clinton Visits Rwanda," *BBC News*, March 25, 1998, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/special_report/1998/03/98/africa/69487.stm.
[26] "Clinton Flies to Rwanda to Meet Genocide Survivors"; "Row over Memorial as Clinton Visits Rwanda."
[27] Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning."
[28] Major, "Unearthing, Untangling and Re-Articulating Genocide Corpses in Rwanda," 170.
[29] Major, 177.
[30] Timothy Longman and Théoneste Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda," in *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, ed. Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 174–75, doi:10.1017/CBO9780511720352.012.

communicate the horror of the massacres.[31] The pre-genocide government had forbid publicization of previous massacres of Tutsis, which had been ongoing since the 1960s, so it is understandable that survivors would feel it necessary to speak out about the genocide in order to help prevent it from happening again – particularly in the context of over 150 attacks on survivors since 1995, as estimated by Ibuka.[32] In addition, many genocide survivors continue to feel that their rights to land and property are tenuous, and that they must support the RPF and not make trouble.[33] If the government wants to keep this evidence visible, then they feel they must go along with it.

The role of the national genocide memorials as state-sponsored testimony should be assessed within a broader context of transitional justice in Rwanda. After the genocide, more than 120,000 perpetrators were detained for participating in the killing. The United Nations Security Council established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) on November 8, 1994 to prosecute those who were most responsible for perpetrating the genocide. The ICTR indicted 93 people, of which 61 were sentenced to terms up to life imprisonment, 14 were acquitted, and 10 referred to the national courts. The ICTR formally closed on December 31, 2015.[34] Rwanda's national court system prosecuted others accused of helping to plan the genocide or committing serious atrocities. About 10,000 perpetrators were tried in the national courts.[35] But this still did not address the vast majority of accused; there was no way that the formal court system could handle the sheer numbers of perpetrators who would have to be prosecuted. In 2005, the Rwandan government re-established the *gacaca* court system nationwide so that communities and local authorities could begin to deal with what had happened.[36]

In the traditional *gacaca* court system, communities would gather in an open space in order to hear testimony from perpetrators. The word *gacaca* comes from the Kinyarwanda word *umucaca,* which means a grass that is soft enough for people to sit on. The primary aim of the traditional *gacaca* courts was the restoration of order and harmony to the community, rather than the search for objective truth or the meting out of "justice" through the punishment of the perpetrator (although these secondary aims could be present).[37]

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[31] Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning."
[32] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 100.
[33] Major, "Unearthing, Untangling and Re-Articulating Genocide Corpses in Rwanda," 174.
[34] "Background Information on the Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda," United Nations - Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide and the United Nations, accessed October 31, 2018, http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/about/bgjustice.shtml.
[35] "Background Information on the Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda."
[36] Bert Ingelaere, "The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda," in *Traditional Justice and Reconciliation after Violent Conflict: Learning from African Experiences*, ed. Luc Huyse and Mark Salter (Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2008), 38.
[37] Ingelaere, 33–34.

Traditionally, local leaders would sit on the grass to review cases and levy symbolic fines, with the goal of reconciling the two sides and restoring harmony to the community.[38]

In the first few years after the genocide, there were some spontaneous instances of communities reviving *gacaca* to resolve disputes, but they were not yet nationally coordinated. Between May 1998 and March 1999, then-President Pasteur Bizimungu held meetings with representatives of Rwandan society to discuss problems facing Rwanda, including justice and reconciliation. At these meetings, the possibility of using *gacaca* was discussed, but with a twist – participants kept bringing up the notion of accountability. Unlike the traditional courts which focused on restoring harmony, they wanted the new *gacaca* courts to focus on the achievement of justice through the surfacing of truth and the prosecution of criminals. Later, the notion of reconciliation would become a more prominent part of the process, but this initial conceptualization stemmed largely from the desire to make clear what had happened, and to hold perpetrators accountable. Thus the contemporary form of *gacaca* courts can be characterized as a form of "invented tradition" (as coined by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger): loosely rooted in a traditional concept, but implemented in a novel and different way.[39] This fits in line with one of the cornerstone principles of the post-genocide RPF-led state's rhetoric: the replacement of divisive practices and values imported during the colonial period with "Home-Grown Traditions" that will restore Rwanda.[40] In 2005, the *gacaca* system was implemented nation-wide.[41] Although it is said to recall the traditional custom, the current system functions according to contemporary state rules, with fixed procedures and dedicated note-takers.[42]

Within this framework of transitional justice, truth and testimony in post-genocide Rwanda have become critical to social reconstruction, but they are also circumscribed. *Gacaca* became a system that prioritized speaking the truth about what happened — but the truth must be spoken only in this state-sanctioned setting. Furthermore, it is impossible to bring to trial any acts committed by the liberation army or the RPF in the *gacaca*.[43] Notes are taken at the *gacaca* meetings, so records of the proceedings endure — but they are stored away afterwards, in folders and desk drawers. In this context, the local genocide memorials serve as a kind of physical testimony that endures beyond the meetings on the grass. They have an ongoing presence in the space of the community in a more physical, visible way than written documents. These memorials also speak not to the crimes of any one individual, but to the crimes by a whole group against another group. On some level, these memorials say what

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[38] Aimable Twagilimana, *Historical Dictionary of Rwanda*, Historical Dictionaries of Africa 105 (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007), 61.
[39] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[40] Ingelaere, "The Gacaca Courts in Rwanda," 32.
[41] Ingelaere, 38.
[42] Ingelaere, 44.
[43] Ingelaere, 56.

cannot be said aloud, outside the context of *gacaca*. Thus, the memorial sites themselves have become a form of testimony.

This testimony goes beyond local and national reconciliation processes, however. The bones and building scars are forms of evidence which some Rwandans believe will prevent genocide denial. Like Holocaust deniers, there are people who have tried to deny that the Rwandan genocide really happened, including perpetrators in exile, opposition politicians, and even some outlying international scholars.[44] Even foreign governments such as that of the United States were initially reluctant to use the word "genocide."[45] The display of the victims' remains is intended to counter any denial that what happened was genocide. The "perceived authenticity" of the memorial sites is "enhanced by the presence of tangible evidence of the event at the actual site."[46] When rows of skulls are displayed side by side, the effect is to both emphasize the number of victims and to remind us of the violation of their bodies. Thus, the memorials make the genocide seem more "real" – not only to other Rwandans, but to people from outside Rwanda.

While some Rwandans were initially uncomfortable with the notion of the memorials as tourist sites, the national memorial sites have also been increasingly recognized as drivers of tourism. In fact, the national memorials are visited mostly by foreigners or urban elites from Kigali, not locals.[47] Foreign tourism is an important source of revenue for the Rwandan economy, and while the mountain gorillas continue to be Rwanda's primary tourist attraction, visitors sometimes stop at the genocide memorials along the way. Thus, the memorial sites have increasingly catered to foreign expectations of edification and accessibility. Foreign NGOs have also been retained to consult on the design of new features on the sites and the preservation of the buildings and remains. The genocide memorials have become an important link between Rwanda and the world. While they refer to a very specific event in Rwandan history, they also speak within a larger global dialogue about genocide prevention. Many of the memorial sites literally say "Never again" — a phrase which originated after the Holocaust and is commonly used today when referring to genocide events around the world. Like all genocide memorials, the Rwandan memorials engage with a global language that arose through the commemoration of the Holocaust; this interaction will be examined in more depth in a later section on the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

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[44] Gerald Caplan, "Rwanda's Genocide: First the Deed, Then the Denial," *The Globe and Mail*, March 13, 2007, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/rwandas-genocide-first-the-deed-then-the-denial/article722068/.

[45] Douglas Jehl, "Officials Told to Avoid Calling Rwanda Killings 'Genocide,'" *The New York Times*, June 10, 1994, https://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/10/world/officials-told-to-avoid-calling-rwanda-killings-genocide.html.

[46] Lisa Moore, "(Re)Covering the Past, Remembering Trauma: The Politics of Commemoration at Sites of Atrocity," *Journal of Public and International Affairs* 20 (Spring 2009): 50, http://www.princeton.edu/jpia/past-issues-1/2009/3.pdf.

[47] Timothy Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 7; Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 181–83.

SHIFTING TOWARD GREATER STATE CONTROL

Until about the year 2000, memorialization of victims and documentation of the genocide sites were higher priorities than preservation.[48] But around this time, it was becoming clear that the remains and other artifacts (such as clothing and papers) that were on display inside the buildings were at risk of deterioration from environmental conditions. Rain could penetrate through holes in the roof and walls, particularly during Rwanda's twice-a-year rainy season. At the mass graves, low quality materials had generally been used, and water infiltration had become a problem.[49] It was becoming increasingly evident that preservation — not only of bodies, but also of the structures housing them — would have to be addressed. In addition, the government of Rwanda was increasingly criticized for mobilizing the bodies for its own political agenda; it had been accused of "corpse voyeurism" by political opponents of the state, academics, and foreign observers.[50] Foreign agencies were called on to help manage the genocide sites, both for their preservation expertise but also likely in an effort to show the Rwandan state trying to do the right thing and not just acting in its own interests.

In order to coordinate preservation efforts at the national memorial sites, the government established the Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide (National Commission for the Fight against Genocide, or CNLG) in 2008. The CNLG's main directive was to fight against genocide ideology and prevent the occurrence of another genocide, but it would also oversee the management of the national memorial sites. Due to the poor quality of the initial mass graves, many bodies had to be exhumed and reburied — sometimes for a third or fourth time. In order to end this cycle which was painful for the loved ones of the dead, CNLG committed to building more sustainable structures, as well as installing protective measures at the major memorial sites. They also wanted to find ways to permanently preserve the remains that were on display at these sites.[51]

Also in 2008, a key modification was made to the naming of the genocide memorial sites. Signs for genocide memorials were officially rewritten from "*Jenoside*" / "*Le génocide"* to the more specific "*Jenoside yakorewe abatutsi*" / "*Le Génocide de Tutsi"* ("the genocide against the Tutsi") (Figure 2.5).[52] These signs are generally written in large enough font to be seen from the road by passersby. The signage of the genocide memorials is visible evidence of the state's gradual narrowing of who could be mourned at these sites, and a move toward increased "Tutsification" of the genocide. This change was also strongly supported by some survivors, who felt that "not mentioning their Tutsi identity is equivalent to being

[48] Cook, "The Politics of Preservation in Rwanda," 307.
[49] Korman, "Mobilising the Dead?," 62.
[50] Korman, 61.
[51] Korman, "Mobilising the Dead?"
[52] Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning," 339.

dispossessed of their history."[53] They were concerned that referring to the genocide without explicitly naming the "Tutsi" could leave room for confusion or even denial.[54]

FIGURE 2.5. Local genocide memorial at Kibuye, labeled "Never Again" and "Jenoside yakorewe abatutsi muri mata 1994" which means "Genocide against the Tutsis in April 1994."

Belying normative state rhetoric that ethnicity is – as President Paul Kagame has stated – a "nonsense of division,"[55] the RPF actually continues to reinscribe ethnicity in a number of subversive ways. While the post-genocide government has displayed an illusion of democracy, it has in fact enacted a concentrated sovereignty. The cabinet is made up of a diverse group of men and women from different regions and ethnic groups, but in actuality "real decision-making power [is concentrated] in the hands of a small group of individuals closely associated with defense minister and RPF leader Paul Kagame."[56] Even though on

[53] Institut de Recherche et de Dialogue pour la Paix (IDRP), *Génocide des Tutsis du Rwanda, Causes, Execution et Memoire*, (2006), 68, in Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 101.
[54] Ibreck, 101.
[55] David Pilling and Lionel Barber, "Interview: Kagame Insists 'Rwandans Understand the Greater Goal,'" *Financial Times*, August 27, 2017, https://www.ft.com/content/a2838936-88c6-11e7-bf50-e1c239b45787.
[56] Timothy Longman, "Memory, Justice, and Power in Post-Genocide Rwanda" (Annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, PA, 2006), 16.

the surface they claim that "we are all Rwandans," to this day, the state is largely still Tutsi, and the Tutsi are still a minority in Rwanda. It is thus in the best interests of the RPF to enact a "Tutsification" of the genocide, in which there are clear good and bad guys, and in which everyone identifies the Hutu (still the majority in Rwanda by a significant percentage, as they are at least 80% of the population) as the bad guys.[57] To circumvent popular resentment of their minority rule, the state upholds a narrative of the Tutsi as noble victims and of themselves as saviors against evil forces. This is a plausible explanation for why the state officially renamed the "Rwandan genocide" as the "genocide against the Tutsis," although Kagame said that it was not renamed, just "clarified."[58] The state also portrays the genocide as if the Tutsi were the only ones killed, although many moderate Hutu also lost their lives. This sustains the positioning of the minority Tutsi as both victims and heroes, and helps to legitimize their disproportionate amount of control over the Hutu.

The reinscription of ethnicity becomes more evident when we see how remains are treated at the genocide memorial sites. In her previously mentioned fieldwork, Laura Major found that the human remains at the genocide memorial sites were consistently transmuted from the remains of individuals into a collection of anonymized, unidentifiable bones and tissues. This had been going on for several years by the time she studied the sites in 2011-2012. To some extent this occurred because some bones had become too mixed up to be separated into individual remains. But Major also recognized the genocide corpses as "symbol" and "spectacle," utilized by the state as a form of political capital. There has been a deliberate disassociation and collectivization of the bones. Although they often had clothing, personal possessions, or even ID cards that could identify the bodies, these items have been removed and collected *en masse* by type of object. As Major observed, "What emerges from this process is a mass of bones that imply a vast dead, one in which the specific detail and texture of the life in which these bones were once embedded is obscured."[59] The state's aim is to solidify a particular collective identity for the Tutsi victims, as well as for themselves as the liberators.

The genocide was a chaotic event in which misinformation and uncertainty about identities were deliberately employed by the genocidal government to carry out their dark aims.[60] It could be argued that the current state has countered this by putting forth a simplified categorization in which the Tutsi were unequivocally the collective victim. However, the flip side of increased clarity may be oversimplification. Some survivors have suggested that there is also a need to commemorate the Hutu resisters who lost their lives.[61]

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[57] Gérard Prunier, *Africa's World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 3.
[58] Francois Soudan, "President Paul Kagame's Interview with Jeune Afrique," *The New Times*, March 26, 2009, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/7817.
[59] Major, "Unearthing, Untangling and Re-Articulating Genocide Corpses in Rwanda," 171.
[60] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).
[61] Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning," 340.

And some Hutu have even expressed the desire to identify the specific perpetrators and participants in the genocide, so as to eliminate collective guilt.[62] But there is one dominant narrative at the national memorial, in textbooks, and in other tellings of history controlled by the RPF, which is that the Hutu were perpetrators and the Tutsi are survivors. Mahmood Mamdani's analysis of non-ethnic terminology in genocide discourse (namely the terms "victims," "survivors," and "perpetrators") shows that, although these terms appear to be neutral, the popular assumption that every Hutu who opposed the genocide was killed implies that "to be a Hutu in contemporary Rwanda is to be presumed a *perpetrator*" (emphasis in the original).[63]

Since the relabeling of genocide memorial sites in 2008, the state has further disenfranchised survivors and local communities in decision-making processes related to the memorial sites. They also have restricted who can be mourned at these sites: all Tutsi victims can be mourned, but not moderate or pacifist Hutus; no one of mixed ethnic heritage; and certainly not Hutus killed in the process of stopping the genocide.[64] The dominant narrative of the genocide also conceals the killings and other violations of human rights – largely against the Hutu – that were committed by the RPF during the civil war before the genocide (1990-1993) and the two wars in the Congo (1996-1997, 1998-2003).[65] These acts of violence are not permitted to be part of commemoration activities, or openly discussed.[66] According to a document produced by the Senate of Rwanda, making reference to "unpunished RPF crimes" may qualify as the punishable offences of "genocide ideology" or "divisionism."[67] And yet, the state has officially renamed the genocide and constrained the ceremonies at genocide memorial sites in order to emphasize the Tutsis as the victims. While the state is pretending to do away with ethnic division rooted in colonial biases, it is actually reestablishing it.

It is clear that there are still ethnicity-based tensions in Rwanda that have no outlet. On two occasions, one in 2008 and one in 2009, grenades were used to attack the Kigali Genocide Memorial during the week commemorating the anniversary of the genocide. The use of grenades to attack these sites is particularly laden with meaning, because grenades had been used during the genocide to blow holes in buildings so that the victims inside could be accessed. In a space intended for remembering victims, this mode of attack recalled the

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[62] Longman and Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda," 174.
[63] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 267.
[64] Helen Hintjens, "Reconstructing Political Identities in Rwanda," in *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction, and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond*, ed. Philip Clark and Zachary D. Kaufman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 77–99; Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 78.
[65] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 85, 109.
[66] Longman, 268.
[67] Rwandan Senate, *Rwanda: Genocide Ideology and Strategies for Its Eradication* (Kigali: Parliament of the Republic of Rwanda, 2006), 17.

hatred of the perpetrators.[68] These attacks suggest that memorial sites have great symbolic significance, and ongoing tensions may continue to be directed toward them, perpetuating violence.

Perhaps due in part to these manifestations of underlying tension in 2008-2009, the state began to mold a rhetoric that emphasized moving forward. Around 2010, government discourse shifted toward forgiveness and reconciliation, and the use of violent imagery in commemoration ceremonies was noticeably reduced. Historian Rémi Korman has argued that the 2010 re-election of President Kagame and the closure of the gacaca system in 2012 were signs of a political shift in which the state shifted its focus from justice and the presentation of evidence to reconciliation and progress. According to Korman, the state began to present the genocide as no longer an immediate element of the present, but rather "a founding element of the Rwandan nation" that was firmly in the past.[69] But Korman seems to take the state at their word, and his analysis misses the subtle manipulation behind the scenes, because it fails to fully recognize the political context of the time – for example, the mounting criticism of human rights violations committed by the RPF during and after the genocide, and the fact that the RPF's legitimacy as a state was beginning to be called into question. In an election year, the incumbent state would naturally want to present a sense of closure and progress to the public by suggesting that ethnicity-based violence was a thing of the past. But in actuality, they were also taking steps to keep ethnicity relevant in the present. While ordinary citizens were forbidden to reference ethnicity, the state had re-inscribed ethnicity at the major sites of genocide and the hundreds of local memorials scattered around the country. This emphasized that the Tutsis were both the victims of the genocide as well as the saviors who had earned the right to memorialize their own. Who could argue that the Hutu, *perpetrators of genocide*, would be better leaders? The incumbent (Tutsi-led) state would thus be legitimized in both the eyes of the voting citizens as well as the international community.

In 2016, there was another major step in the gradual evolution away from the control of memorialization by survivors or independent institutions and towards control by the state. The state had already taken over running the national memorial sites with the establishment of CNLG in 2008, but there was still ambiguity and inconsistency in who was responsible for maintaining smaller memorials located on the property of churches and other private institutions. In 2016, all local memorials were put under the jurisdiction of the local district governments.[70] And while Rwanda's governance may appear to be relatively decentralized, it is in fact tightly controlled by the center through top-down policy-making

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[68] Jessica Auchter, *The Politics of Haunting and Memory in International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 53.
[69] Korman, "Mobilising the Dead?," 66.
[70] Eugene Kwibuka, "Government to Manage Genocide Memorial Sites," *The New Times*, March 2, 2016, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/197620.

and strong control over the actions of local governments.[71] So, in essence, all memorials in Rwanda were put under the control of the central RPF-led state.

In recent years, the Rwandan memorials also show signs of an increasing turn toward the transnational production of memory in the context of globalization. This is evident in a number of elements that will be illuminated in the following case studies, including consultation and funding from international sources, the use of an international commemorative vocabulary, and the development of features that satisfy international visitor expectations. Thus, control over the national genocide sites has shifted increasingly away from the local population and toward centralized state control and international partnerships.

TIMELINES AND PALIMPSESTS: THREE CASE STUDIES

Through the following three case studies, this section will contrast different approaches to the memorialization of the Rwandan genocide. All three sites reflect a mix of domestic and international norms and agents. There is a clear distinction, however, between the purpose-built memorial in Kigali and the in situ memorials such as Ntarama and Murambi. The Kigali Genocide Memorial, built as a new memorial site to be maximally accessible in the capital city, presents a clear narrative of the timeline of the genocide, including Rwanda's history both before and after it occurred. Affect is an important goal of this memorial, but so is a didactic presentation of events that contributes to a chronological understanding of the genocide. The content of the Kigali Genocide Memorial was developed outside of the country, and is largely separate from its architectural housing. For these reasons, this memorial functions more like a purpose-built museum than an in situ memorial site.

On the other hand, the in situ memorials present a layering of the past and present in order to build maximum affective power. Here, chronology is much less important. This is in part due to the need for preservation interventions to conserve historic sites which are aging over time. As the twenty-fifth anniversary of the genocide approaches, deterioration of both the buildings and the remains has become a problem. Various efforts have been made over the years to clean, preserve, and upgrade the sites. But changes to the site also reflect particular agenda which depend on the blurring of a linear timeline to achieve various aims, including increased emotional affect and political legitimation.

The following case studies will contrast the Kigali Genocide Memorial with two in situ memorials, the Ntarama Church and the Murambi Technical School, to illuminate the ways in which chronological clarity – or the lack thereof – serves to convey particular narratives about the genocide.

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[71] Benjamin Chemouni, "Explaining the Design of the Rwandan Decentralization: Elite Vulnerability and the Territorial Repartition of Power," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 246–62, https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2014.891800.

Kigali Genocide Memorial

The Kigali Genocide Memorial is the most prominent national memorial to the genocide in Rwanda. It serves as both a memorial and a site for education.[72] It uses a globalized language of commemoration that has developed largely from the way the West has memorialized the Holocaust, and it presents a chronological narrative of the genocide in which time is linear. The resulting impact is very different than that of the in situ genocide memorial sites, where time is layered and unintelligible.

For several years after the genocide, there was no major memorial site in Rwanda's capital city. In 1999, the City of Kigali set aside a parcel of land for a burial site and place of remembrance. Construction of the memorial began that year, and the burial of victims began in 2001.[73] In 2002, Rwanda's Minister of Culture and the Mayor of Kigali visited the UK Holocaust Centre which had been established by the Aegis Trust, a British NGO that campaigns to prevent genocide worldwide. After this visit, the mayor asked Aegis to work on the genocide memorial in Kigali. The main building on the Kigali site was originally designed by a Rwandan architect, but the Aegis Trust came in to fill in the shell and prepare an exhibit (Figure 2.6).[74] According to the Memorial's website, "The Aegis Trust then began to collect data from across the world to create the three graphical exhibits. The text for all three was printed in three languages, designed in the UK at the Aegis head office by their design team, and shipped to Rwanda to be installed."[75] According to the Aegis Trust website, the Kigali Genocide Memorial was created as "a place of remembrance for survivors and education, both for the young and for wider Rwandan society. It is also a site of learning highly relevant to the international community, as policy makers strive to improve response to mass atrocities and the effectiveness of systems for prevention."[76] The Memorial opened to the public in 2004. Today, the Memorial continues to be run by Aegis under contract to CNLG.[77]

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[72] "Kigali Genocide Memorial," Aegis Trust, accessed November 23, 2018, https://www.aegistrust.org/what-we-do/activities/kigali-genocide-memorial/.
[73] "Our History," Kigali Genocide Memorial, accessed November 23, 2018, https://www.kgm.rw/about/our-history/.
[74] Rory Carroll, "In Memory of Murder: Rwanda's New Monument," *The Guardian*, March 24, 2004, http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2004/mar/24/art.rwanda.
[75] www.kigalimemorialcenter.org/centre/, as quoted in Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 80–81.
[76] "Kigali Genocide Memorial."
[77] "Kigali Genocide Memorial."

FIGURE 2.6. The main exhibit building at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

The Kigali Genocide Memorial has a very different relationship to bodies than Ntarama, Murambi, or other in situ memorial sites where bodies are rendered visible. At the Kigali Memorial, although upwards of 250,000 bodies are buried there, the mass graves are covered by concrete slabs and the bodies are not visible in any way to the visitors; in fact, it is hard to tell that they are mass graves at all, except for a small sign asking visitors not to step on the slabs. They are very simple, unadorned concrete slabs (Figure 2.7). Embedded into one slab is a viewing window through which you can see purple flags draped over coffins (as purple is the color of genocide remembrance), but no bodies (Figure 2.8). There are no markings or other indications of who is buried here. But near the graves, there is a wall of names in progress; it has been inscribed with some of the victims who have been identified.

FIGURE 2.7. A mass grave at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

FIGURE 2.8. A window allows a view of some of the flag-draped coffins.

The Memorial also differs greatly from the in situ genocide sites because those sites are relatively remote from the capital and are still part of the local community, while the Kigali Genocide Memorial is dislocated from the actual site of violence, but located at an easily accessible place where more people can visit. It is also housed within a new structure and grounds, not a building that was once a container for massacre. Compared to the in situ national memorials in Rwanda, this is a unique kind of memorial for Rwanda – one that adheres much more closely to a museum-like atmosphere, a linear narrative, and an international language of memorialization. At this site, the genocide is presented in a chronological and individualizing way, as opposed to the collapsed-time and collective way that it is presented at the in situ memorial sites to be described later in this chapter. One could call the Kigali Genocide Memorial a "didactic memorial." It engages with a clear sequence of events, constructing a chronicle of the events that led up to the tragedy. It was established to tell a story about the past, and to emphasize the commitment to a particular rhetoric ("Never again") that gives the state the moral high ground.

The interior exhibits of the memorial are designed to be experienced in a particular order. Upon entering the main exhibit, titled "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi," you are guided by a wall to turn right, such that you must begin viewing the exhibit at the beginning. The exhibit is laid out along the perimeter of the building, and it conveys a chronological narrative, telling the story of what happened before, during, and after the genocide. The space is designed to encourage quiet contemplation of the information in a direct sequence. The only windows on this level are made of stained-glass, so there is no visual connection to the outside. It is carpeted (and thus quiet), dim around the perimeter, and largely lit by directed point lighting that indicates where to look. Although you can catch glimpses into the central space, for now you can only proceed in a spiral from the outer perimeter to the three side rooms and finally to contemplation of the sculpture at the center.

The narrative proceeds in a chronological fashion and you are led to understand the genocide with a very strong sense of cause and effect (Figure 2.9).

FIGURE 2.9. The genocide is presented through text and images in a chronological fashion, including events that occurred before, during, and after the genocide.

And this story of cause and effect has a clear agenda. The Kigali Genocide Memorial pretty clearly puts a significant portion of the blame for the genocide on foreign actors. The first panel of the exhibit is "Before the Genocide," which emphasizes the unity and harmony in Rwandan society before colonialism. Precolonial Rwanda is presented as a golden age: "This has been our home for centuries. We are one people. We speak one language. We have one history." The information panels cite the colonial era as the source of ethnic strife: "We have lived in peace for many centuries, but now the divide between us had begun." The panels proceed through the colonial era when the Europeans fostered increased ethnic division, and then the post-independence era and events that led to the genocide.

As you approach the genocide section, there is a warning sign about entering a section with graphic photos of the genocide. This is also the first time there are physical objects in the exhibit: guns, machetes, chains. The next section is a black tri-fold panel with a video screen in the center. This video shows horrific images of the dead and injured, and is very graphic. Two subsequent sections of the exhibit talk about the genocide's impact on

women and children, and its devastating effects on society as a whole ("Rwanda was dead."). Although I have termed this memorial "didactic," it is still highly affective and very difficult to view. The sequence focusing on the events of the genocide is particularly disturbing.

The exhibit does not end with the liberation. It continues on to consider the aftermath and impacts of the genocide. Thus, the next section is "After the Genocide." Once reaching the end of the "After the Genocide Section," you have completed the perimeter exhibit, and the circulation guides you into a central room with abstract sculptures created by a local artist to tell the history of Rwanda in four phases. Around this central room, there are three side chambers: (1) a room displaying personal photographs of victims, placed there by survivors to remember their family members (Figure 2.10); (2) a bone room, containing skulls and femurs arrayed in cases; (3) a room displaying clothing and personal items retrieved from mass graves. These rooms are some of the most powerful rooms in the Memorial. The display of clothing and bones is similar, though on a smaller scale, to the displays found in the visceral memorials, and it has a similar effect of emphasizing the numbers of people killed, and the fact that in death many of them became anonymous. But these remains are detached from the actual spaces of violence, and in some way, this has the effect of focusing more attention on the dead themselves, rather than the way they died. Furthermore, the photographs and testimonial videos at this memorial simultaneously humanize and individualize the victims, giving them back their names and stories. The visitor begins to feel as if they get to "know" the victims in some way through these efforts to publicly reconnect individual identity to the dead. The notion of individualizing the victims of genocide is an increasingly common international convention because it is thought to oppose the very essence of genocide, which seeks to make a people disappear. The use of this strategy for the Kigali Genocide Memorial is likely in large part due to the influence of the Aegis Trust, who have experience with Holocaust memorialization. The siting of the Rwandan genocide within an international context is also emphasized by the exhibit on the second floor titled "Wasted Lives." This exhibit examines various genocides around the world. It includes genocides in Namibia, Armenia, Germany (the Holocaust), Cambodia, and Bosnia.

FIGURE 2.10. This display at the Kigali Genocide Memorial uses personal photographs to individualize the victims of the genocide.

The Kigali Genocide Memorial constantly seems to negotiate between a local and international audience.[78] There are ways in which the memorial feels specifically targeted toward the Rwandan population. The landscaped grounds provide a site for mourning of victims, but in addition, the Kinyarwanda text is always largest throughout the interior exhibit, with smaller captions in French and English below. In the central sculpture room, the quotes on the wall are in very large Kinyarwanda text, and the translations in French and English on small glass panels below are very subtle and almost hard to spot at first. The introductory video in the reception building includes testimonials spoken in Kinyarwanda, and subtitled in English and French. It is also notable that the text in "The 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi" exhibit uses "we," not the third person, when talking about Rwandans. The use of this language emphasizes precolonial harmony, but it also makes it feel like the memorial is speaking to a Rwandan audience.

At the same time, the Memorial is also definitely targeted at outside visitors. The story of Rwanda's history is told with enough explanation that someone completely

[78] The audio guide also says that Rwanda's genocide memorials are "for local people and international visitors, to help them understand how genocide evolved and the related consequences for Rwandan society."

unfamiliar with the country could understand the chain of events. The subtitles and translated captions may be small, but they are always present. An optional audio guide is available in various languages. There is even a gift shop selling souvenirs of Rwanda. The black memorial wall inscribed with the names of the dead is further evidence of the Kigali Genocide Memorial's participation in a global language of commemoration. Memorial walls became a Western tradition after the enormous losses of WWI and were further popularized by Maya Lin's Vietnam Memorial; they are now common at many memorial sites.

Why is it important to engage an international audience? Attracting international visitors to the Memorial is a means of political legitimation because the narratives told about the RPF at the Memorial help to build up its reputation to the outside world. If the state is presented as heroic, they are more likely to be considered rightful rulers, as well as worthy allies. International visitors bring certain expectations with them, so an internationalized language of memorial design is used to engage the foreign visitor base. In 2014, the first phase of a new masterplan was completed by UK firm McAslan + Partners. As McAslan + Partners describes the project, "a phased masterplan by the practice is providing expanded facilities for the site, including new entrance and education elements, and extensive re-landscaping that creates a place of shared memory that counters genocidal ideology."[79] In a rendering for the project, a white couple is prominently featured, suggesting that a foreign audience is desired at this site (Figure 2.11). It is also very telling that a significant part of the new masterplan is an external amphitheater, suggesting the importance of *performance* and *audience* (Figure 2.12). The Memorial is not only a place for remembrance, but also a site for telling the story of the genocide in a certain way – a story in which the hero is the RPF.

FIGURE 2.11. Rendering of the expanded facilities at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

[79] McAslan + Partners, "Kigali Memorial Centre," accessed May 9, 2015, http://www.mcaslan.co.uk/projects/kigali-memorial-centre.

FIGURE 2.12. The amphitheater at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

As a genocide memorial, the closest precedents for the Kigali Genocide Memorial are sites that commemorate the Holocaust. We can read the influence of the Aegis Trust's background in Holocaust memorialization in specific elements of the Kigali Genocide Memorial, which derive from conventions at Holocaust memorials and museums. For example, the display of photographs at the Kigali Genocide Memorial is modeled on the use of photographs at the United States' Holocaust Museum as metonyms for the dead.[80] But as argued by visual culture theorist Nicholas Mirzoeff, "The Rwandan genocide is now being…dragged over the Holocaust in order to persuade Western audiences of its importance, even though it is itself evidence of the failure of memorialization inspired by the Holocaust."[81] Perhaps "failure" is too strong a word, but this statement does provoke the question of whether we can learn anything from a specific instance of genocide if it is memorialized according to a standard language. As Andreas Huyssen, scholar of German philology and comparative literature, has said:

[80] Nicholas Mirzoeff, "Invisible Again: Rwanda and Representation after Genocide," *African Arts* 38, no. 3 (2005): 91.
[81] Mirzoeff, 91.

> *In the transnational movement of memory discourses, the Holocaust loses its quality as index of the specific historical event and begins to function as a metaphor for other traumatic histories and memories. The Holocaust as a universal trope is a prerequisite for its decentering and its use as a powerful prism through which we may look at other instances of genocide. The global and local aspects of Holocaust memory have entered into new constellations that beg to be analyzed case by case. While the comparison with the Holocaust may rhetorically energize some discourses of traumatic memory, it may also serve as a screen memory or simply block insights into specific local histories.*[82]

In order to prevent genocides from occurring again, it may be equally as critical to analyze how a genocide is memorialized after it occurs as it is to understand the historical circumstances that led up to the genocide.

Above all, the Kigali Genocide Memorial demonstrates a clear instrumentalization of history by the current state. It presents a clear linear narrative about the past, with key points including: outsiders poisoned Rwandan society; other countries failed to help in a time of need; and the RPF saved the day. Thus, the Memorial identifies important agents, delineates cause and effect, and builds toward what seem like logical conclusions. But in any narrative about a complex historical event, the reality is that certain things will be highlighted while others are deemphasized. This is often necessitated by space constraints (whether it is the physical space of an exhibit, or the length constraint of a published work). But this selectivity also develops from the way that those who are telling the story want it to be told. Like the other national memorials in Rwanda, there are some elements of the genocide which are downplayed or left out at the Kigali Genocide Memorial. It is notable that "all of the testimonies [at the Kigali Genocide Memorial] explicitly or implicitly suggest a Tutsi voice."[83] Although there were some Hutus who acted to save Tutsis, or were killed because they opposed the genocide, they comprise a very small segment of the content at the Kigali Genocide Memorial, and their ethnicity as Hutus is often not made explicit. Again, we see the narrative of the genocide told according to the state's official version.

However, it should be noted that the narrative that is told at the Kigali Genocide Memorial is, in fact, largely accurate. No one, especially after visiting this site, could rightfully seek to deny the reality of the genocide. There is clear and undeniable evidence that the genocide occurred, and that much of what is presented here is true. And yet, it is still the case that certain elements of the past can be downplayed or emphasized in order to uphold the legitimacy of the current state. The Kigali Genocide Memorial tells a narrative about the past, but it also serves the needs of the present.

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[82] Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 14.

[83] Elizabeth King, "Memory Controversies in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Implications for Peacebuilding," *Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal* 5, no. 3 (2010): 297, http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/gsp/vol5/iss3/6.

Ntarama Church

Compared to the Kigali Genocide Memorial, the in situ memorials in Rwanda exhibit a very different approach to chronology and narrative. To illustrate this, this section returns to Ntarama, the church described at the beginning of this chapter. At the Ntarama memorial, the preservation of existing structures is intertwined with new architectural or landscape designs, sometimes without a clear distinction of what is old and new. This approach has been critiqued by some Western preservationists. In 2017, I attended a lecture given in Kigali by Randall Mason, a historic preservationist from the University of Pennsylvania, about his work as an expert consultant for CNLG. In the lecture, he was critical of the way the Ntarama site had been altered, with the addition of large metal canopies, new footpaths, and a memorial wall. He felt that these changes were detracting from the integrity of the place as a historical site. He argued that some changes, such as the canopies, were too obvious — altering the whole "feel" of the site — while others, such as changing the circulation and adding new pathways, were not obvious enough and thus confused what was old and new. Following the Venice Charter, Western standards of historical preservation have long held that there should be as little modern intervention as possible, but when there is modern intervention, it should be obvious. In this way, the visitor can separate out the different time frames of the "original" site and the new interventions. Mason argued that the preservation efforts at Ntarama were problematic because they were not temporally legible.[84]

But the problem is that the Rwandan genocide sites have *never* represented an "original" condition, or a single moment in time, since the end of the genocide. At Ntarama, bodies were moved almost immediately. In 1995 (fifteen months after the genocide), a New York Times reporter visited the Ntarama church. He observed that "Rwanda is building a holocaust museum at its own Auschwitz."[85] But at the time of the reporter's visit in 1995, the Ntarama site was not yet open to the public. In order to visit, you had to procure a letter from the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs. The bodies had already been altered, likely under the direction of the same ministry, which had jurisdiction over the site at the time. The skulls had been detached and laid in rows on the ground, and then later on a long wooden table. Rudimentary efforts at preserving the structures had also been made. For example, a tin roof and a fence had been added.[86] But in the early years after the genocide, it seems that the visible preservation of *bodies as evidence* was the initial priority, more so than the commemoration of lives lost or the preservation of the actual physical sites in which the killing occurred. When asked who made the decision to leave the bodies unburied at

[84] Randall Mason, Lecture (January 30, 2017).
[85] Donald G. McNeil Jr., "Ntarama Journal; At Church, Testament To Horror," *The New York Times*, August 4, 1995, https://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/04/world/ntarama-journal-at-church-testament-to-horror.html.
[86] McNeil Jr.

Ntarama, a local guardian of the site said, "The government made the decision to have it like this."[87]

As the tenth anniversary of the genocide approached, the Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Culture (MIJESPOC), which had taken over the oversight of the memorial sites, became increasingly concerned about the decay of the remains. They asked the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) to contribute funds toward preservation. DFID made a significant donation and also coordinated with British preservation experts and commissioned a restoration design for Ntarama from UK-based architects.[88] In April of 2004, LB Landscape Architecture (a division of the London-based firm Levitt Bernstein) drew up a proposed plan for a variety of interventions at Ntarama.[89] This plan emphasized the preservation of the existing character of the site, but it also resulted in the construction of a new canopy structure to protect the church building, a new fence around the site, a memorial wall of names, and the landscaping of gravel paths and gardens.[90]

In 2013, Sharon Davis was hired to oversee the design of a new welcome center for Ntarama as well as additional preservation work on site, but for unknown reasons she ended up leaving the project and the work was taken over by a Rwandan firm. The work was completed in 2015.[91] According to Mason, who had acted as a preservation consultant for Davis before she left the project, the final results of the project "were disappointing, and included the overly aggressive restoration of heritage buildings, the introduction of new building elements, addition of a parking lot, and the destruction of village buildings next to the site."[92]

Today, the church building at Ntarama still shows damage that occurred at the time of the genocide, and a large metal roof preserves the church in this state and protects the building from further deterioration (refer to Figure 2.1). The metal roof is sensitive to its context by mimicking the slope of the church. However, this roof and other new canopies over auxiliary buildings do alter the character of the site, making the structures seem larger and more imposing than they really are. They also impart a feeling that the site is like an archaeological dig in which truths about the past can be excavated, when in fact many of the site's artifacts have been staged in different ways over time.

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[87] Quoted in Pat Caplan, "'Never Again': Genocide Memorials in Rwanda," *Anthropology Today* 23, no. 1 (February 1, 2007): 21, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8322.2007.00486.x.
[88] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 186–88.
[89] Auchter, *The Politics of Haunting and Memory in International Relations*, 76.
[90] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 186–88.
[91] "CNLG Introduces Ntarama Memorial Site Construction Works to District Authorities," CNLG, August 19, 2015, http://cnlg.gov.rw/news-details/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=477&cHash=3360db15e75b7adff68ebbc1380ecbd8.
[92] Randall Mason quoted in Joann Greco, "Protecting 'Negative Heritage' in Rwanda," *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 21, 2016, http://thepenngazette.com/protecting-negative-heritage-in-rwanda/.

The addition of fencing, large metal gates, and a security office protect the site, but also emphasize a condition of restricted access (Figure 2.13). The site is open to the public but only during visiting hours, and only the state commission has the power to control and shape the site. A concrete wall lists names of the dead at Ntarama who have been identified (Figure 2.14). But unlike the Holocaust or the Cambodian genocide, the killers in Rwanda did not keep track of the names of their victims. Most bodies at Ntarama went unclaimed because they couldn't be identified or there were no relatives to claim them. Most of this memorial wall is still uninscribed. This is an example of the turn toward an international vocabulary of memorialization in Rwanda, even though it may not fit the context.

FIGURE 2.13. At the Ntarama memorial, similar architectural language is used for the new security office, with a metal roof hovering over a masonry building, as for the existing church in the background. This makes old and new part of the same composition.

FIGURE 2.14. Memorial wall at Ntarama.

It is not only the structures themselves which have been augmented and altered; the relationship between the structures and their contents has also changed over time. After the genocide, the church remained full of the bones and personal effects of the victims who had died inside its walls (Figure 2.15). By 2002, hundreds of skulls were put on display in an adjacent shed, and burlap sacks were filled with bones; but by 2005, the skulls had been moved back into the church. At some point, the bones were also scattered on the floor again, in a manner that made it unclear that they had been deliberately placed there.[93] Sometime after that, most of the debris was cleared from the church. A photograph from 2007 shows the floor still clear, and bones stacked at one end (Figure 2.16). Around 2010, the clothes of victims were then put back into the church, but this time hung from the walls and roof structure.[94] The clothes were still there by 2015 (Figure 2.17), but by April 2016 they had been removed again (Figure 2.18). Periodically, coffins holding remains to be buried were placed in the church and then removed again. Today, a visitor to the site would observe both the marks of the massacre but also the results of twenty-five years of different ideas about how to deal with the remains and alter the conditions of the buildings. It would be impossible to restore all of the debris back to the moment of genocide.

[93] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 68–70.
[94] Peter Hohenhaus, "Ntarama Genocide Memorial Site," Dark Tourism, 2010, http://www.dark-tourism.com/index.php/15-countries/individual-chapters/523-ntarama-genocide-memorial-rwanda#p.

FIGURE 2.15. Ntarama in September 1994, about two months after the end of the genocide.

FIGURE 2.16. Ntarama in 2007. By this time the floor was clear and bones were stacked at one end.

FIGURE 2.17. Ntarama in 2015. Note the hanging clothes and the coffins waiting to be buried.

FIGURE 2.18. Ntarama in April 2016. Note the addition of lights on the wooden beams and the metal rails along the walls.

FIGURE 2.19. Preservation work on the church building at Ntarama. A discreet glass panel has been placed in front of the hole to provide maximum visibility of the damage while ensuring that no one can enter the building.

At the time of my visit to Ntarama in 2017, local residents were washing and treating a pile of bones to be interred at the site. These remains had been found in the local area and were going to be buried as part of the annual genocide commemorations. (The discovery of remains is still very much ongoing in Rwanda;[95] remains of up to 1,700 victims were found in mid-2018.[96]) All societies incorporate some form of caring for remains as part of the mourning process, but in post-genocide Rwanda, it is difficult to identify individual remains because of the scale of the massacres and the concealment of information by former killers. So the caring becomes collective -- for piles of bones, skulls, and clothing, rather than individual bodies – and can even extend to the site itself. I believe that the new design interventions at the memorials provide an opportunity for emotional investment when faced with the absence of individual remains. The maintenance of buildings, upgrades to landscape, and addition of new structures can be *both* a state-enacted political strategy but also a way for the local community of survivors to honor their dead loved ones. Thus, even though public sites of mourning are inevitably shaped by multiple actors, I believe that

[95] "New Genocide Remains Uncovered in Kigali, They Were in Possession of IDs," *KT Press*, March 24, 2018, https://ktpress.rw/2018/03/new-genocide-remains-uncovered-in-kigali-they-were-in-possession-of-ids/.
[96] Moses K. Gahigi, "Remains of 1,700 Victims of Rwanda Genocide Recovered," *The East African*, June 16, 2018, http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Remains-1700-victims-Rwanda-genocide-recovered/4552908-4615636-qadccez/index.html.

mourning is not necessarily precluded by state mandates or tourism development efforts. Survivors may need to adapt to changes beyond their control, but they will still be able to mourn at these sites through their involvement in caring for the remains and the site itself. They will still feel the powerful connection that human beings feel to places in which traumatic past events have occurred, as well as to their loved ones' final resting place (as in this case these sites are one and the same). By collapsing time so that past and present become less distinguishable, an in situ memorial can also become a new kind of "living memorial"[97] -- one in which the process of caring for bones and buildings can foster ongoing emotional investment in the site. However, as the state has gradually taken more control over decision-making and management of these memorial sites, there is an increased risk that local communities will feel too constrained to maintain these emotional connections. There is a significant difference between the local community making the decision to change the sites, and the state telling them what to do.

Murambi Technical School

The Murambi Technical School was the site of one of the worst massacres of the genocide, and it later marked an important shift in genocide commemorations. The genocide is always commemorated yearly on the anniversary of its starting date (April 7, 1994) with a national day of commemoration, set within a week of remembrance, which is also set within a longer three-month period of mourning that matches the length of the genocide itself. Two years after the genocide, April 7, 1996 also happened to also be Easter Sunday, but the government refused to move the date of the commemorations. This meant that, due to the necessary separation of church and state functions that day, the commemoration ceremonies were definitively more secular for the first time. The main national ceremony that year was to be held at the Murambi Technical School, a site where many thousands had been killed. The first efforts to recover and rebury the dead at Murambi had been privately initiated by a group of survivors.[98] In the months leading up to the ceremony, thousands of additional bodies had been exhumed from the mass grave behind the school by a local survivors' group (the Amagaju association) and a local committee in charge of victim burial (the Comité d'initiative pour l'enterrement des victimes de Murambi; CIEM). After the state chose Murambi as the location for the national commemoration that year, about two thousand bodies were set aside to be preserved with lime for display in the school.[99]

At this time, the display of bones was something that both academics and some survivors pushed for. Historian Célestin Kanimba Misago and other academics from the

[97] I am suggesting this new meaning is distinct from both the older definition of living memorials as memorials that had some utilitarian use in the community (i.e. a library or community center), as well as the more contemporary usage which usually involves planting trees or some other kind of literally "living" matter.
[98] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 174.
[99] Korman, "Mobilising the Dead?," 59.

national university at Butare in southern Rwanda had theorized that it would help to prevent denial.[100] However, Timothy Longman, who was in attendance at the 1996 commemoration at Murambi, identified the "crucial political message" that was also behind the display of the remains: it showed that "the genocide was so horrible that it justified any actions that the new government had to take to maintain security."[101] Thus, displaying bodies began as a genocide-prevention tactic but it increasingly became a state-legitimizing practice. By leaving the bodies visible, these visceral memorials also keep the trauma and violence of the genocide present. This instills a permanent underlying fear in the population and thus helps the state to retain control.

The bodies at Murambi were preserved in lime, casting the corpses in an otherworldly shade of white, but they are still recognizable as dead humans. As you walk from room to room, you can read in the bodies how they died — for example, a machete blow to the skull — but also how they screamed or tried to throw up their hands to block the killers. This memorial appears to have frozen a singular moment in time when the dead fell where they now lay. But in actuality, the bodies were originally buried by the *génocidaires* in a shallow mass grave next to the school (Figure 2.20).[102] They were later exhumed in order to be properly reburied during the commemorations of 1996, at which time the authorities made the decision to set aside some of the bodies for display. The bodies were then laid out on specially constructed wooden display tables in the classroom buildings (Figure 2.21). Other bodies have been buried in a newly built mass grave (Figure 2.22). Thus, multiple moments in time are actually represented at this site: the time of killing is marked by the contorted bodies as well as stains and damages to the buildings; the time of exhumation is marked by a large hole in the ground made nearly two years after the genocide; the current position and condition of the bodies reflects the decision made shortly before the 1996 commemorations. Murambi has become one of the most shocking memorial sites of all, as it is the only one in which bodies have been preserved in their entirety, and can still be seen in the poses in which they died.

[100] Korman, 60.
[101] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 5.
[102] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 174.

FIGURE 2.20. The Murambi technical school's mass grave after exhumation. Note the fence around the grave which was added later.

FIGURE 2.21. Bodies placed on display tables inside the classroom buildings at Murambi. These bodies have been exhumed from the above grave and placed back into the school.

FIGURE 2.22. The mass graves were developed in stages, with the concrete pits constructed first but the metal roof structure not built until more than a decade after the genocide. The simple abstract slabs covered in unadorned white tile allude to the impossibility of identification of the thousands of remains that lay here.

In addition, the buildings also reflect a series of changes made over time. The Ministry of Youth, Sport and Culture partnered with Aegis Trust for the rehabilitation of Murambi, and work on the site began in February 2004.[103] They have completed a number of projects on site including renovation of buildings and gardens; the creation of formal mass graves; and the development of an exhibition. The rows of classroom buildings were already completed before the genocide when the school was about to open, but the main building itself was actually completed *after* the genocide. A series of historic photos (see Figures 2.23 – 2.26) shows that the cone-roofed entry hall was completed more than a decade later, and new doors and windows were installed. Figure 2.27 summarizes the changes to the site.

[103] Ibreck, 175.

FIGURE 2.23. The back of Murambi's main building in 1994.

FIGURE 2.24. The back of Murambi's main building in 1997 — few changes have been made by this time.

FIGURE 2.25. The back of Murambi's main building in 2005 — you can see the cone-shaped roof under construction, and new doors and windows.

FIGURE 2.26. The back of Murambi's main building in 2015. Paved paths and landscaping have been added to the site.

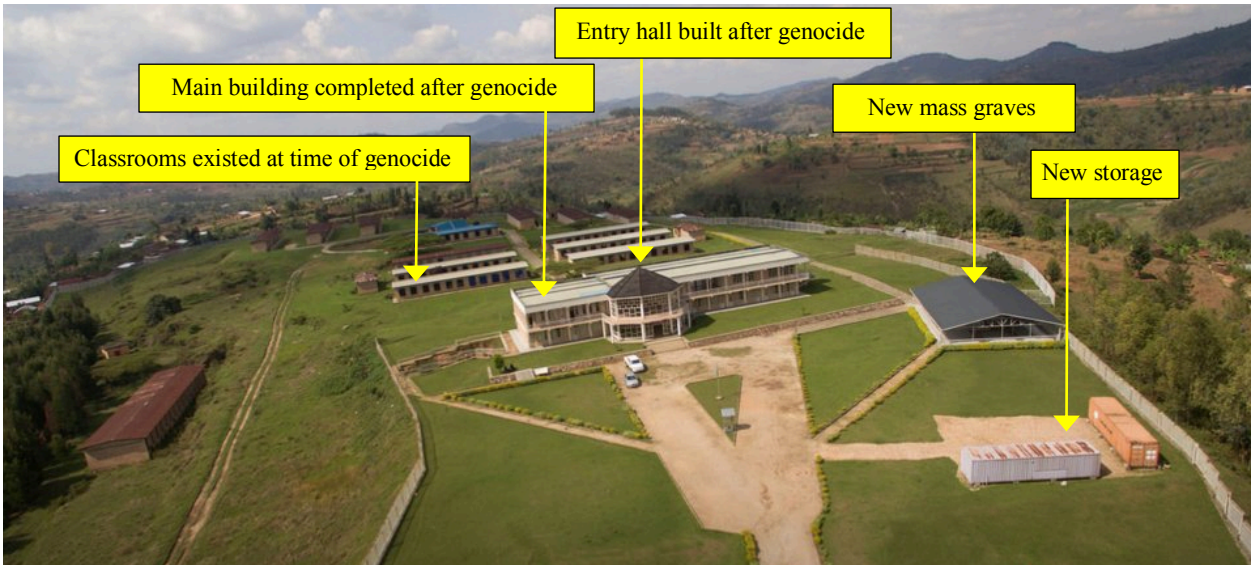

FIGURE 2.27. An aerial view of the front of the Murambi Genocide Memorial site in 2017. The conical roof structure on the front of the main building, the mass crypt on the right side, as well as the paths and landscaping on the site were all added well after the genocide.

While some of the changes to the site – such as the staging of bodies – seem to serve a purpose of political legitimation, other changes seem to be targeted at "upgrading" the site in order to meet the expectations of a foreign audience. Like the Kigali Genocide Memorial, Murambi has also come under the management of the Aegis Trust. Under the guidance of the Aegis Trust, this memorial has begun to incorporate more elements of a museum, catering to the interests of visitors who are unfamiliar with the events of the genocide and perhaps looking for a narrative. Inside the main building at Murambi, there is now a reception desk and a series of columns with wood carvings illustrating life before and during the genocide. An exhibition with printed panels presents a concise history of Rwanda, illustrates the events that occurred at Murambi, and displays reproductions of family photographs to individualize those who were killed.[104] These elements are likely intended to respond to the expectations of international visitors who are not familiar with the events. Susan E. Cook, describing a visit to Murambi in August 2000 (before the exhibition was added), has provided an insightful look at how this memorial did not conform to her expectations:

> *The group of foreigners I was in... had a range of expectations in visiting the Murambi site, expectations that were representative of the international community's agenda with regard to genocide sites.... [T]he lack of a coherent narrative about the events that took place at Murambi, whether in*

[104] Laura-Angela Bagnetto, "Killing Your Neighbour First—Murambi Massacre Remembered," RFI, April 21, 2014, http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20140421-killing-your-neighbour-first-murambi-massacre-remembered.

> *a booklet or on a plaque or just a coherent guided tour, was something of a surprise. It became clear to me that I had expected the visit to teach me some history, shock me morally, and deepen my understanding of the human experience of the genocide.*[105]

In her description of Murambi, Cook was surprised by the lack of several elements common to Western memorial design: booklets, plaques, guided tours, and most importantly, a coherent narrative. The interventions that have been made at Murambi since partnering with Aegis in 2004 were made in large part to address this need for a narrative.

However, the timeline of many of the changes to the buildings, landscaping, and even the placement of bodies has not been made evident to the visitors of the memorial. How would one know that the bodies are not exhibited where they were actually killed? How would one know that parts of the site were constructed years after the genocide? This contributes to a temporal illegibility. Is this site "preserved," or staged? The irony is that while a historic narrative about the massacre is constructed at the site, the site itself resists being read. At Murambi, affect is prioritized above chronological accuracy. Visitors to Murambi inevitably come away from the site recalling one major thing: the gut-wrenching horror of seeing the bodies with their arms outstretched, pleading for their life in the moment before death.[106] This shock helps to convince the visitor of the importance of preventing a reoccurrence of this violence. This overwhelming raw emotion serves to prevent rational questioning of the state, instead making visitors feel thankful that the RPF stopped the genocide.[107]

CONCLUSION

All preservation is staged, but the nature of the staging tells us something about the context. Westerners typically want preservation to be more legible, focusing on a specific event or period that has been "accurately" conserved. This is itself, of course, a form of staging, as it is impossible to freeze any physical site at a moment in time; all preservation requires ongoing effort and change. But while Western standards of preservation currently dictate that modern intervention should be obvious, so the visitor can separate out the different time frames, Rwanda's in situ memorials suggest an alternative: that it is their unintelligibility — the layering of multiple times, and the impossibility of separating out the past and present — that gives these memorial sites their power. They were preserved as evidence of the genocide, but rather than being frozen in time at the moment of loss, they have in fact been altered over time to "stage" the genocide in different ways. They are in fact very dynamic sites. This is true in the following three ways:

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[105] Cook, "The Politics of Preservation in Rwanda," 303.
[106] Ibreck, "Remembering Humanity: The Politics of Genocide Memorialization in Rwanda," 180–81.
[107] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 70–71, 88.

1. The in situ memorial sites exhibit a layering of interventions made at different times. For example, the bodies preserved at Murambi might seem to illustrate a particular moment in time: the moment of their death. But in reality, the victims were killed in and around the building, buried in a mass grave, then exhumed and put back on display inside the building.

2. The experience of visiting the in situ memorials is not typically based on a chronological order ("first this happened, then that happened") but instead based on the order in which you move through the site and encounter each space. As such, they challenge conventions found at memorials which are more museum-like, with clear linear narratives (such as the Kigali Genocide Memorial).

3. The contents and structures of the memorial sites are always changing over time, due to the decay of bones, clothing, and other items as well as the buildings in which they are housed. Changes must be made to the site in order to stop that decay (such as the metal canopies erected at Ntarama), but they are also made to keep up with changes in who controls the site, and the interests of visitors. Due to the demands of "preservation," the sites evolve over time.

But while the variety of changes made to the in situ memorials has made it more difficult to read a clear historical timeline, this is not necessarily a problem. As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, the relinquishment of chronological accuracy could expand the potential for the local community to cultivate a sense of meaningful guardianship at these sites. If involved in decision-making processes, the community could potentially feel a sense of ownership over the memorial sites, and their ongoing involvement in upgrading and maintenance could serve as an opportunity for emotional attachment that would counter the lack of individual remains or burial sites. As shown in this chapter, genocide survivors played an instrumental role in the early creation of memorial sites. From the beginning, survivors have been active contributors in shaping and caring for the genocide memorials; they have "consistently struggled to create their own memorials and to influence other public representations of genocide memory."[108] But while the most basic function of a memorial is to act as a focal site for memory, memorials are also strategic resources that can be used politically. As Rachel Ibreck, a scholar of politics and international relations, has stated, "Trauma exposes the contingency of our socially constituted realities…including the idea of the nation as the locus of security. States commemorate in order to repair the rupture and avert the challenge posed by trauma."[109] Memorials can serve as "zones of 'symbolic' politics where both national governments and local constituents may promote divisive or repressive

[108] Ibreck, "The Politics of Mourning," 331.
[109] Ibreck, 332.

messages in ways they could not in other spheres."[110] Thus memorials can serve as sites for the reconstitution of society at both the state and the community level. But in Rwanda, since 2008, the state has gradually disenfranchised survivors and local communities in decision-making processes related to the memorial sites, and increasingly restricted those who can be mourned at these sites. As the state and foreign experts collaborate on what to do about the memorial sites, the role of survivors and other Rwandan citizens has been diminished. With the passage of time, there will be fewer people who actually remember the genocide; memory of the genocide itself will be gradually replaced by and conflated with memory of the memorials.

Social anthropologist Paul Connerton has pointed out that in the field of psychoanalysis, to remember is to narrate: "To remember … is precisely not to recall events as isolated; it is to become capable of forming meaningful narrative sequences."[111] Rwanda's memorials exhibit widely different approaches to the narration of the genocide. At the Kigali Genocide Memorial, there is a single narrative with a defined timeline, presenting an official version of historical events. This exemplifies how the Rwandan state intentionally conflates history, memory, and truth into one singular narrative of past events. In a speech delivered on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide, President Paul Kagame said, "Historical clarity is a duty of memory that we cannot escape. Behind the words 'Never Again', there is a story whose truth must be told in full, no matter how uncomfortable." In the same speech he also said, "People cannot be bribed or forced into changing their history. And no country is powerful enough, even when they think that they are, to change the facts. After all, *les faits sont têtus"* [the facts are stubborn].[112] The implication is that there is no interpretation, there is only truth.

However, at in situ memorials such as Ntarama and Murambi, there is a temporal layering which mixes past and present in ways that are highly interpretive. This palimpsest condition more closely resembles everyday life in Rwanda today, and thus there is the potential at these in situ sites for a memorialization that could meaningfully connect with the Rwandan people. However, there must be room for all Rwandans to tell their stories. If authorities focus on staging these in situ sites for political ends, then much of their potential will be lost. Based on the current trajectory, there is a strong risk that the local communities will begin to lose their connection to the memorials, as collective memory becomes increasingly suffocated by official historical narratives. The state's control over speech has already created a disjunctive condition in which individual memory can only be expressed underground or behind closed doors, and collective memory becomes increasingly

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[110] Sebastian Brett et al., "Memorialization and Democracy: State Policy and Civil Action" (Santiago, Chile: FLASCO (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales), ICTJ (International Center for Transitional Justice), The International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, 2007), 3.
[111] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 26.
[112] "Quotable Quotes From Kagame's Speech," New Vision, April 9, 2014, https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1339498/quotable-quotes-kagames-speech.

suffocated by "official" historical narratives.[113] The increasing control over memorial sites will only exacerbate this condition. Although they have the potential to be meaningful sites for the local communities, the likelier outcome is that the in situ genocide memorials will increasingly diverge from real environments of memory. This could generate resentment and set the conditions for a recurrence of ethnic violence.

[113] Buckley-Zistel, "We Are Pretending Peace: Local Memory and the Absence of Social Transformation and Reconciliation in Rwanda."

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CHAPTER 3: MUSEUMS

Curating Heritage Sites to Redefine the "Other"

Rwanda's Ethnographic Museum seems like a good place to learn about the history and culture of Rwanda. Its galleries are filled with an extensive collection of artifacts and craft objects that are logically organized and neatly labeled. But toward the end of a visit, the museum visitor may come to a startling realization: The entire Ethnographic Museum makes almost no reference to ethnicity. There is only one caption underneath the photo of a past president that says, "It is under his mandate that genocide against the Tutsi has been committed."[1] Anyone remotely familiar with Rwandan history might find this baffling. How can an *ethnographic* museum eliminate the mention of the country's ethnic groups?

The post-genocide government of Rwanda has adopted the stance that if ethnicity can be learned, it can also be unlearned. The government has passed laws against the promotion of "genocide ideology."[2] Many Rwandans interpret this as a ban on the mention of ethnicity altogether, because even if specific words are not technically illegal, the injudicious use of certain terms could fall under the umbrella of "genocide ideology."[3] This suppression affects everyday speech but also extends to museums and heritage sites, which function as repositories of history and thus play an important role in the dissemination of the current government's preferred narrative of precolonial unity. But this is not the first time that ethnicity has been instrumentalized. As Rwanda is both a postcolonial and post-genocide nation, multiple regimes have influenced how objects and sites from its tumultuous past are stabilized as public history. These regimes have reinterpreted Rwanda's history by editing narratives of past events to suit the needs of the present.

As institutions created to educate the public about history, museums are rife with potential for such historical revision. This chapter focuses on a specific kind of museum in Rwanda – not the kind purposely built to house collections of historic objects, such as the Ethnographic Museum, but rather the kind which occupies a site with its own inherent historic significance. While they both present historical narratives that seek to shape understandings of the past, site-based museums can be distinguished from purpose-built museums due to their status as a location where historical events actually occurred. Rather than history coming to meet us in the space of a museum gallery, it feels as though we have gone to meet history where it happened. Instead of discrete artifacts, we encounter an entire scene which may even spatially encompass or surround us. Historical narratives are thus particularly crystallized at heritage sites, where the visitor can view, feel, and "inhabit" history

[1] Lindsey Hilsum, "The Rainy Season," *Granta 125: After the War*, Autumn 2013, https://granta.com/the-rainy-season/.
[2] Rwandan Senate, *Rwanda: Genocide Ideology and Strategies for Its Eradication* (Kigali: Parliament of the Republic of Rwanda, 2006).
[3] Hilsum, "The Rainy Season."

in an immediate and tangible way. However, time is not frozen at these sites. Heritage sites reveal narrative changes over time through conservation and restoration processes, as well as changes in the relationship between the structure or site and its contained message. Narratives about the past are constantly reshaped to fit the needs of the present through physical alterations to the sites, selective exclusion of certain facts, and/or the insertion of new stories into existing structures.

I refer to these sites as "heritage sites," rather than just "historic sites," for two reasons. The first is the significance of these sites for defining Rwandan identity. Heritage has a connotation of (and shares a linguistic root with) "inheritance," suggesting that it has been handed down from those who came before us.[4] As such, heritage plays a crucial role in the formation of group identity through the sense of belonging to a shared past. As David Lowenthal has suggested, "heritage stewardship is intrinsically possessive."[5] This means it can be "tribal, exclusive, patriotic, redemptive, or self-aggrandizing"[6] – in other words, both self-defining but also self-interested. The second reason is the aforementioned feeling of direct contact with the past. As Dutch historian Maria Grever and colleagues have expressed, "Heritage refers to direct encounters, emotions and veneration, not to arguments or examination."[7]

The editing of history through heritage sites to serve specific interests is not unique to Rwanda, but is true of all societies. The past can never speak for itself because of the very fact that it has passed; our experience of it must therefore always be an interpretation from our own perspective, looking backward. And due to the hierarchical nature of almost all human societies, some agents have more power over these interpretations than others. For this reason, all heritage sites serve the needs of the present. But Rwanda provides an especially clear lens on the role of historical narratives in ethnic conflict. Rwanda's ethnic history has been instrumentalized three times within one century in widely divergent ways. From 1918 until 1959, the Belgians used their perception of the Tutsis as more advanced migrants to justify the selective promotion of the native population; leading up to 1994, the organizers of genocide built on this framework to justify the ethnic cleansing of "invaders"; after 1994, the post-genocide government has (ostensibly) renounced ethnicity in the interest of national reconciliation and upheld a version of history which emphasizes precolonial unity and harmony. Rwanda thus shows how alternate versions of history can drastically reconceptualize the role of ethnicity in a society's past — whether by accentuating it, weaponizing it, or erasing it while turning it into a subtext. Rwanda is also a case for how

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[4] David Lowenthal, "Natural and Cultural Heritage," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 11, no. 1 (March 2005): 81–92, https://doi.org/10.1080/13527250500037088.
[5] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), x.
[6] Lowenthal, 120.
[7] Maria Grever, Pieter de Bruijn, and Carla van Boxtel, "Negotiating Historical Distance: Or, How to Deal with the Past as a Foreign Country in Heritage Education," *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 6 (December 1, 2012): 878, https://doi.org/10.1080/00309230.2012.709527.

postcolonial states can recast insider/outsider roles in historical narratives. The post-genocide Rwandan state is made up largely of "outsiders" – Rwandan by descent, but born outside the country – with a vested interest in emphasizing their "insider" Rwandan-ness. Rwanda thus demonstrates the recasting of agents of history to redefine their roles: who is an "insider," who is an "outsider" or "Other," and who is responsible for ethnic tension.

This chapter examines three heritage sites in Rwanda to show how authorities have instrumentalized historiography in the service of particular narratives about Rwanda's past. At Rwanda's heritage sites, historiographical shifts appear in the portrayal of traditional culture, the colonial era, and state origin stories. Each of the heritage sites described in this chapter demonstrate the recasting of agents, as well as a teleological revision of history. The King's Palace is a precolonial heritage site which expresses both the distancing of the "traditional" past to emphasize modernity, and the editing of history to emphasize unity and harmony among ethnic groups. This site suggests that the "Other" within Rwanda is not the Tutsi, but precolonial history. The Natural History Museum, which has recently been recast as the Kandt House Museum, is an example of spinning the colonial past in service of contemporary relations. Some colonizers are treated as friends while others are blamed for introducing ethnic tension. This is a different kind of "Othering," which establishes a differentiation between two outsider groups, one of which has become an ally and the other which is still resented. Finally, the National Liberation Museum Park is an example of renovating a site associated with the origin story of the state to make it more impressive and further legitimize the current regime – but also to acknowledge the historical significance of an RPF site *inside* Rwanda, which may help to counter the perception of them as invaders. In each case, the past is interpreted in service of present-day goals. To understand these interpretations, it is important to not only analyze the primary source content of Rwanda's historical sites and artifacts, but also the subsequent architectural choices that determine how they are preserved, presented, and made accessible.

All three of these sites claim to be straightforward presentations of the historical past. They are portrayed as nodes on a linear timeline of Rwanda's precolonial, colonial, and post-independence history. There are two motivations for the defined linear timeline: the association of tradition with the past in order to demonstrate modernization, and the creation of a teleological version of history that leads to the rise of the present-day state. But while these sites might seem to focus on specific historical events and eras, they in fact illustrate a layering of time similar to that explored in the previous chapter on genocide memorials. While claiming to present a historical timeline of events, they actually demonstrate contemporary historical revisionism in their narratives, as well as contemporary modifications to their physical structure. This is done to satisfy both the aims of the current state (which oversees these sites through a governing institution) and the expectations of visitors. Again, this is not unique to Rwanda. As previously stated, all heritage sites are manipulated/interpreted to serve the needs of the present. But the specific ways in which

these Rwandan sites are layered give particular insight into the role of heritage in the redefining of the "Other" through colonial, postcolonial, and post-genocide history.

THE POWER OF HISTORICAL EXHIBITION

The power to narrate history is the power to define particular ideals of evolution and progress; moreover, it is also the power to include or exclude people from the phenomenon of developmental advancement. This power has long been wielded on a geographical basis to define a hierarchy among people of the world. For Europeans, the Enlightenment and the development of objective science had introduced a directional notion of progress in which humans had the power to make the present better than the past. The notion of becoming "modern" was associated with the power to move ever forward toward a better quality of life and a more advanced state of being. World expositions, beginning with the "Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations" in London in 1851, became a stage on which nations competed to display how advanced they had become. They also expressed an increasingly hierarchical world order as if it was natural. As British-born political theorist Timothy Mitchell has suggested, "these symbolic representations of the world's cultural and colonial order…were the mark of a great historical confidence" which reflected "the political certainty of a new age" by constructing a version of history that led up to a present in which the British Empire was naturally supreme.[8] Europeans used typological and chronological displays such as exhibitions, museums, and zoos to both reflect *and* produce a world order in which they were at the top. While European nations often exhibited their technological prowess at the expositions, their colonies displayed huts, ethnic dancing, or other "timeless" cultural attributes.

For their colonies, Europeans had constructed a binary of the "modern," which they claimed as their own, and the "traditional," which they assigned to Africa. Following this model, early colonial policies took an approach of assimilation, in which the traditions of the "natives" were to be broken down in the interest of "modernization" and "civilization." There was a directional notion of progress in which the traditional was seen as a primitive origin and the modern was seen as the civilized endpoint. However, when the colonial grip started to loosen between the First and Second World Wars, administrations shifted their strategy towards preserving traditions in an attempt to pacify native populations, freeze them in a state of subjugation, and thereby attempt to quell resistance. As a result, many African traditions were assigned a status entirely outside the trajectory of progress. Europeans essentially declared their colonized territories to be primitive, changeless places where time was frozen; and they thus denied residents of these colonies any claim to history.

[8] Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (1988; repr., University of California Press, 1991), 7.

FIGURE 3.1. In 1897, King Leopold II imported 267 Congolese to live on display in a village adjacent to his palace. They were essentially a "human zoo."

When formerly colonized societies became independent nations (largely in a wave in the 1960s and 1970s), they claimed the tools of historical chronology and exhibition for their own purposes. The very act of creating a history was an act of resistance against the colonial assumptions that Africa was a land without history.[9] Nationalist history became particularly important because it rallied support for decolonization, and subsequently legitimized brand-new nations and political regimes. Architectural historian Nnamdi Elleh has suggested that the "Africa Place" pavilion at Expo '67 in Montreal was the harbinger of a new mode of thinking about African history, as African nations were occupying a place among the nations of the world for the first time as sovereign nations rather than colonies.[10] Exhibition was a means to declare an identity by controlling how one would be displayed to the world, rather than being put on display by others. But some African nations were comprised of groups which had little to no precolonial affiliation. Thus, national histories and traditions had to be somewhat invented. As explored in Hobsbawm and Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition*, traditions are invented most commonly during the time of a rapid

[9] Bethwell A. Ogot, "African Historiography: From Colonial Historiography to UNESCO's General History of Africa," *Groniek Historisch Tydschrift*, September 1993.
[10] Nnamdi Elleh, *African Architecture: Evolution and Transformation* (New York: McGraw-Hill Professional, 1996), 6–8.

transformation of society.[11] In the case of African decolonization, "preference was given to the themes of African history considered useful to the development of new state structures."[12] The influential political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson suggested that post-independence states inherited some of the "political museumizing" of colonial regimes, since they continued to use traditional heritage as -- often simplified or superficial -- symbols of national identity.[13] Because these states were often divorced from traditional hierarchies and comprised of members who did not necessarily represent the actual demographics of the entire nation, there was also a desire to properly historicize the origin story of the new regimes. Thus, national histories and museums addressed both the "traditional" past and more recent events in order to establish national identity, increase nationalism among the masses, and legitimize political authorities.

Historical exhibition has also served another specific purpose in developing countries -- to declare the status of modernity by separating the traditional past from contemporary life. Expositions, museums, and heritage sites "establish in consciousness the definition and boundary of modernity by rendering concrete and immediate that which modernity is not."[14] The placement of certain elements of culture in the space of the museum is an Othering of one's own past, which is in turn a continuation of the Othering that was imposed by colonial powers; it serves to define the modern by contrast with the traditional. The act of claiming modernity via the establishment of heritage sites thus signifies an attempt to align developing countries closer to First World powers on the global historical timeline. This is beneficial for their standing in the international community, suggesting that they are worthy of not only trade and investment but also participation in international governance. In addition, heritage tourism is important to the economy of many nations, so heritage preservation has also become an important strategy for nations and cities to compete globally.[15] Thus, in many postcolonial countries, museums have been established to showcase history and culture, and traditions have been packaged in the form of "heritage sites" for public consumption. But these sites do not only bring in tourism dollars; they also serve to distance the "traditional" from the "modern" and to place the old ways firmly in the past, by virtue of putting them in a museum. They are a declaration of having moved forward. In this manner, postcolonial countries can place themselves firmly on the historical

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[11] Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
[12] Ogot, "African Historiography: From Colonial Historiography to UNESCO's General History of Africa," 72.
[13] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr., London: Verso, 2006), 183.
[14] Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (New York: Shocken Press, 1975), 8-9, quoted in Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (1995; repr., London and New York: Routledge, 2005).
[15] Nezar AlSayyad, "Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism: Manufacturing Heritage, Consuming Tradition," in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (New York: Routledge, 2001), 16.

timeline they were previously denied. They, too, have the capacity to order and represent their world in a way that shows evidence of progression or advancement.

On the other hand, the act of joining the timeline could be interpreted as an unfortunate capitulation to the directional notion of progress established by European colonizers. It could be construed as a declaration that parts of one's identity or culture are problematically "primitive." Indeed, anthropologist Arturo Escobar has argued that the technocratic language and scientific standards of "development" have stigmatized the non-West as if it needs to be fixed, when it is really a way for the West to manage the rest for their own gain.[16] But if development is an ideological export and an act of cultural imperialism that the West has foisted upon poorer countries who have little opportunity to decline, what choice is there?

However, the act of defining heritage can also be a declaration of parity with the West. Heritage is still an arena with a defined global hierarchy, with Western civilization at the top.[17] On the UNESCO World Heritage List there are 1092 properties, but only 95 are in Africa and 258 are in "Asia and the Pacific," while 514 are in "Europe and North America."[18] By creating heritage sites, Rwanda and other developing countries can seek to claim an equivalence with more developed countries. They, too, have sites which should be considered significant to the history of human civilization and valuable to humankind.

Furthermore, despite their acceptance of the timeline as an organizing structure for history, postcolonial nations have also expressed their own agency by distorting historical timelines for their own gain. For example, in his book *Mexico at the World's Fair: Crafting a Modern Nation,* historian Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo describes Mexico's portrayal of itself during the 1889 Paris Universal Exhibition as a ploy for asserting modernity. Tenorio-Trillo argues that the construction of an Aztec pavilion at the foot of the Eiffel Tower was a way of claiming a place within the community of modern nations by displaying the exoticism of one's "traditional" past within the norms of European orientalism. As Tenorio-Trillo says, "it was an experimental synthesis of Mexican perceptions of the European commercial, industrial, and exotic appetite for the non-European" – a complicated play between multiple sets of expectations.[19] The Palacio Azteca was designed by historian Antonio Peñafiel and engineer Antonio M. Anza as a combination of Aztec motifs with Beaux-Arts style.[20] The

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16 Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994).

17 Rosabelle Boswell and David O'Kane, "Introduction: Heritage Management and Tourism in Africa," *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 29, no. 4 (2011): 361–69.

18 "UNESCO World Heritage Centre - World Heritage List Statistics," UNESCO World Heritage Centre, accessed November 7, 2018, https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/stat.

19 Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo, *Mexico at the World's Fairs: Crafting a Modern Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 64.

20 "The Porfiriato: Archaeology and Mexican Nationalism, 1876-1910," The Getty Research Institute, accessed November 7, 2018, http://www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/exhibitions/obsidian_mirror/archaeology_nationalism.html.

Aztec Empire existed from 1428 – 1521 in what is now central and southern Mexico, and the Beaux-Arts style evolved in the 1830s in France. But by associating these two different periods (and geographic locations) together, Mexico established a pavilion that managed to be both appealingly exotic yet impressively familiar to the exposition attendees in Paris. In one swoop, Mexico managed to claim *both* the heritage of an early civilization and the architectural prowess of a modern nation.

FIGURE 3.2. Palacio Azteca, the Mexico Pavilion at the Paris Exposition of 1889.

The designers of the Palacio Azteca were able to explore this synthesis in a bold manner because the Palacio was a temporary pavilion built for an exposition. Expositions are purpose-built sites which are completely interpretive. There is no real burden of preservation. At actual historic sites which claim to preserve real historic material, interpretations must deal with pre-existing physical materials, and thus the manipulations of history are more subtle. However, like the world exposition, heritage sites are also a place where history is staged.

This staging, or performance, is critical to building a national identity. In an essay on Egyptian nation-making, Timothy Mitchell builds on Homi Bhabha's distinction between the nation as pedagogy and the nation as performance. Most scholarly explorations of

nationalism seek to understand the nation as a pedagogical object, constructed through propaganda, media, and textbooks. But as Mitchell, expounding on Bhabha, argues:

> *What such an account generally overlooks is the more mundane and uncertain process of producing the nation. I have in mind the variety of efforts, projects, encounters and struggles in which the nation and its modern identity are staged and performed. The difference between performance and pedagogy is not a question of looking at the practical rather than the ideological, or the local rather than the national. Both involve the making of meaning, and both take place in particular sites among particular parties. What is different about making or performing the nation is that it always involves the question of otherness.*[21]

Mitchell suggests that "otherness" is critical to the performance of a nation. This chapter will unpack that key idea by exploring it through a doubly-loaded circumstance – Rwanda's postcolonial *and* post-genocide condition, both based on redefining the Other. As the rest of this chapter will show, the Rwandan state has used the power of historical exhibition to place itself on the modern end of the historical timeline, but also to recast the Other. In this way, it establishes a teleology in which the current state are true Rwandans who are the rightful rulers of contemporary Rwanda.

REWRITING HISTORY IN RWANDA

Rwanda has essentially become a new nation twice. Although Rwanda first became a nation in 1962 when it became independent from Belgium, the post-genocide Rwandan government adopted a new flag, national anthem, and national seal in 2001. They claimed that the old emblems were too closely associated with the 1994 genocide, in which around 800,000 people had been killed.[22] The establishment of new national symbols implies a re-birth. This would seem to imply that the history of this new (post-genocide) Rwanda would not be the same history as that of the old (pre-genocide) Rwanda, because they are essentially different nations. And indeed, the histories of Rwanda conveyed by the pre- and post-genocide governments are radically different.

The pre-genocide Rwandan government, controlled largely by the Hutus, taught a version of Rwandan history that was largely formed during the colonial era. This history was based on the Belgians' identification of the Tutsi and Hutu as distinct groups that had migrated into Rwanda at different times in the precolonial era. There were two key elements of this narrative: the supposed *racial* differences between the groups, and the idea that the

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[21] Timothy Mitchell, "Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt," in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, ed. Nezar Alsayyad (New York: Routledge, 2001), 214–15.

[22] Timothy Longman and Théoneste Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda," in *My Neighbor, My Enemy: Justice and Community in the Aftermath of Mass Atrocity*, ed. Eric Stover and Harvey M. Weinstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 162–82, doi:10.1017/CBO9780511720352.012.

Hutu had made their home in Rwanda first, before the Tutsi came along and essentially carried out a foreign invasion in which they suppressed and exploited the Hutu majority. The Belgians subsequently favored the Tutsi throughout most of their colonial rule, in part based on notions of the Tutsi as a more advanced race who migrated later than the Hutu and became their feudal lords. It has even been suggested that the promotion of the Tutsi over the Hutu was a form of "dual colonialism."[23] The post-independence (pre-genocide) government, comprised largely of Hutus, adopted this ideology to such an extent that the 1959 revolution for independence was actually depicted as a revolution against the *Tutsi* rather than the Belgian colonial state.[24] The ideology of the 1994 genocide was also largely based on this version of history, in which the Tutsis were portrayed as "invaders" because they arrived in the region later than the Hutus.[25]

To counter this perception, the contemporary, post-genocide state (which is led primarily by Tutsis who grew up outside of Rwanda) has purposely developed its own narrative of history which paints a picture of unity and harmony between precolonial ethnic groups. In this chapter we will see how the Rwandan Patriotic Front or RPF (the incumbent state party), acting primarily through the Institute of National Museums of Rwanda or INMR (the government institution overseeing museums and heritage sites), carries out this historiographical manipulation at sites where physical heritage has been selectively preserved or recreated. The state is concerned with legitimizing itself because the incumbent party was founded and is still largely controlled by returnees and the children of exiles who spent most – if not all – of their lives until 1994 outside of Rwanda.[26] There is some risk that their right to rule could be questioned based on parameters of indigeneity or autochthony — accusations that they are not "true Rwandans." Thus the RPF's legitimacy can be bolstered by presenting themselves as insiders, and the colonial powers as outsiders. The RPF's version of history purposely downplays the feudal relationship between the Tutsis and the Hutus, and the role of ethnicity in precolonial socio-political power dynamics, in favor of a portrayal of the kingdom of Rwanda as a unified and peaceful civilization. In 1999, the Office of the President of the Republic of Rwanda produced a report on "The Unity of Rwandans" that says "…before the White People's arrival, all Rwandans had unity which was based on one King and patriotism, spoke the same language, had the same culture, the same belief and tried hard to be in peace and live together, completing each other in their daily

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[23] Catharine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Citizenship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
[24] Timothy Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 265.
[25] Longman, 39.
[26] An Ansoms, "Re-Engineering Rural Society: The Visions and Ambitions of the Rwandan Elite," *African Affairs* 108, no. 431 (April 1, 2009): 308, https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adp001; Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 6; Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf, "Introduction: Seeing Like a Post-Conflict State," in *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence*, ed. Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 14–15.

needs."[27] The colonizers are blamed for disrupting this harmonious balance. Oral traditions are cited to suggest that the categories of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa emerged from within Rwandan society, and not through migration.[28]

Scholars who are not associated directly with the Rwandan state usually agree upon a version of history that is more nuanced. It is indeed true that Rwanda was a relatively unified kingdom before the advent of colonization, but it was not a well-defined nation-state which would have expressed patriotic allegiance by the modern definition; rather, it was a loosely connected society with complex political arrangements.[29] Society was organized around lineage, clan, and family, and there was a feudal type of arrangement in which Tutsi "lords" presided over Hutu farmers, but these identities were fluid and one could move between them through economic advancement. Migration was also not a defining factor, as both groups contained people who had arrived in Rwanda at different periods of time. Thus, most scholars agree that it is not accurate to characterize the Tutsi as "invaders"; however, there was a real difference in status in the precolonial era. Furthermore, the Belgians did implement preferential treatment based on a vastly oversimplified understanding of Rwandan ethnicity that was influenced by ideas of social Darwinism. Thus, the colonizers did harden and racialize these categories, helping to pave the way for the later genocide by exacerbating ethnic tensions to a much greater extent.[30] By redefining Rwanda's ethnic categories as racial pseudo-science, mobility between them became – by definition – impossible. The colonial state had succeeded in positioning the Hutu as indigenous and the Tutsi as alien.[31]

The variations in each of the above narratives (colonial, pre-genocide state, post-genocide state, and external scholars) illustrate different interpretations of the relationship between ethnicity, indigeneity, and citizenship. This is relevant not only in Rwanda but within a larger framework of postcolonial indigeneity in this region of Africa. As Ugandan political scientist and anthropologist Mahmood Mamdani has noted:

> *At its heart, the question of indigeneity was a question of entitlement: Who was entitled to justice in the postcolonial period? Who was the postcolonial subject? ... If the terms of the colonial world set the indigenous apart from the nonindigenous in a racial sense, and then privileged the nonindigenous in a perverse way, the postcolonial response was to stand this world on its head, so as to privilege the indigenous against the nonindigenous.*[32]

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[27] Office of the President of The Republic of Rwanda, "The Unity of Rwandans - Before the Colonial Period and Under the Colonial Rule - Under the First Republic" (Kigali: Republic of Rwanda, 1999), 8, http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/4918.
[28] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 47.
[29] Longman and Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda."
[30] Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," *Africa Today* 45, no. 1 (January 1998): 7–24.
[31] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 34.
[32] Mamdani, 166.

Mamdani is referring here to the privileging of indigeneity in Uganda, where Rwandan exiles lived in refugee camps and the nonindigenous population was treated with increasing hostility. However, this postcolonial privileging of indigeneity also existed in Rwanda, where periodic outbreaks of violence against the Tutsi (which had driven many into the Ugandan refugee camps) indicated a growing resentment. The 1994 genocide built on this rhetoric of outsider-hatred to encourage the massacre of the Tutsi on an unprecedented scale.

To put a stop to the genocide, the RPF left the camps in Uganda and crossed the border into Rwanda. When the RPF invaded Rwanda, was it a foreign invasion, or was it "an armed repatriation of [Rwandan] refugees"?[33] Were they outsiders twice over – by being Tutsi in the first place, and then by living in Uganda – or were they returning home? The answer is not merely a matter of semantics; it is consequential to the current state's right to rule. The current Rwandan state is comprised of an ethnic minority of Tutsi former exiles (and their descendants) ruling over a native-born Hutu ethnic majority, so it has a vested interest in upholding its own legitimacy to its own citizens. The state also cares about its international standing due to its need to attract foreign aid and investment.

The museums and historical sites described in this chapter express this dual focus on two audiences, both domestic and foreign. In Rwanda, the controlling authority over these spaces is a government institution known as the Institute of National Museums of Rwanda (INMR), which was initially established in 1989 as the administration of the National Museum of Rwanda, the first and only museum in Rwanda at the time.[34] (The National Museum has subsequently been renamed the Ethnographic Museum, which was described at the start of this chapter.) As of 2018, INMR manages eight national museums and heritage sites.[35] INMR makes a point to publicize their museums and heritage sites to the domestic population, but they also seek to attract foreign tourists and are aided by foreign experts and NGOs. As a result, they also increasingly adhere to Westernized standards of heritage conservation and presentation.

The following sections will show how INMR has adapted heritage sites to fit the historical narratives of the current state, and how it has tried to address the multiple publics who visit these sites. Three sites from different periods will be considered: the King's Palace Museum, representing the precolonial era; the Natural History Museum (now called the Kandt House Museum), representing the colonial period; and the National Liberation Museum Park, representing the more recent past. Each section will note the ways in which specific architectural and spatial mechanisms shape the historic narratives at each site in

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[33] Mamdani, 36.
[34] "Introduction," Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, accessed November 12, 2018, https://museum.gov.rw/index.php?id=32.
[35] "Our Museums," Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, accessed November 8, 2018, https://museum.gov.rw/index.php?id=23.

order to conform to the current state's attitude toward ethnicity, indigeneity, and foreign relations – or in other words, how they seek to portray insiders and outsiders.

THE KING'S PALACE MUSEUM

The King's Palace Museum is a recreation of a portion of an actual palace which once existed in Nyanza. This museum is an example of a "recreation" of a physical object or space from the past which presents tradition as something quite different from the modern – so different that we might only be able to understand it by actually viewing, touching, or occupying a recreated likeness. This site demonstrates how in Rwanda, as well as in most developing countries, the past is separated from the present in effort to declare the past "traditional" or "historic," and by contrast the present more "modern." In this way, the traditional past is placed firmly at an earlier point on the timeline of national history, as if it has been surpassed.

Rwandan kings were traditionally nomadic, but by 1899 they adopted a more sedentary lifestyle and established a royal seat at Nyanza, located to the southwest of the present-day capital of Rwanda. When the Belgians took over colonial rule in 1916, they established their administrative capital at Butare (which they called Astrida, after Queen Astrid of Belgium), but the Rwandan kings were allowed to retain a nominal degree of power and they continued to reside in Nyanza. In 1962, Nyanza lost its status as the royal capital when the country gained its independence and Kigali became the capital of the new nation, but today Nyanza is an important heritage destination in Rwanda. It is the site of the King's Palace Museum, a recreation of the royal residence that was once occupied by King Yuhi V Musinga, who ruled from 1896-1931 (Figure 3.3).[36] Musinga's original sixteen-hut palace compound was made mainly out of vegetal material and did not survive, but some of the huts were re-created using the same traditional materials to show contemporary visitors what they would have been like (Figure 3.4).

[36] Célestin Kanimba Misago and Lode Van Pee, *Rwanda: Traditional Dwelling* (Brussels: Africalia, 2008), 20.

FIGURE 3.3. The King's Palace during the time of King Yuhi V Musinga.

FIGURE 3.4. The recreated King's Palace Museum photographed in 2016.

The museum guides at the King's Palace teach visitors about the variety of pragmatic and functional reasons for the materials and layout of the compound. The abundance, low cost, and renewability of local plants encouraged the use of tree trunks for structure and the weaving of stems, grasses, and bamboo for the thatch. Furthermore, the exterior grass thatch roof and the interior woven bamboo partitions were waterproof in the wet season and helped to insulate the interior of the hut from the strong sun and hot outdoor temperatures in the dry season. The arrangement of the hut within a fenced courtyard with only one entrance provided safety and security for the King. The large courtyard around the main hut was a public area where the king held meetings with his courtiers and settled disputes. The threshold of the thatched hut was demarcated by a white curb that served as both a symbolic and physical boundary. The space enclosed by this curb served as a foyer for the king to receive his subjects and to act as a judge in all kinds of disputes. Behind this curb, there was another inner threshold to the hut which defined a space for both the king and queen to sit and look out on the courtyard.[37]

There was a great deal of cultural symbolism incorporated into the architecture of the palace. There was a spike on the top of every typical dwelling of the era to provide an attachment point for the thatch, but the King's Hut had two additional spikes above the doorway that represented the horns of the King's cattle, which were a sign of wealth and a symbol of royalty. Inside the King's Hut, the center of the woven ceiling contained four concentric rings that symbolized the different parts of the universe: heaven, space, earth, and the afterlife.[38] The design of the King's Palace reflects a variety of important cultural symbols and traditions, and the layout of the entire compound was carefully orchestrated to emphasize the power of the Rwandan dynasty and to protect the wealth of the king and his family.

The King's Palace Museum also includes the next-door residence of Musinga's son, Mutara III Rudahigwa, who ruled from 1931-1959 (Figure 3.5). This palace is not a re-creation but is in fact the original home that was occupied by the king. It is a large rectilinear structure with a European-style arrangement of rooms, verandahs, and courtyard space. Rudahigwa commissioned it in the late 1950s after he made a state visit to Belgium and decided that his own home was not sufficient for a leader by international standards. Visitors to the museum are always taken to the older thatched palace first, and the newer European-style palace second, implicitly reinforcing the narrative of historical progress.[39] In a brochure produced by INMR, the earlier palace is identified as "the Traditional Palace" and the later residence is called "a modern palace." There is a reason that it is presented last on the tour, as the visitor understanding of the site is meant to be chronological. The more modern residence shows visitors that the Rwandan people were moving toward a more modern way of life. This reinforces the narrative that Rwanda has moved forward from its traditional past

[37] Personal visit to the King's Palace Museum in 2016.
[38] Misago and Van Pee, *Rwanda: Traditional Dwelling*, 43.
[39] This was evident after multiple visits to the museum.

and that this newer residence was a step on that timeline. In the traditional palace, traditional ways of life are portrayed by female guides in traditional dress as if they represent a timeless way of life; specific dates or historical periods are not mentioned and there is no reference to evolving or changing customs (although surely the transition from nomadic to sedentary had some effect). However, in the modern palace, maps and texts portray a chronology of Rwandan history, such as the geographical expansion of kingdoms over time. The traditional palace is thus associated with "traditional" Rwandan ways of life and building, while the newer residence is associated with a more chronological understanding of history.

FIGURE 3.5. The "modern" King's Palace, built in 1931-32.

In the process of re-creating the King's Palace as a museum, several new elements have been added to the site. There is a paved parking lot and a new visitor center housed in a new series of round thatched-roof buildings with a pavilion in the center (Figure 3.6). A guide told me that these buildings were built in February of 2016. The left side of this complex contains a reception desk where visitors pay admission and photography fees, as well as an INMR gift shop. The central open pavilion and right-hand building are going to be a restaurant. With their spike-topped thatched roofs, these buildings obviously make an

architectural allusion to the King's Palace. However, there are also some obvious differences: rather than extending to the ground so that roof and wall become one, two of the roofs sit atop cylindrical masonry walls with punched openings, while the center roof covers an open-air space. According to David Nkusi, the Heritage Sites Manager of INMR, the visitor center was shaped by some degree of "foreign influence" due to the fact that that the architects were brought in from Uganda.[40] Thus, the visitor center reflects a synthesis of more than one style from the region. One can guess that perhaps this is acceptable to INMR because these buildings have an in-between status on the site. Being adjacent to the historically significant King's Palace, they are intended to read as "traditional" – particularly to the foreign visitor – but they are not within the demarcated zone for the actual King's Palace, so they do not need to be as historically accurate. They are an example of the use of thatch as an easy shorthand for "traditional" in touristic spaces (see Chapter 4 for an extended discussion of the coding of thatch as a traditional material in Rwanda).

FIGURE 3.6. The reception building built in 2016. The conical thatched roofs are an allusion to the traditional palace.

Within the primary courtyard containing the main hut of the king and queen, there are also several elements which dispel the illusion that this is an original and untouched site, but they are subtle (Figure 3.7). I asked why there were lights on the fence, and the guide told us that the compound is sometimes used for special nighttime ceremonies, and that the lights were also good for security. There was a small sign to the right of the doorway asking

[40] David Nkusi, Personal communication, November 15, 2018.

guests to "please preserve the traditional house" by removing their shoes before entering. I also asked what material the concrete ring around the hut would originally have been, and the guide said a mixture of ash and dung. Concrete is used today for increased durability and longevity. These updates are pragmatic and address the needs of the site to function as a museum and event space, but they do not detract too much from the historical accuracy of the site. The material and spatial qualities of the king's hut are fairly faithfully reproduced.

FIGURE 3.7. The King's Palace Museum recreates a historic site, but is updated with modern elements including electric lighting, a concrete collar, and a sign telling visitors to take off their shoes.

However, this accuracy conceals a less obvious manipulation in the historical narrative presented at this site. Although the King's Palace is undeniably associated with the Tutsi kings who ruled over Rwanda's feudal system, today it is presented as a site of *Rwandan* history, with no mention of ethnicity. This falls in line with state policy that has effectively made ethnicity an illegal subject — even at heritage sites which address a fairly distant past. After all, the political and social hierarchy that had roots in precolonial society and was racialized and entrenched during the colonial era was the primary source of conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi. Between their ascension to power in 1959 and the genocide in 1994,

Hutu government leaders had repeatedly stoked Hutu fears of the reinstatement of a Tutsi monarchy to incite periodic violence against the Tutsi.[41] After the genocide, the (now Tutsi-led) state might not want to publicly associate the Tutsi with their historical control over the population.

On the other hand, perhaps they do want people to subliminally associate Tutsi rule with a "golden age" of Rwanda. The state has gone to great lengths to portray precolonial Rwanda as a peaceful and prosperous land. They frequently assert that precolonial Rwanda was harmonious and unified, and the Belgian colonizers created ethnic tensions where there were none before. In the preface of the museum catalogue for *The Formation of Rwanda from the 15th Century* (exhibited at the National Ethnographic Museum in 2008), then-Minister of Sports and Culture Joseph Habineza wrote about Nyanza:

> *Nyanza has been chosen to remind us of the role played by the Nyinginya monarchs in the growth and unification of Rwanda, an expansion that was stopped by the penetration of Europeans at the end of the 19th century. … Our history is made up of examples of courage and a sense of dignity which should be followed by all Rwandans. … That nice exhibition enlightens our vision of constructing a harmonious development of our country on the basis of our cultural values.*[42]

Note the reference specifically to the *Nyinginya* clan rather than the Tutsis, and the references to "unification," "*all* Rwandans," "*our* vision," "*our* country," and "*our* cultural values" (emphasis added). This is similar to the situation in Berlin when the phrase "*Wir sind das Volk*" ("we are the people") was invoked "in a rhetorical attempt to deny the separations that remained after the wall came down as well as opening up the possibility of a 'safe' new nationalism…"[43] The Rwandan state wants to emphasize historical unity for the purposes of stoking a collective nationalism. Thus, the King's Palace museum is a component of a larger strategy to knit a deeply divided society back together. It is this elision of ethnicity which allows the King's Palace to serve as a symbol of pride of Rwanda's traditional culture. But it is also the apparent material and spatial accuracy of the recreated palace which lends a sense of veracity to this heritage narrative.

Temporally, the presentation of the King's Palace as an important site suggests both a pride in traditional heritage and a distancing from it. The traditional weaving skills and the large-horned cattle are displayed to be marveled at by visitors, and yet the very act of making this a "museum" site suggests that these elements of Rwandan culture are in the past or primitive. At the King's Palace, the guides, who seem to be all women, wear the traditional style of dress and explain the old ways of life to the visitor — both foreign and Rwandan alike. Foreigners are accommodated by the fluency of the guides in both English and

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41 Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 41–42.
42 Habineza, quoted in Célestin Kanimba Misago, *The Formation of Rwanda from the 15th Century* (Butare, Rwanda: The Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, 2008), 8.
43 Susan A. Crane, "Memory, Distortion, and History in the Museum," *History and Theory* 36, no. 4 (December 1997): 55.

French. However, the National Institute of Museums of Rwanda initiated a promotional program in 2016 to encourage Rwandan visitors to visit these historic sites.[44] The statistics of visitors to the site, as shown in Table 1 in the Appendix, reveal that the majority of visitors to this museum are in fact Rwandan nationals.

Press releases and photographs on the website of INMR portray Rwandan visitors as "fascinated by" the museum. On the occasion of a visit by Miss Rwanda contestants in 2017, the INMR described how interested and curious the women were about the unfamiliar architecture and its contents:

> *Contestants were given an interactive/guided tour through the Museum and right from the entrance, they were amazed by the unique architectural design of the traditional palace, discovering the meaning attached to some of its components. … They also learnt morals, cultural values and many other unique cultural aspects which they confessed were new and interesting to them. … More to their amazement was the hands-on experience they had on various traditional objects most of which they had heard about but never seen, touched and felt.*[45]

According to the same press release, "It's a Museum that serves to fill the gap between the present and the past Rwandans lifestyles," suggesting that a great deal of change has occurred between then and now.[46] The inclusion of these customs, accoutrements, and ways of building in a museum serves to preserve them in the public memory but also to distance them from the present, as if to say "We must remember this because we no longer live like this." This helps to emphasize progress and evolution. Just as grass huts from the colonies used to be displayed in Belgium for curious Belgian tourists to observe how the "natives" lived (refer back to Figure 3.1), today Rwanda's traditional dwellings are displayed in their own land as museum objects. This is what Rwanda *was*, but not what it is now, or where it is heading in the future.

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[44] Athan Tashobya, "RDB Launches Domestic Tourism Campaign," *The New Times*, September 29, 2016, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/203995.

[45] "Miss Rwanda 2017 Contestants Fascinated by Their Visit to the King's Palace Museum," Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, February 27, 2017, https://www.museum.gov.rw/rukali/index.php?id=14.

[46] "Miss Rwanda 2017 Contestants Fascinated by Their Visit to the King's Palace Museum."

FIGURE 3.8. "Miss Rwanda 2017" contestants visiting the King's Palace.

We can analyze this staging through a lens that cultural theorist Doris Bachmann-Medick has termed "the performative turn," which is a shift in the discourse of cultural studies toward the analysis of how cultural meanings are generated through performance.[47] And this photo of the Miss Rwanda contestants is certainly a "performance." The visit itself is clearly not just for the edification of the young women, but is also a photo opportunity for the advertisement of the King's Palace museum. The women are dressed in special coordinating outfits marking them as pageant participants, but they are wearing modern T-shirts and pants – clearly contrasting from the traditional dress worn by the female museum guides. They are performing an encounter with ethnographic objects representing their cultural heritage, but in a way that clearly separates them from this past. And it is also significant that this photo was posted on Twitter; as Bachmann-Medick suggests, there are "emerging alliances between the power of the performative and the power of new global media."[48] But while Bachmann-Medick suggests that the performative turn has begun to dissolve the dichotomy between "pre-modern" and "modern" societies due to the recognition of the importance of ritual to both, this Rwandan museum shows that performance can actually *strengthen* this dichotomy. Performances like the staging of this

[47] Doris Bachmann-Medick, "Chapter II: The Performative Turn," in *Cultural Turns: New Orientations in the Study of Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016).
[48] Bachmann-Medick, 95.

photo suggest that Rwanda's pre-modern past is foreign not only to international visitors, but also to young Rwandans.

But it is important to recognize that individual readings of the past vary depending on the viewer's position relative to the history invoked by these sites and artifacts. For both international visitors and Rwandan urban elites, the King's Palace may seem to present a distant past of unfamiliar customs. But for many Rwandans, some of these traditional ways are still part of everyday life. The traditional style of dress is still worn at weddings and other important occasions.[49] Handwoven baskets, although they have changed in function and design and now are marketed largely to tourists, continue to be an important product in many communities.[50] The "one cow per family" policy still provides a cow to aid subsistence farmers.[51] Thatched dwellings were still present in rural Rwanda as recently as 2010, when the government established an eradication program (as explored in Chapter 4).[52] The rural population would probably recognize (and still use) some of the traditional ways of life. Thus, different visitors could have different experiences of how far "past" this history is.

The King's Palace Museum downplays the role of ethnicity in the precolonial past, and performs traditional culture as if it is so far in the past as to be essentially foreign. This suggests that the "Other" in contemporary Rwanda is not the Tutsi, but precolonial history.

THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (THE KANDT HOUSE MUSEUM)

Rwanda's treatment of its colonial history also reveals shifting attitudes toward the Otherness of different colonial actors. These changing attitudes can be read through the case of Rwanda's Natural History Museum. This Museum once exhibited a juxtaposition of multiple time periods and topics loosely related to nature. These exhibits on natural history were contained in a building whose identity as the earliest colonial structure still standing in Rwanda was more or less tangential. But this museum has recently been converted to the "Kandt House Museum" in order to focus on its original German occupant and the history of German colonialism in Rwanda. This transformation reflects an international partnership based on both contemporary aspirations and future prospects. By reconceiving a former

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[49] Peterson Tumwebaze, "Old Is Gold: The Rise of Umushanana Fashion Trend," *The New Times*, July 15, 2016, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/201706.

[50] Andrew I Kazibwe, "Traditional Basket 'Agaseke' Weathers Modern Cultural Storm," *The East African*, March 20, 2015, http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/rwanda/Lifestyle/Traditional-basket--Agaseke--weathers-modern-cultural-storm/1433242-2660456-vwjyo2/index.html.

[51] Kalinda Brenda, "Civil Society Organisations to Manage 'One Cow per Family' Program," *KT PRESS*, May 11, 2017, https://ktpress.rw/2017/05/civil-society-organisations-to-manage-one-cow-per-family-program/.

[52] James Musoni, "Terms of Reference for Joint Task Force Shelter Scheme on Eradication of 'Nyakatsi'" (Ministry of Local Government, Republic of Rwanda, 2010), http://www.minaloc.gov.rw/fileadmin/documents/Minaloc_Documents/ToRs%20Nyakatsi%20eradication%20signed%20dec%202010.pdf.

colonizer as *less* of an "Other," the past has been molded into a version of history that addresses the goals of present-day actors.

Before Rwanda was mandated to Belgium at the end of World War I, it was first awarded to Germany during an 1890 conference in Brussels in exchange for ceding all German claims to Uganda. For several years, there was little actual contact with Rwanda. A German physician and explorer named Richard Kandt came to the region in search of the source of the Nile, and in 1898 he arrived in the kingdom of Rwanda, and became its first permanent German resident. After exploring the area and trying with limited success to establish relations with the Rwandan king, he built a small wooden house in the Western Province, roofed with thatched reeds. The house was so poorly built that Kandt continued to sleep in his tent, and fell seriously ill for several months. After nearly a year, he finally met the king, Musinga, who did not perceive him as a threat due to his lack of evident military power. Kandt became a regular visitor to the nearby chiefs and sometimes to the king, and his residence developed into a small village. Kandt later moved to Bwakira, which was more centrally located and closer to the king's court, signaling an ongoing transformation from explorer to German colonial official. In 1907 he established a new residence in what is now the city of Kigali, but was then only a small village. Over the course of several months he built a home and several other structures, using exclusively local labor and local materials to construct buildings that were essentially European in style, but with long verandahs that accommodated the local climate.[53]

FIGURE 3.9. Kandt House, around 1910-1911.

[53] Michael Pesek, "The Lonely Imperialist. Richard Kandt and the Making of Colonial Politics at the Very Periphery of the Empire," accessed November 23, 2018, https://www.academia.edu/3303036/The_lonely_imperialist._Richard_Kandt_and_the_making_of_colonial_politics_at_the_very_periphery_of_the_Empire.

FIGURE 3.10. Kandt House, May 1918.


FIGURE 3.11. Kandt House, 2016.

Today, the Kandt house is important as a built heritage object because it is one of the oldest buildings in Kigali and it is frequently identified as the first "modern house"[54] in Rwanda.[55] The large size of the house and the sizable verandah are cited as features which made it distinct from the local vernacular at the time.[56] Today, a plaque near the entry briefly sketches the history of the house in English, Kinyarwanda, German, and French: "This building is the preserved part of the Residence of Kigali, set up by Richard Kandt in 1908. It is the foundation of Kigali City. The renovation of this building in 2004/2005 was financially supported by the Federal Republic of Germany and the state of Rhineland-Palatinate."[57] The Rwandan government took control of the house and in December of 2004, the INMR opened the Natural History Museum within the Kandt house and its grounds.[58]

At the time of my visit in November 2016, the Natural History Museum contained a diverse range of exhibits. There was a display case of real fossils from around the world located near a display case full of plastic dinosaurs. Various rooms contained gorilla skulls; taxidermied animals, birds and reptiles; and a stuffed crocodile named Claude. There was a volcanism room; a geology room; a hydrology alcove; a fossils and pottery exhibit; and a room exhibiting a variety of different minerals under glass. The latter space had a fireplace situated diagonally in the corner, providing one of the few physical clues as to how the space was used when it was still a domestic residence. Behind the house, there was a wooden shed full of live snakes and an empty concrete pool which was intended to house live crocodiles.

In addition to the natural history exhibits, the museum also contained some exhibits about the human history of the area. In a side room, an alcove with a raised wood floor displayed an exhibit about Dr. Kandt. The text, in four languages (Kinyarwanda, English, German, and French), described his explorations and his establishment of a base in what would become Kigali. Toward the back of the house, another room displayed information panels about the history of the missionaries and explorers of this area. The panels in this room were only in German and Kinyarwanda. It is notable that this is the only museum in Rwanda where we observed the German language being used.

The museum also contained a display about outer space which had a case containing a LEM model, a meteorite, and a plaque holding a moon rock and Rwandan flag from the Apollo XVII mission of 1972, given to Rwanda by Richard Nixon on behalf of the people

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[54] The identification of the Kandt House as Rwanda's "first modern house" implies that modernity in architecture was brought to Rwanda by the colonizers – an implication that will be explored in much greater depth in Chapter 4, "Materials."
[55] "KNOW YOUR HISTORY: The Story of Kandt and How Kigali Came to Be the Capital City," *The New Times*, January 13, 2015, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/184924.
[56] "Rwanda's Evolving Architecture," *The New Times*, April 20, 2013, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/106927.
[57] Observed during a visit to the museum in 2016.
[58] "Introduction."

of the U.S.A. Above this case there were two horizontal panels which showed the relative size of the planets in our solar system and the movement of the tectonic plates on Earth over time. On the adjacent wall there was a diagram of the galaxy, and a cut-away drawing of the earth showing its core and layers.

The connection between the Kandt house and its designation as the "Natural History Museum" of Rwanda was Kandt's identity as a naturalist.[59] The museum evoked a feeling of visiting a cabinet of curiosities, like those created in the Renaissance era to display a diverse variety of interesting objects. It even contained a taxidermied crocodile like the one in Ferrante Imperato's famous example (Figure 3.12). The cabinet of curiosities originated from a desire to understand humankind's place within a universal scheme.[60] But it is actually a product of human labor, and it is the space *between* the objects that reveals how their collector thinks.[61] At Rwanda's Natural History Museum, it seemed like anything that could be linked to nature could be exhibited, and more – from living and dead animals to geology, mineralogy, ethnography, and the cosmos. The collection spanned a *longue durée* of history from prehistoric fossils to space exploration. It seemed to claim a place for Rwanda within the broader history of the universe, as if to say that Rwanda was not merely a small, isolated kingdom-turned-nation, but deeply connected to the rest of the world across time and space.

FIGURE 3.12. A Renaissance cabinet of curiosity in Ferrante Imperato's *Dell'historia Naturale*.

[59] Stephanie L. McKinney, "Narrating Genocide on the Streets of Kigali," in *The Heritage of War*, ed. Martin Gegner and Bart Ziino (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 175.
[60] "Ferrante Imperato: Step Into His Cabinet of Wonders!," Biodiversity Heritage Library, accessed November 12, 2018, https://blog.biodiversitylibrary.org/2017/03/ferrante-imperato-step-into-his-cabinet-of-wonders.html.
[61] Amy Johnson, Janelle A. Schwartz, and Nhora Lucía Serrano, "Introduction: On the Virtues of Cabinets and Curiosities," in *Curious Collectors, Collected Curiosities: An Interdisciplinary Study*, ed. Janelle A. Schwartz and Nhora Lucía Serrano (2010; repr., Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), 2, https://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/58437.

The exhibits on Dr. Kandt and German colonialism seemed relatively tangential at the time of this visit in 2016. However, it also seemed like the museum was undergoing a process of transformation. The ongoing construction of a decorative pond with a statue of Dr. Kandt in front of the museum was one major clue, but the transformations could also be read by the language in the signage and information placards. Some of the older displays were only written in French and German, while the newer ones also had English. In addition, the displays seemed to be from different eras of curation. The older, nature-based exhibits were collections of objects placed in glass cases, while the exhibits on Kandt and the Germans utilized archival photos and much more textual explanation.

As it turned out, these clues were indeed indicative of a big change. As of December 17, 2017, the INMR rebranded the Natural History Museum as the "Kandt House Museum."[62] The natural history artifacts were to be consolidated with the contents of the new Museum of Environment, located in the Western Province. This would free up the Kandt house to be used as a museum focusing on the history of the Germans in Rwanda. But Isidore Ndikumana, the Director of the Culture Tourism Promotion Unit at INMR, reported that the snake shed and the live crocodile would remain at the Kandt House Museum, as they were a big draw, estimated to increase visitorship from 100 to 1,800 visitors per month.[63]

The creation of a museum focusing on German colonial history is perhaps a bit surprising, as the Germans were in Rwanda for a relatively short time, and they left way back in 1916. After the League of Nations mandate gave control over the territory to Belgium, the Belgians stayed in Rwanda for nearly half a century.[64] Thus Belgium has had a much greater influence on Rwanda than Germany. But Belgium is still publicly criticized in Rwanda's historical narratives as fostering the division that led to genocide, while Germany seems to be treated much more as a friend. Rwanda's relations with Germany are praised as positive and mutually beneficial by officials on both sides. An interview with the German ambassador, posted on the "Rwanda Diaspora in Deutschland" website, quotes Peter Woeste as saying, "Our two countries share a short period of history during the colonial times and I am very impressed how vivid and positive the memory of these years still is with many citizens of Rwanda even today."[65] The benign reference to colonization as a "shared history" is perhaps surprising, as is the notion that any Rwandans could have a "vivid memory" of a

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[62] "Kandt House Museum," Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, accessed November 12, 2018, https://www.museum.gov.rw/index.php?id=75.
[63] Jean Paul Mugwaneza, "Relocation of Some Exhibited Collections from Natural History Museum to Museum of Environment in Karongi District," Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, October 18, 2017, https://museum.gov.rw/.
[64] Aimable Twagilimana, *Historical Dictionary of Rwanda*, Historical Dictionaries of Africa 105 (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007), 14.
[65] "Germany: Rwanda's Preferred Partner for Development Programs," *The European Times*, December 6, 2016, http://www.european-times.com/peter-woeste-german-ambassador-interview/.

period which ended in 1916 — since it is very unlikely that there is anyone living today who was alive back then.

The positivity directed toward this relationship and the renewed attention placed on a relatively distant history can be attributed to several motives. Rwandan leaders may in fact see Germany as a role model, as it is a country that also had a genocide and subsequently went on to find renewed economic success. Germany is also a valuable trade and investment partner for Rwanda, as they have financed a number of projects in the education, health, energy, agriculture, and infrastructure sectors.[66] Of course, Germany wants something out of it as well. In 2016, Peter Woeste said that the Rwandan government "must establish a framework which is conducive to business, while neither the government nor government affiliated institutions should engage in these sectors themselves as this would disturb the competitive environment."[67] This reflects a long-standing norm in which developing countries are pressured not to regulate trade – for example, imposing importation caps – in ways that could protect their own industries. But furthermore, although Germany said "Never again" after its own genocide, Germany was then part of the international community that failed to intervene in Rwanda in 1994. German researcher Gerd Hankel has suggested that Germany is expressing some kind of misplaced moral responsibility to support the government of President Paul Kagame because he successfully stopped the Rwandan genocide.[68] Germany may be interested in the optics of supporting post-genocide reconstruction in order to sustain a positive image on the global stage.

Domestically, the museum conversion is not without controversy. In letters to the editor of *The New Times Rwanda*, one Rwandan citizen said, "I realise that for diplomatic reasons that brutal reality is avoided to ensure that we do not create uncomfortable spaces for our modern-day German 'friends' but we need to call a spade a spade. It is utterly ridiculous and arrogantly insulting to ourselves and our ancestors to refer to this toxic relationship with our colonisers as anything but barbaric."[69] Another said the museum is "trying to portray our colonisation as a period of a normal, harmonious relationship between us and the colonisers" and asked why colonial figures would be portrayed as heroes.[70]

To be fair, the Director General of INMR, Robert Masozera, has said, "We will insert more pictures detailing the history of Germans in Rwanda plus the bad and the ugly

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66 "Rwanda, Germany Seek to Strengthen Trade Relations," *The New Times*, October 21, 2015, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/193699.
67 "Germany: Rwanda's Preferred Partner."
68 Philipp Sandner, "Germany's Non-Judgmental Relationship with Rwanda," *DW (Deutsche Welle)*, April 8, 2014, https://p.dw.com/p/1Bduu.
69 Ali Rukariza, "Richard Kandt Was a Brutal Enslaver and Colonial Agent," *The New Times*, December 21, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/226045.
70 Seth, "Richard Kandt Was a Brutal Enslaver and Colonial Agent," *The New Times*, December 21, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/226045.

side of the German colonialists from the first day they stepped in Rwanda."[71] It seems that some negative aspects of the past will be addressed. However, both the INMR and the German government generally speak very positively of their contemporary partnership. Masozera says the new exhibits will illuminate "our shared history between Rwanda and Germany,"[72] and the INMR has expressed their gratitude to the Germans for their help in protecting Rwanda and Germany's "shared heritage."[73] Woeste said, "It shows how long Rwandans and Germans are in some kind of cooperation together and what is really important to me is how we can develop, strengthen and enforce it further in the future."[74]

The Kandt House Museum reflects the fact that certain histories are rewritten to serve contemporary relationships. The reinvention of this museum reflects the desires of these present-day actors to maintain a relationship that will lead to mutually beneficial exchange. Thus, even though it may seem that the conversion is narrowing down the scope (including timeframe) of the museum from the *longue durée* of the Natural History Museum, it still concurrently reflects the past, the present, and the future.

Meanwhile, there are currently no official museums or heritage sites that commemorate the Belgian presence in Rwanda. However, an idea has been proposed for where such a museum could be housed. The "1930 Prison" was built by the Belgians in Kigali in 1930 and continued to serve as a prison until 2018, when the last of its inmates was moved to a newer facility.[75] In 2016, then Kigali City Mayor Monique Mukaruriza spoke of turning the prison into a museum.[76] The most common suggestion for the content of such a museum is the Belgian occupation. Alphonse Umulisa, the former Director General of INMR, has said, "The same way Germans' history in Rwanda is exhibited at Kandt House, this prison will also help exhibit Belgians' history in Rwanda."[77] But the "1930 Prison" is a foreboding structure in Kigali which has painful associations for many Rwandans, including former prisoners and their families. An editorial in the New Times of Rwanda said: "Those who were unfortunate to be its unwilling tenants will be able to pass by or visit and reminisce what curtailing one's freedom really means."[78] So while the Kandt House will teach

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[71] Kalinda Brenda, "Kandt House Turns into Museum of Colonial History," *KT PRESS*, December 21, 2017, https://ktpress.rw/2017/12/kandt-house-turns-into-museum-of-colonial-history/.
[72] Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, "New Museum to Showcase Rwanda's Colonial History Launched in Kigali," *The New Times*, December 18, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/225813.
[73] "A Round Table Discussion on Rwanda-German Shared Heritage," Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, February 3, 2015, https://museum.gov.rw/index.php?id=14.
[74] Mbonyinshuti, "New Museum to Showcase Rwanda's Colonial History Launched in Kigali."
[75] James Karuhanga, "End of an Era: What next after the Closure of 1930?," *The New Times*, July 16, 2018, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/end-era-what-next-after-closure-1930.
[76] Oswald Niyonzima, "Last Inmate to Vacate '1930' Prison in May," *KT Press*, January 4, 2018, https://ktpress.rw/2018/01/last-inmate-to-vacate-1930-prison-in-may/.
[77] Niyonzima.
[78] Peterson Tumwebaze, "Editorial: The Iconic '1930' Prison Will Be Saved after All," *The New Times*, January 7, 2018, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/227117.

people about Rwanda's "shared history" with Germany, the proposed Belgian museum will remind people of being controlled.

The example of the Kandt House shows that when a museum is created within a pre-existing heritage site, a historical narrative is reinforced by the relationship between the structure and its contents. Both the Germans and the Belgians might be defined as the "Other" in Rwanda, but clearly the historical narrative of each colonial period is inflected differently when one is housed in a house and the other is housed in a prison.

At the time of the conversion of the Natural History Museum into the Kandt House Museum, Claude and the other taxidermied animals were moved out of the house and loaded into a truck which drove them several hours west, where they are now on display in the large new Museum of the Environment.[79] Visitors to the Kandt House will no longer experience the quirky mixture of human, animal, and mineral histories and the somewhat bizarre juxtaposition of multiple time periods and places in this museum, from the dinosaur age to space exploration. But these changes reflect the state's desire to refresh and reorganize and Rwanda's historical sites with an eye on contemporary strategic partnerships. The past will continue to be molded into a more palatable history in order to meet the needs of the present.

FIGURE 3.13. Claude in the truck, being delivered to a new museum.

[79] Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, "VIDEO: Historic Artefacts Relocated from Kandt Museum to Karongi District," *The New Times*, September 5, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/219305.

THE NATIONAL LIBERATION MUSEUM PARK

The National Liberation Museum Park is an example of the reinterpretation of more recent history. This site has been left supposedly "as it was" at the time of the historical events, but it has subsequently gained an additional layer of interpretation through the addition of guides and site infrastructure, in order to give increased gravitas to the current administration. This site also recognizes a historically significant RPF site *inside* Rwanda, which can help dismantle the notion that the RPF "invaded" Rwanda.

The National Liberation Museum Park preserves the headquarters where the Rwandan Patriotic Army – led by Major-General Paul Kagame, who is now the president of Rwanda – encamped during the war to end the genocide. It is a historic military site, but it was a site of planning and meeting (a strategic headquarters), rather than a site of battle. Although it is one of Rwanda's eight official national museums, it is the least visited (see Table 3 in the Appendix). It is out of the way of most tourists, as it is to the north of Kigali, and so is not along the routes south toward the university and museum in Huye, west toward the lake resorts, northwest toward the gorillas, or east toward the safari park. It is also less known than the other museums; after going there in 2016, I asked a number of friends, both local and expatriate, if they had ever heard of it and they said no.

The road north from Kigali to the National Liberation Museum is sparsely populated compared to other major routes in Rwanda. At the time of a visit in 2016, this museum did not yet appear on Google maps, and there were no clear maps or directions on the INMR website.[80] In fact, I only knew it was next to a tea factory due to some news articles about it. The road to the museum passes through the tiny town of Mulindi, with a series of shops lining both sides of the road. We drove to the top of the hill, turned at the tea factory, and spotted the reception building for the museum. Upon getting out of the car we were greeted by a security guard, but there didn't seem to be anyone else there. Then we saw the museum director walking toward us. He apologized for being off-site due to lunch, and introduced himself. He led us into the reception building where we paid the entrance fee. The room had a stone fireplace but was otherwise sparsely furnished with a glass top table, three office chairs, and a desk in the corner. The director explained that we were inside President Kagame's former house and we would hear more about it on the tour. He also proudly showed us Kagame's actual signature in the guest book.

After paying the fees, we went outside to Kagame's bunker, which was directly in front of the house. This bunker is the real claim to fame of the site. Here the director commenced the tour by explaining that the site was important due to its role in the 1990-1994 war to liberate Rwanda. The director told us that Kagame's house, which is currently the reception building, and other buildings on the site were originally owned and occupied by the tea factory, but during the war the tea factory was closed. As the Rwandan Patriotic Army came down from Uganda, this area was chosen for occupation because the army had

[80] As of 2018, the museum now appears on Google maps.

realized that the hills would be advantageous for defense, and also because there was existing infrastructure here – especially the power lines which originated in Uganda, and the radio towers.[81]

After providing some additional historical background, he led us down into the bunker to show us the space where Kagame met with other leaders to plan the liberation. The bunker currently contains a chair (original), table (not original but similar to what would have been there), portrait of Kagame (added), and an electric light (added). The director explained that there would also have been a mattress in the bunker so Kagame could sleep there if necessary, but for meetings it would have been placed aside and chairs would be brought in for the group of leaders.

When asked, the director compared the current physical state of the bunker to what it would originally have been like during the time it was in use. There is now a canopy structure over the bunker, whereas originally the mound over the bunker would have just been planted with vegetation. The stairs down to the bunker have also been widened and are made of relatively new concrete (Figure 3.14). The interior of the bunker has been greatly altered since the conclusion of the war, with the addition of wood paneling, lighting, and a photograph of the president (Figure 3.15). The director told us that in the time when the bunker was occupied by Kagame, the walls were stone and the ceiling was made of bags of sand. The director told us that a former soldier had done the renovations to Kagame's bunker, and that he now lives in Kigali and is part of the Mechanized Infantry. When we asked why these renovations were made (suggesting perhaps it was for aesthetics, or for preservation), the director said that the soldier who did it had used the word "modernization" when talking about his work. The director was unable to tell us more, and did not know the soldier's name.

The upgrading of Kagame's bunker becomes particularly evident when compared to another bunker on the site which is less associated with Kagame, and thus has been left to fall into disrepair (Figure 3.16). Both bunkers show the effects of time, but in opposite ways – one has been upgraded while the other decays. We can see in this comparison the extent to which Kagame's bunker has been radically altered to "improve" its physical conditions.

[81] Personal visit to the museum, 2016.

FIGURE 3.14. Kagame's bunker, with renovations completed after the liberation struggle.

FIGURE 3.15. The interior of Kagame's bunker, with wood paneling and electric lighting added after the liberation struggle.

FIGURE 3.16. Another bunker on the site which has been left to fall into disrepair.

The site beyond Kagame's bunker has also evolved. Other buildings have been altered or removed over time, and there are plans to build a new museum housing exhibits about the liberation struggle. Kagame laid the cornerstone for this building in 2012, but no further construction has yet taken place. The director showed us a rendering of a large white building with a huge parking lot. He told us that the president had rejected that design, and there would be a meeting later in the week to discuss new plans. This is evidence that the president is directly involved in approving the presentation of historical narratives – perhaps especially when they involve his own personal history.

The director also reported that before the site was turned into a museum, it was watched over by security guards, and it was open to the public but there were no tour guides. But a guide might be essential for a site which does not necessarily convey what it used to be. The function of the different parts of the site, and even (at least for some visitors) the significance of the site itself, might need to be narrated, because it is not evident. Particularly as visitors from outside the area, we would not have understood the significance of what we were looking at without our tour guide. But the addition of a tour guide is also the first step in the transformation of an uninterpreted historic site to a curated, guided heritage site – a transformation in which various agenda can begin to shape the site.

The plans to add an entire new museum building would be another major step in that direction. There is an additional layer of detachment in looking at informational exhibits in a new museum building, as opposed to hearing a tour guide speak about history while standing in the actual spaces. Would further alterations and additions to the site make the experience less "authentic"? But then again, the most important space on the site, Kagame's bunker, had already been extensively renovated. Perhaps there is little authenticity actually left to worry about. Unlike Winston Churchill's war rooms in London, which were left largely as they were at the end of World War II, there has been a great deal of change to the physical components, both exterior and interior, of Kagame's bunker. This seems to reflect a belief that a site associated with the country's leader should physically reflect his prestige, rather than the actual conditions it would have been in at the time. These changes might seem to make the site less historically accurate, but one might say that the upgrades to the site reflect the presence of Kagame, and his later impact on the image of the country, most authentically. Kagame's attention to aesthetics and polish truly resonate in this space.

Furthermore, the director expressed the need to develop the site in order to attract more visitors. I asked him if there were currently a lot of visitors to the site and he said no, that Byumba was too far (35 kilometers) away from Kigali. He said that there were a few visitors sometimes (including a big school group that morning), but that there were weeks when there were not many visitors at all. The director told us about the plans to build a new hotel on site so that people could come and stay overnight. This hotel would reuse the swimming pool which was a legacy from the old tea factory. The director also told us about plans to build a resto-bar, a zip line across the valley, and a bamboo garden. It seems like the idea is to make it a destination with more amenities where people will want to stay for a while, because it is too far for most people to come visit in a day. Is the idea of commercializing the site counter to the idea of preserving the site? But these two things often go hand in hand. Heritage sites are more likely to survive when they have visitors.

The National Liberation Museum Park is thus an example of a historical site which is significant for its association with an origin story, but it has been altered over time to portray those origins as less humble than they really were. The site is significant because it was a place that was very transformative for both the RPA and RPF, in terms of transitioning from a rebel group to a real army, and then to a political party. Although it may seem to be an "authentic" historical site, this site has actually had many layers of interpretation added to it. The physical renovations of the site are intended to increase public interest and perception of it as an important historical site, and to give an increased sense of authority and importance to the incumbent party. For foreign visitors, who have expectations of "authenticity," these interventions may appear to decrease the historical authenticity of the site, but that is only true if one is looking for an accurate representation of past conditions. In fact, they give an authentic understanding of the way today's Rwandan state wishes to be perceived.

In addition, it is significant that this site which is so closely associated with the origin of the liberation and the rise of the current state is located *inside* Rwanda. This helps to offset the notion of the liberation as an invasion carried out from the camps in Uganda, and to counter the perception of the RPF as outsiders. How can it be an invasion if their headquarters was located here, inside Rwanda? This aligns with the RPF's recasting of the liberation war as a struggle not *against* the Rwandan people but *by* the Rwandan people against a corrupt genocidal government.[82] The RPF is not the "Other." They are Rwandans who were displaced for a time, but have returned home to save their country. Here we return again to the recasting of the relationship between ethnicity, indigeneity, and citizenship. Through the preservation of this site, the RPF has linked the origin of the new (post-genocide) nation of Rwanda with their time spent on Rwandan soil, rather than in the Ugandan refugee camps.

CONCLUSION

Rwanda's heritage sites illustrate an underlying tension in the state's approach toward the role of ethnicity in history. Through the historical narratives developed by its museum-governing arm, the INMR, the state has implicitly removed ethnicity from the precolonial heritage site at the King's Palace. The implication is that the Tutsi were not Others in Rwanda, until the Belgians (the true "Others") imported their own divisive ideas of hierarchy, which led to tensions that were further exploited by the genocidal government. This suggests that during the colonial and post-independence periods, the Tutsis were falsely made into Others, but in fact they are true Rwandans. In the 1990s the RPA returned home to Rwanda to establish a base at Mulindi, from which they fought not *against* Rwanda, but *for* Rwanda. And yet, as seen in the chapter on genocide memorials (Chapter 2), the state has revised all memorial signage to explicitly call out the "Genocide against the Tutsi." At the same time that Rwanda's history museums work to portray the Tutsi as true Rwandans, the genocide sites also help to remind people that specifically the Tutsi were victims – even though the RPF carried out its own share of violence in the course of stopping the genocide. Thus, Rwanda's museums and memorial sites work together to establish the historical narrative that best serves the incumbent state.

A study carried out by Timothy Longman and Théonèste Rutagengwa found that the general population of Rwanda are, on the whole, very familiar with the state's version of history, and easily able to explain it.[83] But Longman and Rutagengwa also found that half (49.2 percent) of their respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "Whoever is in power rewrites Rwandan history to serve their own interests."[84] This suggests that while the Rwandan state works to solidify their own narrative of Rwandan history, the Rwandan

[82] Longman, *Memory and Justice in Post-Genocide Rwanda*, 56.
[83] Longman and Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity, and Community in Rwanda," 169.
[84] Longman and Rutagengwa, 170.

people still view history as fluid and mutable. They recognize that historical narratives can be manipulated by those with power.

Heritage sites are particularly powerful for reworking history because embodied encounters with historic objects and spaces lend a tangible immediacy and sense of veracity to heritage narratives. But these sites are not frozen in time; all of the sites examined in this chapter show physical evidence of the layering of the past and present. This is evident in the electrical lighting and the thatched-roof visitor center at the King's Palace; the fresh paint and the new statue and the changing exhibits at the Kandt House; the wood siding installed in Kagame's bunker and the new hotel they want to build near it. These interventions show that the past is being actively and intentionally brought into the present. It is not just about upkeep or maintenance; it is about the ongoing process of reinterpretation. Through the recognition of these interventions, the visitor might become aware of their own positioning in a multi-layered assembly of time. However, the difficulty lies in trying to perceive these elements, particularly when it is not clear what might have been "restored" and what might have been added or invented later.

Due to a lack of clarity with regard to the scope of these interventions, many scholars have decried the development of the "culture industry" as the destruction of actual history. But all changes to a site are part of its history.[85] If heritage reflects present values, then a *history of heritage* itself becomes a valid history. In other words, it is not only the original content of each site, but the subsequent history of each site after it becomes designated "historical" by which we can gain a better understanding of the subject. In Rwanda, the transformation of these various heritage sites over time illuminates Rwandan history as much, if not more so, than their actual content.

[85] David C. Harvey, "Heritage Pasts and Heritage Presents: Temporality, Meaning and the Scope of Heritage Studies," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 7, no. 4 (2001): 319–38.

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CHAPTER 4: MATERIALS

Manipulating the Binary of Modern and the Traditional

In the southern province of Rwanda, the village of Mayange is a cluster of small mud-plastered homes with corrugated metal roofs (Figure 4.1). Although only forty kilometers south of Rwanda's capital of Kigali, it seems a world away. In comparison to Kigali's bustling traffic and shiny new glass and steel towers, Mayange appears to be quiet and remote, and not a place that one would associate with change. However, little of life in the village today actually resembles life in Rwanda a century ago. Mayange is not an isolated rural enclave, but a UN Millennium Village highly connected to international networks.[1] As one of Rwanda's official "Reconciliation Villages," it is also a planned community where genocide perpetrators and survivors purposely live side by side. In return for demonstrating reconciliation to outside audiences, the villagers receive foreign aid for health and education. But notions of "progress" are not only acted out by the village's inhabitants; they are also embedded in its buildings. And in this regard, the houses lining Mayange's dirt streets – like vernacular dwellings across the country – reflect a combination of external and internal influences that have profoundly changed Rwandan vernacular architecture, redefining notions of "modern" dwelling according to specific ideals of durability and domesticity. In short, Mayange is an archetype of contemporary settlement in Rwanda.

FIGURE 4.1. A contemporary house in the town of Mayange, Rwanda.

[1] The Millennium Villages Project is a project initiated in 2005 to apply the UN's Millennium Development Goals to villages in sub-Saharan Africa. It was financed by international donors, NGOs, local and national governments, and village communities. See www.millenniumvillages.org.

A comparison of the typical vernacular houses today in Rwanda (refer to Figure 4.1) to the traditional hut which was prevalent across Rwanda until the latter half of the twentieth century (Figure 4.2) shows how much Rwandan dwellings have changed over time. One obvious difference is shape: the traditional huts were circular in plan, while contemporary houses are rectangular. But the other major difference is material. Traditional houses were built entirely of organic materials: the walls were usually woven or made in a wattle-and-daub style out of branches, reeds, or straw mixed with soil, and the home was covered by a thatched roof.[2] Today, however, houses in Rwanda are most commonly built out of mud block or bricks, with either a metal or tile roof; and higher incomes allow the use of concrete. In addition, today's houses are often clustered together in small villages, a different pattern from that of older settlements, which were more dispersed on the land.[3] This chapter will examine how and why these changes came about, and what they reveal about the evolution of "modernity" in Rwanda.

FIGURE 4.2. Recreation of a traditional hut in the Rulindo Cultural Center.

[2] In the western region of Rwanda, there would also be some use of stone.
[3] Direct observation by the author in fieldwork in Rwanda, 2016-2017.

In this chapter, I will explore the impact of both top-down mandates and bottom-up choices on the transformation of Rwandan dwellings over time, an evolution in which the solidification of building materials has served as a visual signifier of "modernization." Although their programs had different scales and methods, both Rwanda's former Belgian colonial authorities and its post-genocide government have sought to legitimize their rule by shaping the domestic lives of the masses through the material improvement of dwellings. However, they have not been the only agents of change. In both eras, as their society became increasingly monetized and "modern" building materials became more accessible, the Rwandan people willingly exercised available options to build homes that matched their aspirations. As this chapter will show, modernization was not solely a project of the foreign colonizer, nor of the powerful elite; the indigenous population at large had a great deal of agency in this transformation. The changes propagated both vertically and horizontally.

Of course, I do not wish to downplay the influence of the West. The binary of "modernity" and "tradition" was formed in the encounter between the West and its colonial subjects, and then used to legitimize Western dominance over their colonized subjects, who were cast as the inferior and backward "Other."[4] This binary was subsequently internalized by native authorities and colonized populations, irrevocably shaping their aspirations and desires. As a result, "modern" materials were embraced for dwellings, while traditional building practices fell out of daily use. But archival evidence suggests that the Rwandan population were not entirely passive recipients of architectural modernization initiatives.[5] During the colonial period, they influenced the direction of the Belgian program, and even found ways to implement their own version of it when the colonizers' system turned out to be economically impractical. Furthermore, the authorities of post-genocide Rwanda have implemented the "creative destruction" of fiber and thatch to create space for modern imported materials to a greater extent than the Belgians ever did. While acknowledging the incontrovertible influence of the West, I also suggest that Rwandans became agents of their own project of modernity, both during and after the colonial period.

In addition, the sequestering of primitive culture as an ethnographic past was not enacted by colonizers, but by postcolonial authorities. It coincided with an anti-thatched-roof program implemented by the Rwandan state after the genocide. As vernacular dwellings evolved, "traditional" building materials and forms were sequestered into specific didactic spaces for the purpose of preservation and education. This act of distancing the present from the past helped to solidify Rwanda's claims of modernization, thereby legitimizing the post-genocide state. As argued in the previous chapter, the exhibition of own's own traditional culture is an "Othering" of one's own past, emphasizing subsequent evolution and progress. The "tradition" versus "modernity" binary is thus reinforced.

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[4] Nezar AlSayyad, *Traditions: The "Real", the Hyper, and the Virtual in the Built Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 45; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1979).

[5] Note: All archival documents from the African Archives at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Belgium have been translated from the original French into English by the author.

And yet, even as this binary has been upheld in some ways, it has been collapsed in others. Thatched roofs are currently found at hotels, bars, and restaurants such as the Milles Collines hotel and The Hut, a popular restaurant in Kigali. These roofs reference traditional Rwandan building culture, but employ organic thatch for new building types and in environments that otherwise strive to be very contemporary in style. These spaces are often targeted toward visitors who want to experience something "Rwandan" without giving up the comforts of a modern hotel. At the same time, traditional material culture at the object scale has evolved into a lucrative commodity on the international market, in the form of woven "peace baskets." These Rwandan-made baskets have become not only a popular retail commodity, but also an emblem of "Rwandan-ness" used in state symbology. While "tradition" was once defined as a state of stasis in contrast to the "modern," it can in fact evolve and be deployed as a strategic tool for development that supports both national identity and economic growth in a global context. As this chapter will show, Rwanda provides a particularly clear example of how developing countries can exploit the "modern"/"traditional" binary when it serves them, and collapse the binary when it does not.

TRADITIONAL MATERIALS

Today, a visitor to Rwanda can generally only see a traditional-style house inside an institution charged with the quarantine of past from present: the museum. Recreated huts can, for example, be found at the Rulindo Cultural Center (refer to Figure 4.2), the King's Palace Museum (refer to Figure 3.4), and the Ethnographic Museum of Rwanda. Inside the Ethnographic Museum, there is also a large gallery devoted to the traditional Rwandan crafts of weaving and pottery. In this gallery, woven panels and baskets of all different shapes, sizes, and patterns catch the eye with their dynamic patterns and precision of detail. Museum visitors, peering through the glass of the display cabinets, marvel at the notion that human hands could create such intricate objects. The gallery's information placards explain that weaving — or more specifically wickerwork (meaning the weaving of organic plant materials such as twigs, reeds, etc.) — was not just a simple craft used to produce functional objects, but "the most remarkable artistic production of ancient Rwanda."[6] The Rwandan historian Célestin Kanimba Misago has noted that "the shape of the object, the technical quality and the finishing touches were the criteria used to judge an object's value."[7] But weaving was also integral to dwelling, as both the dwelling itself and many of the objects inside it were woven by the residents and their community. Thus, the roof and walls of the traditional house, as

[6] Gallery III: Weaving and Pottery, Ethnographic Museum of Rwanda, Huye, Rwanda.
[7] Célestin Kanimba Misago and Lode Van Pee, *Rwanda: Its Cultural Heritage, Past, and Present* (Kigali, Rwanda: Institute of National Museums of Rwanda, 2008), 198.

well as interior partitions, floor mats, fences, baskets, and decorative wall panels, were all part of a cohesive material culture (Figure 4.3).[8]

FIGURE 4.3. Hutu weavers at work in front of their dwelling, showing a coherent material culture across scales.

Behind the Ethnographic Museum is a recreation of a traditional dwelling compound. In traditional Rwandan society, families lived inside a compound which consisted of the *inzu* (house), *urugo* (front yard), and sometimes also an *igikali* (back yard). The compound would also contain small auxiliary structures used for storing grain or keeping animals. The compound was enclosed by a natural hedge or a fence made of reeds, and sited in the center of the family's plot of land for ease of access to crops, which were planted in concentric zones around it.[9] In traditional settlement patterns, these homesteads were scattered among the hills. Although members of the same patrilineal extended family would be somewhat clustered together, there would typically be some distance in between these groups.[10]

[8] Misago and Van Pee, *Rwanda*.
[9] Ministry of Infrastructure, "Updated Version of the National Human Settlement Policy" (Kigali, Republic of Rwanda, 2009).
[10] Célestin Kanimba Misago and Lode Van Pee, *Rwanda: Traditional Dwelling* (Brussels: Africalia, 2008), 6.

At the end of the nineteenth century these construction methods and settlement patterns had been practiced fairly consistently for generations. This was true for both the Hutu, who were originally agriculturalists, and the Tutsi, who were originally pastoralists.[11] Over time, the two groups had grown more and more alike in lifestyle, and in some areas they *both* kept cattle and cultivated fields.[12] While there was some regional variation, the dwellings of Rwanda's two major ethnic groups – the Hutu (refer to Figure 4.3) and the Tutsi (Figures 4.4 and 4.5) – were largely similar in form and materiality, although Tutsi dwellings tended to be larger and more intricately woven.[13]

FIGURE 4.4. Construction of a Tutsi dwelling in Rwanda.

[11] The Twa, who comprise 1% of the population, were originally forest dwellers who lived by hunting and gathering, but over time they have come to work more closely with the Hutu and Tutsi as servants, laborers, or potters. Due to their small numbers, they have not played a significant role in Rwanda's ethnic conflicts. See Aimable Twagilimana, *Historical Dictionary of Rwanda*, (Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007).

[12] Catharine Newbury, "Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda," *Africa Today* 45, no. 1 (January 1998): 7–24.

[13] Theo Schilderman, "Tutsi (Rwanda)," in *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World*, ed. Paul Oliver, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 2013.

FIGURE 4.5. The Mwami (King) of Rwanda in front of his residence.

From a construction standpoint, circular dwellings are fairly simple to lay out, requiring only a center point and a constant radius, which can be measured with a length of rope tied to a stake. Circular plans can also help moderate external temperatures, because they offer the minimum possible wall surface for thermal bridging, and they can be very stable in earthquakes (and indeed, Rwanda is in a seismically active area). However, the circle also had important cosmological significance in Rwandan dwellings. At the center of the woven ceiling were four concentric rings which symbolized heaven (*ijuru*), space (*ikirere*), earth (*isi),* and the world of death *(ikuzimu*).[14] The ceiling was the most important architectural element of the house, and the builders took great care in weaving it.[15] Once the ceiling was completed, thin wooden pillars would be set in place to support it, and the whole dwelling would be covered in a thick layer of thatch in a dome-like fashion. Finally, once a soothsayer had pronounced the house to be properly complete, ceremonies would be held to inaugurate it.[16]

Obviously, a house made of thatch does not last forever. Ongoing maintenance was a part of life, and periodic rebuilding was a communal activity. A Rwandan architect

[14] Misago and Van Pee, *Rwanda: Traditional Dwelling*, 43.
[15] Misago and Van Pee, 30.
[16] Misago and Van Pee, 32.

described to me the way that his mother remembered her community coming together to rebuild a thatched dwelling:

> *I talk to my mother about this sometimes, she tells me about how when she was growing up, people lived in thatched houses. They had fire which was burning 24/7, so houses would catch fire. Fires were not something that was seen as something which needs to be prevented, right? Of course, you had to manage it so it doesn't kill people, but my mom told me that sometimes you'd wake up one morning and see, 'oh, this person's house got burned down'. What would happen is everybody would come to your rescue – someone brings a tree, someone brings the vine, someone brings something else, they come clear the land – the same day, they will have the house completed and you will sleep in it that night. It was a communal process.*[17]

For these traditional homes, repairs were to be expected, but materials were locally abundant, and strong social ties ensured that labor was readily available. A dwelling was commonly understood to have a certain degree of innate ephemerality, and replacement in kind was a necessary part of the cycle.

Contemporary researchers should not be quick to romanticize these traditional dwellings, however, or to assume that the Rwandan people did not want something better. As this chapter will show, a variety of agents have pushed this cyclical, communitarian building culture out of practical existence, to the extent that it exists today only in museums and in the archive of public memory. But if the role of indigenous agency is not factored into this situation, half the picture is missing. Architectural historian Joseph Godlewski has argued, in the context of Nigeria, that "by nostalgically privileging and elevating an era prior to European contact, [some historians of architecture have] ironically removed indigenous agency from later periods of fragmentation, [erroneously] labeling Europeans as the sole catalysts of change."[18] As in Nigeria, Europeans were also not the only agents of change in Rwanda. While colonial authorities in Rwanda may have planted the seeds of transformation in the form and material of dwellings, comprehensive changes only took wider effect with the participation of the indigenous population.

"DURABLE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS" IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD

When the first European explorers arrived in Rwanda in the 1890s, they found it to be a highly organized kingdom with a common language, which had been in existence for at least five hundred years. Curiously, this initial contact happened *after* the region had already been assigned to Germany as a protectorate at an 1890 conference of colonial powers held to resolve any lands still in dispute after the "Scramble for Africa." Following Germany's defeat in World War I, however, the League of Nations gave Belgium the mandate to govern

[17] Christian Benimana. Interview. Interviewed by Jennifer Gaugler. March 19, 2017.
[18] Joseph Godlewski, "Zones of Entanglement: Nigeria's Real and Imagined Compounds," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 28, no. 2 (Spring 2017): 30.

the combined territory of Ruanda-Urundi (comprising the territories of what are now the nations of Rwanda and Burundi).[19]

Although a number of German missionaries and colonial officials were present in the country from the mid-1890s, it was only following World War I that the expansion of missionary activity and the presence of Belgian colonial authorities sparked an era of major changes to vernacular dwellings. In any situation where different cultures come into contact, ideas are sure to be transferred. However, Belgian ideas about building materials and techniques were not only absorbed by the Rwandan people, they were also actively transferred through programs that aimed to build new houses for the indigenous population. In particular, colonial administrators focused on the promotion of "durable construction materials." Today, archival documents help to illuminate these officials' criticisms of local building materials, which kinds of materials they considered more suitable, what kinds of programs they implemented, and their perception of the response of the "*indigènes*."

In their reports, the Belgian authorities typically described indigenous dwellings with words like "rudimentary" and "primitive." They also frequently referred to indigenous dwellings as "unhealthy," stating that the indigenous people "too often show an incredible negligence in the construction and especially in the maintenance of their dwellings," and that they "have habitually ignored or neglected to observe the most basic rules of hygiene."[20] Colonial authorities further noted that the indigenous huts were in constant need of "repairs."[21] On the basis of these analyses they determined the comfort of the indigenous population to be "extremely reduced," but they also acknowledged that this situation seemed satisfactory to the indigenes, who were "living almost constantly outside, not conceiving family life like us, leading an extremely rough existence, [as] they only ask the hut to shelter them against the freshness of the nights, the excessive heat of the day or the violence of tornadoes."[22] Through statements like this, the Belgian administrators implied that a change in building materials, to make dwellings healthier and more comfortable, might also persuade the indigenes to spend more time indoors, and so cultivate the kind of nuclear family life that seemed more appropriate by European standards.

Prior to World War II, colonial housing initiatives mostly focused on housing for indigenous civil servants, including clerks and police. These were typically very simple one-room dwellings, often arranged in contiguous rows or as duplexes (Figure 4.6).[23] In the late

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[19] Aimable Twagilimana, *Historical Dictionary of Rwanda*, Historical Dictionaries of Africa 105 (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2007).

[20] Belgian Colonial Government, "Report on Housing Problems," n.d., 6, Box 3DG(503)4, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

[21] G. Franck to Resident of Ruanda, "Constructions SIX demeures pour policiers indigènes," July 30, 1931, Box RWA(519), Folder 4988, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

[22] Belgian Colonial Government, "Report on Housing Problems," 6.

[23] Various sketches including "Croquis maisonettes pour travailleurs et policiers," 19 March 1927; "Projet constructions d'un camp pour policiers, soldats, douaniers à Birenga – Ruanda," 17 June

1940s, however, the colonial authorities began to consider how to improve the dwellings of the masses – shifting their focus from one-off construction projects to the development of replicable prototypes and long-term building programs. In 1947, on a hill called Jari outside of Kigali, colonial administrators thus convened a meeting attended by thirty-eight local residents, to whom they presented several options for a round "house for indigenes." The Rwandans, however, testified that they would not cooperate in the program if the roof were to be thatched, because thatch could rot or become infested with rodents or insects. As the Belgian government's Resident George Sandrart reported: "Learning that no objection is made to the thatched roof being replaced by tiles, the interest on the part of the listeners became much more marked, the atmosphere changed radically, and it is by no means exaggerated to speak of enthusiasm."[24] Thus it was that one of the major changes to vernacular dwelling materials in Rwanda – the shift from vegetal to hard roofing – was fostered by the colonial authorities, but also very much the result of a decision made by the local population. (Of course, it should be noted that the indigenous reactions in these documents are filtered through the colonial perspective; but it does seem like there was a clear preference indicated.)

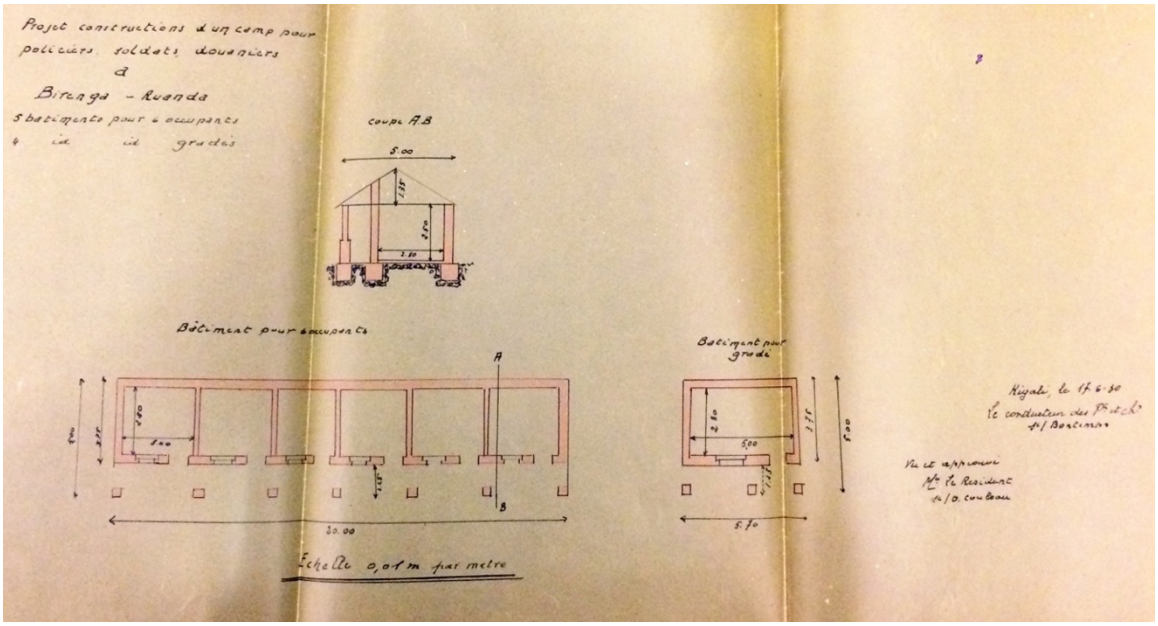

FIGURE 4.6. "Camp construction project for police, soldiers, customs officers at Birenga – Rwanda" (1930), showing one type of housing that would be provided for male workers without their families: simple rooms laid out in a linear fashion.

1930; "Projet d'habitation pour le clerk à Kigali," 5 November 1930; African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Brussels, Belgium.

[24] G. Sandrart, "Construction de Maisons Pour Indigènes" (Kigali, February 28, 1947), Box RWA(519), Folder 2821, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

Following this meeting, tests were done at Jari to construct a round dwelling with smoothly plastered baked-brick walls, exterior brick columns, a tile roof, and an exterior porch (Figure 4.7).[25] But when this first house turned out to be more expensive than hoped, the territorial administrator A. Van Hoeck suggested that the round form be replaced with a rectangular one, because he believed (for unknown reasons) that a porch would not be necessary on a rectangular house – thus eliminating the cost of the foundation stone, brick, and tile needed for this covered outdoor space.[26] This was a key decision in changing the indigenous housing program from round to rectangular forms (Figures 4.8 and 4.9). Van Hoeck testified that the indigenes were again enthusiastic about this change, and in fact they even preferred the rectangular house, although he does not specify their reasons.[27]

FIGURE 4.7. This round dwelling matches the description of the first kind of house to be built in 1947 as part of a colonial housing program: circular in plan, but constructed with solid materials (bricks, stones, and tiles).

[25] Sandrart.
[26] A. Van Hoeck to Resident of Ruanda, "Construction maisons pour indigènes," May 21, 1947, Box RWA(519), Folder 2821, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.
[27] A. Van Hoeck to Resident of Ruanda, "Construction maisons pour indigènes," August 8, 1947, Box RWA(519), Folder 2821, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

FIGURE 4.8. The Belgians switched to a rectangular form for their indigenous housing program, believing it would cost less to construct. Here, a nurse and his family pose in front of their house in Kisenyi, 1947.

FIGURE 4.9. Houses for clerks in the colonial administration, constructed by the government in Usumbura (the capital of Ruanda-Urundi, located in what is now present-day Burundi).

The initial response to these tests seemed promising, but to develop the program on a wider scale, the Belgians needed the cooperation of local authorities. Although European agents could be assigned to oversee the construction of the houses, they were only able to visit each construction site a few days per month due to their small number and large areas of oversight. Meanwhile, the procurement of materials, the erecting of the structure, etc., was controlled by local Rwandan chiefs and their deputies. A note written by Van Hoeck in 1948 thus asserted the importance of getting Rwandan leaders on board by ensuring that these leaders would be the first in their community to receive the new houses. As Van Hoeck wrote,

> *For more than one year that I have been occupied with these constructions, the experience has proven to me that this work is impossible without the total collaboration and even enthusiasm of the customary authorities. … And it is understandable, that this one [the chief or deputy], living himself in a hut, does not dedicate himself with all the devotion required by this task, if the Administration does not begin to procure him a clean house of durable materials."*[28]

The Belgian strategy was thus first to ensure the program was accepted by local authorities, with the expectation that when people in the community saw their leaders living in these new houses, they would aspire to the same. The following year, the territory administrator for Ruhengeri, W. Antonissen, wrote that the one hundred houses constructed in his territory in 1948-49 were "exclusively for natives who asked for it without any pressure," and that "the idea has been launched, and the indigenes can see with their own eyes what they can achieve with some effort. In my view, the sufficiently evolved indigenes, having already presented certain guarantees of cleanliness and financial comfort, will themselves solicit the help of the government for building a house…."[29] Thus the new homes were linked to the *evolués*, a class of "enlightened" Westernized indigenes who legitimized Belgian rule by demonstrating the success of its "civilizing" mission.[30] By associating the new style of house with the elite of the indigenous population, the Belgians intended it to become aspirational for the masses.

However, it turned out that not all indigenous subjects were enthusiastic about the housing program. In practice, the new houses were out of reach for all but the wealthiest. As Antonissen wrote: "This program only concerns the category of rich indigenes. Indeed the current price for a 3 room house of 3.5 [m] x 3.25 [m] is 7,000 Fr, including 1,000 to 1,500

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[28] A. Van Hoeck, "Note Concernant La Construction Des Maisons d'Habitation En Materiaux Durables Pour Indigenes En Territoire de Kigali" (Kigali, March 31, 1948), Box RWA(519), Folder 2821, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.
[29] W. Antonissen to Resident of Ruanda, "Habitations pour indigènes," September 4, 1949, Box RWA(519), African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.
[30] Nancy Rose Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa: Usumbura's Foyer Social, 1946-1960," *Signs* 15, no. 3 (April 1, 1990): 447–74.

Fr to be paid upfront with the balance to be paid in 3 annuities. It is evident that the masses do not have the resources necessary to meet such expenses."[31] Furthermore, the lower classes had largely been requisitioned into forced unpaid labor in order to keep the price of construction down. The program to build houses thus bred resentment, as it became increasingly clear that these houses would go to the wealthy, while poor farmers with little chance to gather the necessary capital were unlikely to ever obtain their own house.[32] As those with lower incomes were typically Hutu and those with higher incomes were typically Tutsi, this was one of the ways in which colonial policies helped breed ethnic tension. As a result of this disillusionment, several territorial administrators began to report disinterest in the housing programs. In one territory, the local people were even reported to say "*n'umulimo w'abazungu*" ("it is an affair of Europeans").[33]

Indigenous Rwandans were justified in feeling that the new houses were essentially "European." It is clear from archival reports and correspondence that when developing housing for the indigenous population, the Belgians prioritized certain values: cost, climatic suitability, and hygiene. The socio-cultural customs or aesthetic preferences of the indigenous population were not considered. Put another way, the Belgians felt that the indigenous population should change their dwelling habits to fit their new houses, rather than have their new houses fit their traditional ways of life. The aforementioned remark that the indigenes were "living almost constantly outside, *not conceiving family life like us*" (emphasis added) indeed presented a condescending Othering of indigenous domesticity.[34] Thus it is likely that one reason the colonial housing program dispersed with exterior porches was the hope that the interiorization of domestic life would place an increased emphasis on the nuclear family. This might also help downplay communal or clan ties, breaking society down into smaller units to help prevent an anti-colonial uprising. The domestic habits of the indigenes were further Westernized through training programs such as the *foyer social*, which taught married African women living in colonial cities how to properly keep their homes. This program was proudly touted in annual reports to the United Nations and helped to legitimize Belgium's control of this territory. By appearances, the "natives" were becoming more civilized, and to European eyes this validated Belgium's continued rule over them.[35]

The colonial housing initiatives also had a particular focus on "*durable* construction materials," which is a phrase noted in dozens of archival documents. And this notion was also illustrated by projects to convert communal buildings to more "durable" structures (Figures 4.10 and 4.11). However, one territorial administrator noted in 1948 that some

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[31] W. Antonissen to Governor of Ruanda-Urundi, "Habitations pour indigènes," September 4, 1949, Box RWA(519), African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.
[32] Pierlot to Resident of Ruanda, "Maisons pour indigènes," May 8, 1948, Box RWA(519), Folder 2821, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.
[33] "Construction de Maisons En Materiaux Durables Pour Indigènes. Année 1948" (Territory of Nyanza, Rwanda, 1948), Box RWA(519), African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.
[34] Belgian Colonial Government, "Report on Housing Problems," 6.
[35] Hunt, "Domesticity and Colonialism in Belgian Africa."

indigenous residents of Byumba resisted living in brick houses because these might prevent them from emigrating to better land if necessary.[36] A thatched hut, which needed to be periodically reconstructed to begin with, could easily be rebuilt at a new site. But a house built of heavy stone, bricks, and tiles contained a lot more embedded labor and equity, and would be much harder to move or abandon. The high cost of the homes also ensured that people were unlikely to abandon them. Durable building materials thus suggested an underlying agenda for the fixing of indigenous people to their land.

FIGURE 4.10. Seed storage shed, 1949. (Original caption: "Here in the administrative center of Buyoga the old seed storage shed, now replaced by a building in durable materials.")

[36] Labiau, "Rapport Sur Le Fonctionnement de La Cooperative Du Ndorwa I de Byumba" (Byumba, 1948), Box RWA(519), Folder 2821, African Archives, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Belgium.

FIGURE 4.11. Newer seed storage shed, 1949. (Original caption: "Here in the administrative center of Buyoga the new seed storage shed.")

By the mid-twentieth century, cities across the African continent had become potential sites of anti-colonial dissent and native uprising.[37] Belgian authorities, however, saw they could potentially avoid this kind of conflict if they kept native Africans from settling in cities *en masse*. Although the Belgians did establish necessary administrative centers, they thus pursued a range of "anti-urbanization" policies when it came to their African colonies. These policies were largely aimed at controlling rural-to-urban migration and preventing too many rural dwellers from moving to cities. The 1930s saw the introduction of a number of measures designed to control and monitor movements of Africans in the Belgian colonies, including pass laws, censuses, and taxation. Africans had to pay taxes to visit the city, and authorization papers were necessary for any travel. These were all means "to keep 'customary' people in 'customary' space."[38] Although it was not explicitly stated, the initiatives to build indigenous houses with more durable materials could be another means to keep people more firmly rooted in place.

However, as a result of the disconnect between the intended scope of the program and the actual ability of the masses to pay for these houses, the Belgian colonial housing program turned out to be very limited. For example, nearly two years after the first house

[37] Adam Branch and Zachariah Mampilly, *Africa Uprising: Popular Protest and Political Change*, African Arguments (London: Zed Books, 2015).
[38] Nancy Rose Hunt, "Noise over Camouflaged Polygamy, Colonial Morality Taxation, and a Woman-Naming Crisis in Belgian Africa," *The Journal of African History* 32, no. 3 (1991): 483.

was built at Jari, only twenty-one houses for indigenes had been built at Ndorwa I – a settlement with a total of 3,500 households.[39] In general, Belgium prioritized the economic exploitation of its colonies above all other goals, and its interest in investing in construction or infrastructure for any other purpose was limited. In addition, while the Belgians envisioned the indigenous population making financial contributions toward construction costs, most Rwandans were subsistence farmers who did not generate sufficient cash flow to save up for a house. In essence, Rwandan society was not yet monetized enough for the program.

However, even very low-income indigenes began during the colonial period to build their own homes – outside of the program – in a more solid manner, changing from walls made of woven reeds to walls made of timber-framing with smaller horizontal members interwoven into a framework that would be packed with clay. And within the past fifty years, as wood became increasingly scarce, some builders dispensed with the framing altogether and began to build only with adobe blocks dried in the sun.[40] The indigenes also began building of their own accord in a rectangular shape. By the time François and Annie Bart carried out a detailed study in the late 1980s (more than twenty-five years after Rwandan independence), they found that two-thirds of dwellings in Rwanda were rectangular, and 54 percent of dwellings had either a tile or corrugated metal roof. They observed that these newer forms and materials were directly connected with access to money from off-farm endeavors.[41] In other words, the wealthier classes were choosing to build rectangular homes made of non-vegetal materials.

In the end, therefore, while the Belgians never managed to build housing in Rwanda on a large scale, they did help to associate certain kinds of housing (durable, non-organic, rectangular) with higher status – by building them first for civil servants, and then providing them to local authorities and the wealthier classes. But as stated earlier, the desire for more durable materials came from the indigenous residents as well as from the colonizers. In 1948, the Belgian territory administrator of Nyanza noted that some chiefs and indigenes had been conducting their own initiatives. For example, four hundred indigenous houses in the Marangara region had been covered with tile solely at the initiative of the owners.[42]

In 2013, Itohan Osayimwese published an article in which she describes a similar hardening of architecture among the Bamum in Cameroon. She argued that the transition of some examples of royal architecture from raffia palm to mud brick, stone, wood, and iron should not be lamented as a mimicry of European building or a loss of native tradition.

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[39] Labiau, "Rapport Sur Le Fonctionnement de La Cooperative Du Ndorwa I de Byumba."
[40] Robin Kent, "Conservation in Rwanda," *Context*, Institute of Historic Building Conservation, no. 120 (July 2011): 23–25.
[41] François Bart and Annie Bart, "Niveau de Vie et Habitat Rural: Le Cas Des Terres de Lave Du Rwanda," in *Pauvreté et Développement Dans Les Pays Tropicaux*, ed. Singaravelou (Bordeaux: CEGET-CNRS, 1989).
[42] "Construction de Maisons En Materiaux Durables Pour Indigènes. Année 1948."

Rather, it could be seen as an expression of the agency of colonized people to create hybrid forms by taking elements from both their own and foreign cultures and combining them into something new.[43] Similarly, the people of Rwanda exhibited a non-monolithic variety of reactions to colonial programs, ranging from accepting and making choices that actively influenced the programs to rejecting them altogether. In the end, the indigenous people themselves should thus also be recognized as agents in the shift of Rwandan houses from round and organic to rectangular and more durable.

IMIDUGUDU AND A RETURN TO IMPERMANENCE

The colonial housing initiatives were just one of the ways in which the Belgians showed preferential treatment to the Tutsis, sowing discontent among the Hutu majority (around 85 % of the population[44]). However, toward the end of the colonial period, the Belgians feared that the trained and educated Tutsis were becoming increasingly anti-colonial, and they abruptly removed the Tutsis and granted positions within the colonial administration to the Hutus. After Rwanda gained independence in 1962, ethnic tensions – based largely on Hutu fears of losing their recent gains in power – periodically erupted in episodes of persecution and violence against the Tutsi.[45] Due to underdevelopment, both unemployment and overcrowding also came to plague the country's urban centers. But there was also hardship in the rural areas, where population growth and the subdivision of land from one generation to the next had reduced the amount of land available to individual families over time.[46] The dual pressures of growing poverty and increasing land scarcity eventually helped set the stage for catastrophe. In 1994, the Hutu-led government called for the genocide of an estimated 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus. The slaughter was only ended by the invasion and victory of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), largely made up of Tutsi exiles who had been living in Uganda.[47]

When the RPF emerged victorious in 1994, hundreds of thousands of Tutsi refugees and exiles returned to Rwanda. But about two million Hutus had by then fled the country, fearing prosecution or retaliation. There was thus initially no need for additional housing, as the returnees could occupy the homes of those who had been killed or had fled. However, in 1995 and 1996 about 1.3 million additional refugees, who had been displaced to Congo

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[43] Itohan Osayimwese, "Architecture and the Myth of Authenticity During the German Colonial Period," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 24, no. 2 (Spring 2013).
[44] Twagilimana, *Historical Dictionary of Rwanda*.
[45] Twagilimana.
[46] Robert E. Ford, "Rural Settlement Structure and Landscape Ecology in Humid Tropical Rwanda," in *Rural Settlement Structure and African Development*, ed. Marilyn Silberstein (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1998).
[47] Twagilimana, *Historical Dictionary of Rwanda*.

and Tanzania by the violence, flooded back into Rwanda.[48] By two years after the genocide, there was an urgent new need to create housing in large quantities.

Across the country, there were thousands of damaged homes that could have been repaired and occupied by the returnees.[49] But rather than allocate funds toward the rehabilitation of these homes, the new Rwandan state decided to push forward with a program that would place people in new homes within planned villages. Rwanda's National Habitat Policy of 1996 thus outlined a strategy to regroup the rural population into *imidugudu,* or planned villages of between one hundred and two hundred houses, where people would be clustered together in new dwellings with more efficient access to services, infrastructure, etc. The policy claimed that the establishment of *imidugudu* would make agricultural production easier, protect the natural environment, foster more non-agricultural employment, and make transportation networks more efficient.[50] In truth, it was also an attempt to reorganize settlement patterns, prevent further conflict triggered by land scarcity, and ensure that the returning refugees would not flood into Kigali and stress the already stretched ability of the city to absorb new residents. In this way, the *imidugudu* program could be seen as a continuation of the anti-urbanization mindset of the colonial period.

In addition to these concerns, the *imidugudu* program reflected deeper layers of socio-political ambition. For example, the National Habitat Policy claimed that it would counter the tendency of dispersed settlement patterns to "*rend difficile la sensibilisation de la population* [make it difficult to sensitize the population]", meaning to convince them of the merits of government policy.[51] Thus, the state openly admitted that one reason for resettling the population was to obtain better control over it. This control would be gained by physically arranging bodies into dwelling patterns where they could be more easily surveilled and propagandized.

Michel Foucault argued that state surveillance will eventually condition the population to manifest what he called "biopower," a condition in which individuals gradually acquiesce to imposed regulations and enact self-discipline in order to fit within a normalized power structure.[52] And such an approach to the reconditioning of social norms might indeed be particularly relevant in a nation in need of rebuilding itself after the extreme deterioration in social relations during the genocide. According to the National Human Resettlement Policy of 2004 (republished in 2009), the resettlement of rural people into *imidugudu* not only intended to provide "adequate housing" and "access to social and economic services," but to create "an environment of social integration for different strata of the Rwandan society."[53]

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[48] Human Rights Watch, "Uprooting the Rural Poor in Rwanda" (New York, 2001), 9–11.
[49] Human Rights Watch, 12.
[50] "Politique Nationale de l'Habitat" (Ministère de Travaux Publics, Rwanda, 1996).
[51] "Politique Nationale de l'Habitat," 20.
[52] Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France 1977--1978*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2009).
[53] Ministry of Infrastructure, "Updated Version of the National Human Settlement Policy."

Reading between the lines (as ethnicities are not mentioned explicitly in this section, nor anywhere in most contemporary state documents), the *imidugudu* might also encourage the Hutu and Tutsi to live together in mixed communities, promoting the reintegration of society.

Recognizing that international assistance for their program would be more readily given if it was seen as serving homeless survivors or former refugees, the Rwandan state also began to couch its language about the *imidugudu* in terms of a "housing crisis," rather than what it really was — a long-term land use and economic plan.[54] One irony of portraying the *imidugudu* as a housing solution was that there were, by estimate of the Ministry of Planning, around 84,000 damaged homes already available around the country; these homes could have been repaired more quickly and at one third or less of the cost of building new homes. However, these homes were located outside of the *imidugudu*, and local officials actually put a stop to repair programs once the habitat policy made it clear that people should only be moving into *imidugudu* sites.[55] In 1997 the minister of public works even went so far as to issue an order forbidding anyone from building a house outside an *imidugudu*.[56]

By the end of 1998 the authorities began to coerce not only homeless returnees and survivors but all Rwandans in rural areas — including those who had never left their existing homes — to move into the *imidugudu*. However, the rate at which proper homes needed to be built in the *imidugudu* far exceeded the capacity of the various aid agencies, and this led to a marked decline in housing quality. Thus the first residents to move into the *imidugudu*, mostly Tutsi survivors or returnees, were provided with move-in ready homes or decent construction materials, but those who came later — many of whom had been obliged to leave solid existing houses — received far less. A Human Rights Watch (HRW) report from 2001 detailed the trajectory of the villagization plan in the first few years after the genocide:

> *Local authorities permitted ever shoddier houses to be built. As the resouces [sic] which had paid salaried workers were exhausted, the new residents - many of them Hutu - received no help and were told to build their own houses. Many lacked the time and resources to build solid, mud-brick homes and they settled instead for wood-and-mud daub structures. The weakest and poorest of the new residents could manage to build only fragile shelters of wood, leaves, and pieces of plastic. Rwandans call such a make-shift shelter a* blindé*, from the French word meaning tank or armored personnel carrier. The term, which ironically contrasts the fragility of the shelter to the solidity of a military vehicle, apparently refers to the shape of the shelter - something like a small hangar - or to the blue plastic sheeting sometimes used to cover it. Some Rwandans first saw the sheeting used to cover military tanks of U.N. peacekeeping troops which arrived in Rwanda in 1994. Some residents of imidugudu have inhabited* blindés *for two years or more.*[57]

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[54] Human Rights Watch, "Uprooting the Rural Poor in Rwanda," 16.
[55] Human Rights Watch, 19–20.
[56] Ministère de Travaux Publics, "Instruction Provisoire No. MINITRAPE 1/97 Sur l'Habitat" (1997).
[57] Human Rights Watch, "Uprooting the Rural Poor in Rwanda," 22.

Life in a *blindé* was wet when it rained, often cold, and cramped. For refugees, these conditions were usually at least no worse than what they had endured in the camps. But for people who had left a good, solid home, it must have seemed completely illogical. According to data gathered by the United Nations Development Program and the Rwandan government, more than half a million people were still living in *blindé* shelters or unfinished houses five years after the genocide (Figure 4.12).[58]

FIGURE 4.12. This simple shelter is covered by a plastic roof, like many unfinished houses that rural Rwandans occupied when they were displaced into the planned settlements called *imidugudu*.

Various forms of coercion were also necessary to "convince" people to move. One was the destruction of existing homes, and this was sometimes carried out by the police under the orders of local officials. However, in some areas, homeowners were forced to *destroy their own homes* before they moved to *imidugudu,* where they used the remnants of their former home, augmented by pieces of plastic, sticks, and even grass, for a makeshift *blindé.*[59] It is ironic that after decades of colonial programs to get people out of thatched dwellings, they were once again using grass. As one interviewee told HRW:

> *Those with houses in durable materials [baked or adobe bricks], we had to destroy them by force. … Imagine destroying a home made of brick with a metal roof, then looking for grass to build a new*

[58] Human Rights Watch, 2.
[59] Human Rights Watch, 51–58.

> *one! I can't even call my house a hut, not even a* blindé*, because* blindés *have plastic sheeting for roofs. I had a nice house made of stone, with glass windows. But I have destroyed that house. That is the way it is. We have to obey government orders.*[60]

People tried to salvage what they could from their homes, particularly if they had a metal roof that could keep out the rain.[61] Indeed, the more they could take from their old houses, the better off they would be in the *imidugudu*. Unfortunately, metal roofing was hard to salvage because the nail holes were difficult to repair and they allowed water leaks.[62]

One might expect that such a degree of imposed change would have been met with more resistance from the local population; however, the state sometimes utilized fear as a psychological tool for persuasion. In particular, the authorities were known to exploit fear of attack by the Interahamwe, the Hutu militia that had carried out many of the genocide massacres, to persuade reluctant residents to relocate to the *imidugudu*.[63] Memories of the past were thus employed to enforce the policy of the present, in order to reshape society in the future image envisioned by the state. It was a clear example of the state using acts of creative destruction to clear the way for a new organization of society. Literal destruction, in the form of demolition or forced abandonment of homes, was thus inflicted to support the creation of the new planned villages. It was a Faustian kind of creative destruction, in which great authority is used to control the masses in the service of lofty ambitions. And unlike the colonial housing programs, the *imidugudu* policy profoundly altered the rural landscape of Rwanda, as almost 20 percent of the population live in *imidugudu*.[64] In some districts, the proportion of people in *imidugudu* is as high as 90 percent.[65] Around the country there are now numerous clusters of tiny houses, all similar in size, shape, and materials (Figures 4.13 and 4.14).[66]

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[60] Human Rights Watch, 56.
[61] Human Rights Watch, 51.
[62] Human Rights Watch, 53.
[63] Human Rights Watch, 38.
[64] Ministry of Infrastructure, "Updated Version of the National Human Settlement Policy."
[65] Human Rights Watch, "Uprooting the Rural Poor in Rwanda," 24.
[66] Direct observation by the author in fieldwork in Rwanda, 2016-2017.

FIGURE 4.13. A relatively good quality house in one of the post-genocide government-planned villages.

FIGURE 4.14. One of the post-genocide government-planned villages, showing similarity of the houses.

The state has since recognized that many of the homes built in the *imidugudu* were inadequate. The National Human Settlement Policy, issued in 2009, thus referred several

times to the "flimsy structures" occupied by the poorest families.[67] It acknowledged that the most vulnerable families live under "plastic sheetings" or "in makeshift shelters commonly called '*blindées*'."[68] And it went on to specify the problems: "The materials and the techniques used, the quality of finishing, the surface area of the houses reflect their poor quality."[69] The policy blamed a number of factors for the deficiencies, including lack of funding (particularly a drop-off in funds from foreign donors and NGOs), limited human resources, and insufficient building materials. Yet, rather than alter the program, the policy recommended a recommitment to it through such means as strengthening existing administrative structures, studying locally produced building materials, and raising "awareness" among both the general population and the authorities as to the importance of the program.[70]

THE BYE BYE NYAKATSI PROGRAM

While the *imidugudu* program had a far-reaching effect, significant numbers of people still resided in traditional-style dwellings in 2009 when influential members of the Rwandan diaspora visited a rural village and saw the kind of thatched-roof huts they had either left behind long ago or never lived in themselves.[71] Members of the diaspora periodically travel back to Rwanda to find out how they can assist in the sectors of health, education, and culture. In 2009, the diaspora members were in Rwanda for the 4th Diaspora Global Convention (December 13-15, 2009), which was hosted by the Diaspora General Directorate, a division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. They visited the southeastern province of Bugesera and observed people living there in *nyakatsi*, or thatched houses. In a short video documentary, Dr. Ismail Buchanon, then executive director of the Rwanda Diaspora Global Network (RDGN), explained:

> *We could tell from the first sight that they were not happy with their lives. So as the Rwandan Diaspora, we asked ourselves the question, 'What can we do to help our fellow countrymen living in such hard conditions?' Not conditions that they created but those caused by our past.... So we thought about this project called 'Bye Bye Nyakatsi' so we can get rid of those houses made from leaves. We also did this so we can fall in line with the Government's policy and vision because, as you know, our government aims at getting rid of leave* [sic] *houses by 2010.*[72]

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[67] Ministry of Infrastructure, "Updated Version of the National Human Settlement Policy," 13.
[68] Ministry of Infrastructure, 30.
[69] Ministry of Infrastructure, 30.
[70] Ministry of Infrastructure, 26–34.
[71] Created by multiple waves of large-scale exodus over decades of persecution, the Rwanda diaspora is an important and sizable group with ongoing influence in national affairs.
[72] Rwanda Diaspora Global Network, *Bye Bye Nyakatsi*, Documentary film (Kigali: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Republic of Rwanda, 2011).

Shortly afterwards, the RDGN, in partnership with the government and the Bralirwa beverage company, initiated the "Bye Bye Nyakatsi" campaign.[73] Robert Masozera, the general director of RDGN, stated that the Rwandan diaspora "saw at firsthand how those houses are similar to bird nests."[74] In fact, a common tagline for the campaign was "Nests are for birds, not people." Masozera explained how a small *nyakatsi* would shelter a family of five or six and their domestic animals without proper sanitation or access to clean water, and he asserted that as a result of the campaign to replace these houses with better houses, "certainly, this will be a modern community".[75] This kind of statement demonstrates the deliberate construction of an opposition between the traditional (thatch) and the modern (corrugated metal).

Another agent may thus be added to the list of those who have shaped housing in Rwanda: the diaspora. This time, the agent is both external *and* internal. Because many diaspora members have been exposed to houses in other parts of the world, they have often adopted a more globalized or Western concept of house form and materials. At the same time, they identify as Rwandan (see "our fellow countrymen" in the above quote), and thus they have a sense of pride in claiming Rwanda as "modern."

Both the RDGN and the Rwandan state now promote the Bye Bye Nyakatsi campaign as an initiative to provide people with more "modern" houses. The Rwandan government cites a number of valid health and safety concerns — such as mildew and the potential hazard of fire — as justifications for the campaign to eradicate traditional thatched roofing.[76] And it is indeed true that metal is more durable and easier to put up than thatch. But the new metal roofs are not without their own set of problems. To begin, they are not thermally insulated, and although Rwanda has a relatively mild climate, there can be plenty of warm days (especially in the flatter east) and cool nights (especially in the mountainous west) when the temperatures inside the home would have been better moderated by the thick thatch roof. In addition, the sound of rain on a metal roof can be deafening in the rainy season. However, the campaign is as much about the aspiration for the country to have a particular *image* as it is about the actual materials or dwelling conditions. Metal is mass manufactured, and thus a symbol of industrialism. It is shiny (at first), and thus a symbol of newness. Metal is also the one major element of many rural vernacular houses that cannot be made by hand. Moreover, metal certainly does not look like a bird's nest.

However, the program is not without controversy. It was implemented jointly by the Ministry of Local Government, the Rwanda Defence Forces (RDF) and the Rwanda

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[73] "Involvement," Rwanda Diaspora Global Network, January 22, 2017, http://www.rwandaglobaldiaspora.org/categories/.
[74] Rwanda Diaspora Global Network, *Bye Bye Nyakatsi*.
[75] Rwanda Diaspora Global Network.
[76] Barrie Terreblanche, "Sunshine and Shadow in Rwanda's Rural Housing Programme," Inter Press Service News Agency, April 27, 2011, http://www.ipsnews.net/2011/04/sunshine-and-shadow-in-rwandas-rural-housing-programme/.

National Police (RNP).[77] The inclusion of military and police forces suggests that, once again, the transition out of traditional homes is not always peaceful or voluntary. Indeed, in 2011 the governor of the Southern province, Fidel Ndayisaba, spoke of demolition as an effective means to propel the Bye Bye Nyakatsi program forward. Addressing a press conference, Ndayisaba said that people may ignore or refuse a directive when they are not pushed to comply with it. He suggested that people were still living in thatched houses not because of a lack of means, but because they did not value living in a habitation better suited to human needs. According to Ndayisaba:

> *People were seemingly happy to stay in their thatched houses and showed no commitment to leave them. But when such houses are demolished, people who have means are encouraged to look for appropriate accommodation in a short period of time while those who have no means are identified and get help. It is really a good strategy of accelerating the anti-Nyakatsi drive because when people are temporary accommodated by their neighbours or paying for rent, they quickly build their own houses.*[78]

The 2010 Terms of Reference for the Bye Bye Nyakatsi program include such objectives as "improve community policing and Civil Military Cooperation," and "support all the people living in 'Nyakatsi' to settle in identified sites of Imidugudu."[79] Thus it becomes clear how the *nyakatsi* eradication program was in fact explicitly tied to the *imidugudu* resettlement program. But whereas the *imidugudu* houses had often been inadequate, the government was now at least promising to provide a metal roof for each dwelling. Echoing the colonial agenda for durable materials to fix subjects to the land, however, the Bye Bye Nyakatsi program has also created more robust dwellings that entrench people in a particular site. But this time, it is according to new, state-planned settlement patterns.

Since the Bye-Bye Nyakatsi initiative was launched in 2010, thatched roofing has been nearly eradicated from the landscape. Most people still live in houses made of mud block or wattle-and-daub, but now they have corrugated metal roofs instead of thatch.[80] The gleam of shiny metal roofs against the green hillsides of Rwanda is a striking sight in the bright equatorial sunlight. The Bye-Bye Nyakatsi campaign has thus created an important visual signifier of Rwanda's pursuit of modernity, one which makes Rwanda visibly distinct from its neighbor.

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[77] James Musoni, "Terms of Reference for Joint Task Force Shelter Scheme on Eradication of 'Nyakatsi'" (Ministry of Local Government, Republic of Rwanda, 2010), http://www.minaloc.gov.rw/fileadmin/documents/Minaloc_Documents/ToRs%20Nyakatsi%20eradication%20signed%20dec%202010.pdf.

[78] Jean Pierre Bucyensenge, "Southern Province Intensifies Nyakatsi Eradication," *The New Times*, January 24, 2011, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/27852.

[79] Musoni, "Terms of Reference for Joint Task Force Shelter Scheme on Eradication of 'Nyakatsi.'"

[80] Those who can afford it have houses made of locally baked brick with rounded clay tile, but corrugated metal is the only material provided by the government.

REDEFINING THE "MODERN"

As recounted in the preceding sections of this chapter, the notion of modernity in Rwandan dwelling has come to be associated with durable materials and orthogonal forms. But is important to recognize that these changes were not entirely top-down, nor external to internal. "Modernity" in Rwandan dwelling has been defined by multiple agents. In colonized settings like Rwanda, the "modern" was initially defined by colonizers in order to differentiate and inferiorize the "traditional" and legitimate the control of a ruling power. But increasing connectivity, accessibility, and the monetization of Rwandan society have also exposed the masses to an increased variety of options. Notions of the "modern" have thus also been shaped by choice on the part of the indigenous population of Rwanda. The Rwandan diaspora, a population that can be classified as both external and internal, has also helped to define the modern based on its experience with other cultures. All these agents have played a decisive role in the story of how houses in Rwanda have changed over time in both material and form. This disproves any oversimplified association of "tradition" with Rwandan and "modern" with Western.

However, as seen in the *imidugudu* and Bye-Bye Nyakatsi programs, architectural modernization also helped fulfill the goal of centralized governmental control over a population, which is itself a form of modernity. The rhetoric of "material upgrading" allowed the state to regroup people on the land and mold settlements in their vision. There is also a performative element that contributes to state legitimization. In his chapter about Geothe's fictional character Faust in the seminal book *All That Solid Melts Into Air,* Marshall Berman identified a key feature of Faustian development in underdeveloped countries: it often involves gratuitous destruction to make the symbolic point that society cannot turn back.[81] In the case of Rwanda it may not be gratuitous, but in some ways the largest impact of the Bye-Bye Nyakatsi campaign may indeed be its visual and *symbolic* declaration of modernity. This visual evidence of progress – presented in the form of media photographs, foreign donor reports, and village tours for visitors – serves to legitimize state control over the population by showing that Rwanda is moving on from its difficult past and marching forward to the future. Thus, the Bye Bye Nyakatsi campaign exhibits an intentional perpetuation of the tradition/modernity binary in order to demonstrate progress.

As I have shown, changes to vernacular dwellings were often embraced and even initiated by those with less power because it would improve their quality of life, but when coupled with other centralized, top-down initiatives like urban master planning, the results have been largely detrimental to the low-income population in the long term. Residents of informal settlements do not have legal claim to the land upon which they reside, and their presence is threatened by master planning initiatives. Under the guidance of the Kigali City Master Plan, informal settlements in the capital are at perpetual risk of demolition. Houses

[81] Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982).

that are slated to be demolished are marked with a red X, and entire neighborhoods can disappear in very little time (Figure 4.15).[82] The poor never entirely go away but they are moved around, and out of sight. Thus, precariousness is a part of life for many urban Rwandans. But while traditional ways of building allowed for more flexibility, now it is more difficult each time to pick up, move, and build again. As vernacular dwellings became more solid, they also embodied higher degrees of energy and cost. This is the irony embedded in the solidification of dwellings. There is a disconnect between the kinds of durable homes people have become conditioned to desire, and the reality that so many people lack solid claims to a plot.

FIGURE 4.15. Demolition of an informal neighborhood in Kigali, Rwanda.

TRANSFORMING THE "TRADITIONAL"

Another irony is that thatched roofing in fact remains common in Rwanda today — but not on houses, unless they are traditional dwellings recreated in museums. Although the Bye Bye Nyakatsi campaign has basically eradicated thatch from vernacular dwellings, one can still find thatched roofs at many different places around the country. They exist inside of museums such as the Ethnographic Museum (Figure 4.16).

[82] Direct observation by the author in fieldwork in Rwanda, 2016-2017.

FIGURE 4.16. The re-creation of a traditional thatched hut inside the Ethnographic Museum of Rwanda.

Thatched roofs also exist on the gazebos and poolside huts at restaurants and hotels such as the Milles Collines (also known as the hotel from the 2004 film *Hotel Rwanda*), and on the cabins and communal buildings of lakeside resorts such as Rwiza Village on Lake Kivu (Figure 4.17). In such places, the use of thatch may appeal to foreign tourists who want to experience something "traditional" and "African." In essence, thatch has become touristic scenography in spaces of foreign leisure, representing the "authentic" Rwandan environment – precisely to moderate the universality of a modernist hotel environment. Thus the "traditional" increasingly becomes a construct based on contemporary economic interests which cater, frequently, to the expectations of foreign audiences.

FIGURE 4.17. Resort on the shores of Lake Kivu where visitors can stay in cabanas with thatched roofs.

The commercialization of tradition is not unique to Rwanda; in order to attract tourism dollars and retail business, postcolonial societies around the world manufacture heritage and market tradition.[83] It is often assumed that as tradition commercializes, it becomes less authentic. And indeed, it is true that this new version of the "traditional" thatched roof may be more artificial in some ways. It is used on building types and shapes that never existed in precolonial Rwanda. It is a more of a visual callback to a past era than a representation of present-day culture. It does not reflect contemporary daily life or the current availability of materials and skills, nor does it embody specific cultural meaning (like the four rings in the ceiling of a traditional hut which symbolized a particular cosmological positioning). In these touristic spaces, thatch is primarily used to appeal to outsiders' desire for a cultural experience different from their own. As Dell Upton has argued, we might perceive these changes to be negative, because in the context of our anxieties about the inauthenticity of modern life, it is comforting to believe that tradition is "evidence of the continuity of identity through time."[84] Conversely, it is disturbing to accept that "tradition

[83] Nezar AlSayyad, ed., *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism* (New York: Routledge, 2001).
[84] Dell Upton, "'Authentic' Anxieties," in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, ed. Nezar Alsayyad (New York: Routledge, 2001), 300.

can also be catalogued, packaged, imagined, and sold."[85] We often perceive the manipulation of tradition for economic gain as fake, callous, and materialistic.

But tradition is never static to begin with. For decades, scholars have argued that traditional environments transform over time through multiple points of contact and migration.[86] Furthermore, adaptation for commercial purposes can be the very thing that sustains tradition, and keeps certain crafts and skills alive. In 2016, Abraham Konga, a Rwandan jewelry designer who is well known for making minimalist jewelry from recycled brass padlocks, told me that his career choice was unusual because most Rwandans today do not think of craft as a sustainable and income-generating practice. He said that craft is considered to be an option for people who have not gone to school to get a well-paying, white-collar job. This devaluation of craft skills is striking in a country where intricate weaving was once considered an artform, but it is largely the legacy of European colonialism, which emphasized the value of bureaucracy and white-collar administration jobs. It is also the impact of the state's focus on STEM training as a means for the country to achieve middle-income status. In this context, weaving continues to exist as a craft in Rwanda mostly because of its commercial value. In other words, commercialization has facilitated preservation. In addition, commercialization of craft can provide livelihood, increase standard of living, and often lead to increased gender equality.

The evolution of traditional craft in Rwanda is particularly well-illustrated by Rwandan baskets. Traditional woven baskets are on display in the Ethnographic Museum (Figure 4.18). Rwandans used baskets to store food, oils, tobacco, and herbs as well as personal possessions such as jewelry, cloth, and money.[87] They served as vessels for carrying possessions while traveling, as surfaces on which to dry crops, and as plates on which to serve food. They were also used in rituals and ceremonies or presented as gifts at weddings and other occasions.[88]

Today, the most widely produced baskets in Rwanda are marketed to foreigners at craft markets or small shops in Rwanda, or on the internet. Rwandan women still make these baskets using traditional techniques, but some of the physical details and visual aesthetics have evolved. While the baskets are still made out of natural fibers, the bright dyes used today are often artificial, and certain colors and patterns are selected in order to be more eye-catching at the market. These baskets are targeted toward foreign consumption for collecting and display, rather than domestic use and exchange (Figure 4.19).

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[85] Nezar AlSayyad, *The End of Tradition?* (London, New York: Routledge, 2004), 11.
[86] Janet Abu-Lughod, "One's Future from One's Past," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 7, no. 1 (1995); Dell Upton, "The Tradition of Change," *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 5, no. 1 (1993).
[87] Andrew I Kazibwe, "Traditional Basket 'Agaseke' Weathers Modern Cultural Storm," *The East African*, March 20, 2015, http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/rwanda/Lifestyle/Traditional-basket--Agaseke--weathers-modern-cultural-storm/1433242-2660456-vwjyo2/index.html.
[88] Julius O. Adekunle, *Culture and Customs of Rwanda* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood, 2007).

FIGURE 4.18. Traditional Rwandan baskets on display in the Ethnographic Museum.

FIGURE 4.19. A display of "peace baskets" from Rwanda for sale on a website.

These changes respond to specific demands of the foreign market. Rwandan baskets were first sold on a large scale in the United States when the magazine *Marie Claire* published a story in 2003 about the weaving group Avega (*Association des Veuves du Génocide d'Avril*), a group of women who survived the genocide and needed a way to support the many orphans they took in. Through orders placed with the magazine, *Marie Claire* sold 1,200 "peace baskets" to U.S. customers. Willa Shalit, the photographer for the article, was struck by the Rwandan women's stories and saw a chance to expand Avega's business by putting them in touch with the CEO of Macy's parent company, Terry J. Lundgren. Lundgren was initially planning to offer a charitable donation, and was surprised when he was instead asked about a business relationship. Once he saw the baskets, however, Macy's ordered 30,000 of them.[89]

With the backing of a huge corporation and a relatively affluent U.S. customer base, sales grew exponentially, into the millions (USD). But the expectations of these new Western customers began to change the baskets themselves. Shalit created a company called Fair Winds Trading to produce the baskets and sent its president, Dean Ericson, to Rwanda to oversee quality control. When a customer commented on macys.com that "the basket is beautifully woven, but very thin and almost flimsy," Ericson wondered how it could be redesigned as a sturdier product. A Rwandan weaver named Agnes Nirere demonstrated a different technique using banana bark and papyrus, and Ericson decided that all of the women should adopt this method. All of the Macy's baskets sold after that point were made according to the new design.[90]

In time, weavers targeting foreign markets also began to use brightly colored synthetic fibers in their baskets. The colors attract more attention in crowded marketplaces, and expand the variety of available color palettes. In addition, weavers have diversified their range of products to appeal to foreign tourists and expats, weaving items such as placemats,

[89] Lesley Jane Seymour, "Rwandans Weave Baskets of Hope," *New York Times*, October 11, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/10/11/garden/11rwanda.html.
[90] Seymour.

earrings, necklaces, bags, and other home decor or accessories.[91] Within Rwanda, these products are sold at craft markets, Christmas fairs, and gift shops aimed at foreigners. (At the local markets, Rwandan people much more frequently buy and sell plastic bins and buckets that are easier to clean and to replace, rather than woven baskets.) These products have also been sold at a range of sites in the U.S., including Macy's, the National Museum of African Art in Washington D.C., and the Green Mountain Coffee Roasters website. They have also appeared in the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C. — again, tying Rwanda into a larger global network of post-genocide culture.[92]

The genocide is, in fact, a key factor in the marketability of the baskets. It is not just about the handicraft, the eye-catching colors, or the variety of product types. Lundgren has suggested that it is the baskets' connection with events in Rwanda, and these women's lives, that really makes them sell to a Western audience: "The key is, there has to be an amazing story."[93] Macy's promotes the baskets by publicizing their connection to the tragedy of the genocide. Similarly, the nonprofit cooperatives that organize women into weaving groups often have testimony pages where the women tell stories of hardship and tragedy, and how the sale of baskets improves their lives.[94] The baskets are cited as a tool for forgiveness and reconciliation, in news stories with titles such as "Woman opens heart to man who slaughtered her family."[95] This kind of testimonial is increasingly common in the sale of fair trade and "do-good" consumer products. In the case of Rwanda's peace baskets, you are made to feel that your purchase not only lifts women and their families out of the deepest poverty, but also helps knit back together a devastated society.

As Rwanda has increasingly opened up to foreign connection, the baskets today must be understood as more than just objects of a particular material culture. They also serve an important role within the nation's global political and economic positioning in the world. In the two decades since its devastating genocide, Rwanda's developmental success can be attributed largely to foreign investment and aid. The baskets – and the female collectives that produce them – provide the means to make a living, but they also serve as part of a larger narrative of reconciliation and progressiveness that is crucial to attracting this foreign capital. The baskets are valued by foreign consumers because they are perceived to be authentically "traditional" Rwandan artifacts. However, their physical and material attributes have changed over time, and their role in Rwandan society, as well as the global market, has evolved profoundly. It is likely due to *both* their traditional character as well as their important role in

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[91] Peninnah Gathoni, "The Agaseke, Rwanda's Exclusive Brand," *The New Times Rwanda*, March 30, 2009, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/7864.
[92] Rosalind McLymont, "The Women of Gitarama; Landing at Macy's against the Odds," *Network Journal; New York* 13, no. 3 (December 2005): 42.
[93] Seymour, "Rwandans Weave Baskets of Hope."
[94] "Meet Our Master Weavers: Weaving Lasting Empowerment," Gahaya Links, accessed September 19, 2018, http://gahayalinks.com/master-weavers/.
[95] Christiane Amanpour, "Woman Opens Heart to Man Who Slaughtered Her Family," *CNN*, May 15, 2008, http://www.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/05/15/amanpour.rwanda/.

the economy today that baskets have become a symbol of Rwanda, featured on the currency, in advertisements, and on the national seal (Figure 4.20). The baskets represent a collapsing of the tradition/modernity binary in two senses: (1) that traditional culture is used to support modernization; (2) that tradition itself evolves or modernizes.

FIGURE 4.20. The national seal of Rwanda established in 2001 shows a traditional *agaseke* basket.

To connect back to the evolution of Rwandan houses, there is a direct link between the sale of these material goods and the material conditions of dwelling. As one of the Master Weavers at Gahaya Links, Mukamuhoza Mamerita, testified,

> *When we opened a savings account for the cooperative, Gahaya Links educated us on how to start savings circles. In these circles, we started to build a house for the women in the poorest living conditions. Today, we have completed 25 iron sheet roofed houses [sic] and we are still going strong. Our goal is that every weaver in our group will live in a decent home where she feels proud to live where our children can play and live a normal life which we didn't have while growing up.*[96]

The sale of baskets directly correlates to the improvement of material conditions of dwelling, and in particular, the use of a metal roof. It may seem ironic that one kind of weaving is still practiced so that another can be replaced. Perhaps it seems like a contradiction that basket-weaving is encouraged because it creates "traditional" products for the global market, while roof-weaving is forbidden because it is not a "modern" material for

[96] "Meet Our Master Weavers: Weaving Lasting Empowerment."

houses. But if the traditional baskets and the modern houses actually co-evolve, then is the traditional/modern binary not a false dichotomy?[97]

This chapter has come full circle, having started and ended with the notion of weaving. Although it continues to be an important practice in Rwanda, the role of weaving in the Rwandan culture and economy has greatly changed. In the past, dwellings and baskets were expressions of similar making at different scales. Today, woven material has been outlawed from house construction, but it is preserved in museums and tourist spaces, and also used to produce commodities for the global market. The nature of these spaces and objects continues to evolve in response to market demand, such that weaving is today both a traditional and a modern practice. The very notions of tradition and modernity also co-evolve, each shaping the other. The tradition/modern binary was initially constructed by Europeans to justify their domination of "Other" societies; Rwanda shows that developing countries can deploy this binary when it helps to demonstrate their own progress, but they can also collapse it when tradition is useful for modern practices.

[97] Another weaver on the Gahaya Links website, Mukakamanzi Theresa, tells a story that shows how the basket cooperatives have also begun to shift gender roles. At the age of 19, she was forced to get married and stay at home caring for children while her husband went off to work in the capital city and barely made enough to support the family. After joining Gayaha Links and working her way up to become a Master Weaver and trainer, she had enough income to buy clothes, livestock, and the family's first mattress. Her husband then moved back home and she bought him a bicycle which he uses to pick up her raw materials. This is a clear example of the evolution of traditional social norms. Women who were traditionally caretakers of the home and children are now also becoming breadwinners. (In many cases, this is an economic necessity due to the number of women who were left widowed after the genocide.) Basket production is changing Rwandan society.

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CHAPTER 5: INTERFACE

Cultivating Image and Identity on the Global Stage

Anyone who primarily remembers Rwanda from media reports about the genocide in 1994 might be surprised at what they see when visiting the country today. Arrival at the Kigali airport is the first harbinger of what is to come. The airport is spacious, brightly lit, and spotlessly clean. Wayfinding is clear, and free wireless internet is available. If you are seen carrying any plastic bags (which are illegal in the country), you may be asked to purchase a non-plastic bag in order to help keep litter off the streets. Upon exiting the airport, you will find a licensed taxi waiting to drive you along smoothly paved streets with painted curbs and well-manicured medians. The roundabouts are ornamented with flower beds and decorative fountains. You may pass by the new Kigali Convention Centre, a shining dome which has quickly become a symbol of modernity and a visual metonym for Rwanda. But underlying these clean streets and new architecture is a complex story of image control which shapes two different interfaces[1]: the one between the Rwandan nation and the world, and the one between the Rwandan state and the domestic population.

As a tiny landlocked nation in the heart of sub-Saharan Africa, Rwanda is both physically and virtually remote. Its hilly topography and high elevation (averaging a mile above sea level) make travel difficult and create a degree of isolation from neighboring lands. For most of the twentieth-century, Rwanda remained one of the least connected nations in Africa.[2] However, the post-genocide Rwandan state has placed heavy emphasis on Rwanda's transition to a service- and information-based economy, in an attempt to become a major hub of East Africa, both physically (tourism) and virtually (internet provision). To that end, the state has implemented major construction projects such as the Bugesera International Airport and the Kigali Convention Centre with the goal of putting Rwanda "on the map" as an important destination for the continent. They have also invested heavily in internet infrastructure in the hope of becoming an ICT powerhouse like Singapore.[3] Even while domestic infrastructure including roads and electricity are in poor condition, the state seeks to connect Rwanda to the rest of the world, both physically and virtually.

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[1] An interface is a point or surface where two systems or subjects meet and interact; it can also be defined as a boundary where information is exchanged.

[2] Like other landlocked countries, Rwanda faces higher costs and longer delays for the transport of goods, which impedes the expansion of trade. Rail linkages to other countries have been planned, but have never materialized. A lack of coastline precludes direct access to undersea cables, making Rwanda dependent until recently on satellites for long-distance communication.

[3] Warigia Bowman, "Imagining a Modern Rwanda: Sociotechnological Imaginaries, Information Technology, and the Postgenocide State," in *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power*, ed. Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015).

Today, the interface between Rwanda and the rest of the world exists in multiple realms including conference and tourist spaces, digital media, and virtual finance and trade flows. These interfaces – both physical and digital – are important because they influence the perceptions that outsiders have about Rwanda. The state seeks to replace negative associations with the genocide and build a new sociotechnical imaginary for Rwanda which legitimizes the state's power, boosts international status, and raises national morale. Like any developing country seeking a better position on the global playing field, Rwanda must convince the outside world that it is worthy of their capital investment and their tourism. But for Rwanda, the task of self-promotion is particularly herculean because the genocide is still so prevalent in global public memory. The Rwandan state must overcome these negative associations in order to be taken seriously as a continental powerhouse. They must replace the images of genocide with images of peace, progress, and stability. Above all, they must counter stereotypes of "tribal conflict" and underdevelopment commonly associated with Africa by putting forth new expressions of modernity. This is why the state has focused so heavily on the mediation of Rwanda's interface with the rest of the world.

Under the guidance of the state, architects, planners, and developers in Rwanda have prioritized the production of shareable images of modernity, as well as the construction of mediated spaces for encounter. This chapter will argue that, due to this focus on the *staging of modernity* (i.e. generating visible evidence of linear progress and development), the state has shaped the built environment in ways that might be considered superficial. With respect to urban policy, aesthetics of cleanliness and order have been prioritized over real improvement of living conditions. Selective beautification has been especially targeted at those areas which will be seen by visitors and important persons. However, while urban beautification may seem to focus primarily on the interface between the city and its foreign visitors, it also reveals the nature of the interface between the powerful elite and the domestic masses in Rwanda. National and local authorities have used the rhetoric of beautification, organization, and cleanliness to justify expropriation and displacement of the poor. They have also used traditional practices and forms of governance as mechanisms to carry out these improvements. While this urban beautification may seem superficial, it actually reveals deeper truths about the nature of power in Rwanda, and the unexpectedly strong overlaps between traditional and modern governance.

Rwanda's staging of modernity also leads to an apparent superficiality at the architectural scale. The shiny new buildings of Kigali are intended to be a demonstration of the modernity that the state seeks to bring to all of Rwanda, and many of them seem to follow a bland global style. But one of Rwanda's newest major buildings suggests a new direction. This chapter will close with a case study on the Kigali Convention Centre, where Rwanda's most prominent staging of modernity is found in a building whose architect has explicitly claimed to evoke traditional architectural forms. The Convention Centre is a means of staging modernity as a telos based on one's own past. It is a symbol of Rwanda's past that looks pointedly toward its future, and its significance is the claim that something can

simultaneously be modern and traditional – both a symbol on the global stage, and yet inherently Rwandan. This building speaks to a larger truth about the power of the allusion to tradition within the modern.

RWANDA'S MASTER NARRATIVE

Imagery is particularly important to Rwanda because images have long defined the West's understanding of Rwanda. In the colonial era, the colonizers used photography to document the "native" way of life, and to serve as visual evidence of "progress." (See, for example, Figures 4.3 – 4.5 and 4.7 – 4.11 in Chapter 4 of this dissertation.) Later, the world was shocked by images that were circulated in the mid-1990s by two main sources: Western news media and humanitarian groups. Before the genocide, the international news media had paid little attention to the mass killings that had periodically occurred since independence, or to the civil war that began in 1990 when the RPF invaded Rwanda from Uganda. But when the plane carrying Rwandan President Juvénal Habyarimana and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira was shot down on April 6, 1994, sparking one hundred days of genocide, Western news outlets drastically increased their coverage.[4]

Early Western media coverage (in the first two months of the genocide, April to May 1994) tended to show photographs of soldiers with guns riding in trucks in the midst of a military coup. As the killing went on, and the RPF made gains in territory, more and more Rwandans — both Hutu and Tutsi — fled across the border to refugee camps in neighboring countries. News images then increasingly focused on the plight of women and children in the camps (although there were actually as many males as females).[5] Humanitarian organizations also circulated their own images to persuade donors to support their efforts. These photos of Rwanda made a lasting impression on Western memory. To this day, American friends still ask me if it is "safe" to go to Rwanda and whether people are "still killing each other over there."

International news stories portrayed the genocide as the product of long-standing tribal conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis. This characterization oversimplified a complex web of factors including a colonial legacy of ethnic hierarchization, the support of the French and South African governments for the incumbent government, and the impact of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in depressing the Rwandan economy. In his analysis of the representation of the Rwandan genocide through media imagery, sociologist and psychiatrist Niranjan S. Karnik has even suggested that Western media should have shown a picture of the World Bank next to the devastation in Rwanda in order

[4] Niranjan S. Karnik, "Rwanda & the Media: Imagery, War & Refuge," *Review of African Political Economy* 25, no. 78 (December 1, 1998): 611–23, https://doi.org/10.1080/03056249808704347.
[5] Karnik.

to more accurately illustrate their stories.[6] But stereotypes of Africa as a "dark continent" rife with tribal warfare have long shaped the portrayal of African news in Western media.[7]

Even twenty-five years after the genocide, the images chosen to showcase Rwanda still sometimes reflect stereotypes of Africa. In early 2018 a *New York Times* travel column titled "36 Hours" featured Rwanda's capital city, Kigali. This recurring column advises readers on what to do if they have thirty-six hours to spend in cities around the world. The author referred to Kigali as "Rwanda's gleaming capital" and "a proud and progressive city, buzzing with tech hubs, creative start-ups and cafes."[8] The suggested destinations included a range of trendy and cosmopolitan eateries, hotels, and shops. Yet, the photo that was chosen as the main cover photo for the article is one that foregrounds fairly-dilapidated corrugated metal roofing, with a view beyond to the dense urban settlement across the valley (Figure 5.1). On Facebook a Rwandan engineer commented, "The reporter was very lazy choosing an appropriate background picture to go with the article or she had her own agenda. Out of all the pictures of #Kigali, that's the picture she could come up with?"[9]

FIGURE 5.1. The cover photo from a New York Times article about how to spend thirty-six hours in Kigali does not show any of the new construction in the capital city.

[6] Karnik.
[7] Laura Seay, "How Not to Write About Africa," *Foreign Policy*, April 25, 2012, https://foreignpolicy.com/2012/04/25/how-not-to-write-about-africa/.
[8] Debra Kamin, "36 Hours in Kigali, Rwanda," *The New York Times*, January 12, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/01/12/travel/what-to-do-36-hours-in-kigali-rwanda.html.
[9] Comment by Didier Faraja on Carlos Bellas Lamas, "Rwanda in the NY Times," Facebook, February 26, 2018, https://m.facebook.com/groups/ExpatsinRwanda/permalink/1377929812311820/.Lamas.

The Rwandan state's efforts to reinvent Rwanda as a safe, attractive, and pleasant destination for tourism and business meetings are largely dependent on changing the imagery that is associated with Rwanda. This includes replacing the images of violence and devastation from the genocide and the refugee camps, but also replacing those stereotypical images of poverty and underdevelopment which plague Africa in general. For Rwanda to be seen as worthy of investment and tourism, new images must replace the old in the international consciousness – and these images must portray Rwanda as a modern nation. If Rwanda does not want to remain dependent on aid, it must be seen as a valid player on the economic playing field, not an underdeveloped charity case.

However, Rwanda's image rehabilitation is not only in the best interest of the country itself; it also legitimizes the post-genocide state. And as stated in the first chapter of this dissertation, acceptance and recognition of a governing regime or state must be produced both internally and externally. Citizens must accept its rule without revolting, and recognition must be granted by other states. In other words, both insiders and outsiders must accept the state's right to power. Thus, state legitimacy is contingent upon both external or foreign perceptions, as well as the internal or domestic national imaginary. To cultivate the aesthetic of a modern Rwanda, the state has focused on both appearance to visitors on the ground, as well as images of Rwanda that circulate within and beyond its borders.

Images play a major role in how a nation is perceived. Images and the imagination are directly connected to one another, both linguistically and in our minds.[10] The images that we see and remember become the pictures in our head that shape our understanding of the world and our place in it; they shape our identity. In other words, images shape the imaginary that we construct about who we are. As Benedict Anderson has argued, imagination is the very key to national identity. Anderson's seminal book *Imagined Communities* proposed that a nation is an imagined political community. Anderson identifies the rise of vernacular printed language (in order to sell more books) as a key origin of national consciousness. But while the printing press drastically increased the reach of the written word, images have also played an important role. Anderson also points to the map as an image which enabled people to picture their nation.[11] The development of the camera also allowed photography to play an increasingly important role in national consciousness. Throughout history, images have played a critical role in shaping national imaginaries.

Of course, identity is defined not only by self-perception, but also by comparison with others. Anderson argued that encounters with other peoples also increased the desire to sharpen the definition of one's own identity. He primarily referenced the age of exploration and colonialism, but what about the encounters facilitated by modern technology? Building

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[10] The word "imagination" is derived from the Latin verb *imaginari* meaning to "picture to oneself." The root of *imaginari* is *imago*, which means image, likeness, or representation.

[11] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr., London: Verso, 2006).

on Anderson's notion of the nation as an "imagined community," anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has suggested that electronic media and physical migration have created "diasporic public spheres" which transcend nation-state boundaries and shape experiences of modernity. Appadurai believes that advances in technology have enabled greater knowledge of those *beyond* our nation — an increased global consciousness. This, combined with migration and the de-coupling of people from their home soil, suggests to him that ethnic identity is increasingly transnational. Appadurai believes that the nation-state is "on its last legs" as it is poorly equipped to deal with the contemporary "interlinked diasporas."[12] Appadurai cites the divorce of nationalism from "spatial boundary and territorial sovereignty" as the driving force of this crisis.[13] In other words, by de-linking people from territory, migration is a threat to nationalism and thus the nation-state itself. Appadurai suggests that "the modern nation-state…grows less out of natural facts — such as language, blood, soil, and race — and more out of a quintessential cultural product, a product of the collective imagination."[14] For Appadurai, this is inherently destabilizing.

But I would argue that in some circumstances the reliance upon imagination and imagery can in fact *strengthen* national identity. Unlike Appadurai, who believes that the nation-state is dying, I argue that these diasporic public spheres can bolster national identity for postcolonial developing nations. As Benedict Anderson had argued, a sense of nationalism is inherently imagined to begin with — it is based on a great deal more than physical ties to land. And electronic media have evolved a great deal since Arjun Appadurai's book came out in 1996. With the increasing use of social media, people are both consumers and producers of media (and especially image-based media). Rather than the print age, in which ideas spread from the few to the many, the digital age sees the connection of the multitudes to the multitudes.[15] In some way, this is a modern-day equivalent of the encounters during the age of exploration, which Benedict Anderson cites as critical to the desire to establish identity. In addition, we are able to access and see images and video of war and terrorism that amplify their psychological impact, even when we are far from the actual events. Thus, we see the solidification of communities based around "narrow, exclusivist conceptions of identity," and a rise in fundamentalist nationalisms.[16]

Thus, while Appadurai is right about the growth of diasporic public spheres, they do not preclude the continuing importance of the nation-state. As shown by the involvement of the Rwanda diaspora in the "Bye Bye Nyakatsi" project discussed in the previous chapter, members of a diaspora often retain strong ties to their home nation. And in our largely

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[12] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, Minn: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 19.
[13] Appadurai, 161.
[14] Appadurai, 161.
[15] Caroline Tynan, "Nationalism in the Age of Social Media," *Digital Scholarship Center* (blog), December 13, 2017, https://sites.temple.edu/tudsc/2017/12/13/twitter-bots/.
[16] Tynan.

capitalistic world, the nation still plays a large role in economic exchange. National policies determine foreign aid and investment; national interests dictate trade agreements and shape various quotas and subsidies; and tourism is still very much dependent on movement allowed by national passports. Globalization does not automatically supersede the importance of the nation. This argument builds upon architectural and urban historian Nezar AlSayyad's assessment of the relationship between capitalism and globalization:

> *…the process by which the world is becoming a single economic entity, characterized by information exchange, interconnected modes of production and exchange, and flows of labour and capital within a predominantly capitalist world system. ….since capitalism thrives on the construction of difference, such economic universalism, under the confines of a world constituted of national units, can only lead to further cultural division.*[17]

Of course, in guarding against over-generalizations about globalization, we must recognize that nations have unique histories and diverse contemporary issues. AlSayyad has also argued that "while the national identities of the former colonizers are undergoing major change, often becoming more inclusive, the national identities of the formerly colonized are moving in the opposite direction, often becoming more exclusive and more directly linked to national origin or religious association."[18] Thus, the significance of national identity is contingent on particular circumstances for each nation. In Rwanda, the state emphasizes national unity for specific reasons including to prevent another genocide and to present an image of reconciliation and stability in order to encourage foreign investment. Thus, while Rwanda increasingly participates in a globalized economy, the Rwandan state also focuses on building an image – both internally and internationally – of a strong nation.

Any national image-building project is largely state-driven. In Rwanda, as in all hierarchically-organized societies, there is a "master narrative" which is related to but distinct from a collectively-held imaginary. Sheila Jasanoff, a scholar of science and technology studies, distinguishes between an imaginary and a master narrative as follows:

> *Like an imaginary, a master narrative — such as 'American exceptionalism' — offers a rationale for society's long evolutionary course while also committing that society to keep performing the imagined lines of the story. But a master narrative implies a more monolithic and unchangeable vision, closely bound to a singular retelling of national and cultural history, and not necessarily welcoming of invention or prescriptive of new goals to be achieved.*[19]

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[17] Nezar AlSayyad, *Traditions: The "Real", the Hyper, and the Virtual in the Built Environment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 117–18.
[18] AlSayyad, 118.
[19] Sheila Jasanoff, "Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity," in *Dreamscapes of Modernity: Sociotechnical Imaginaries and the Fabrication of Power*, ed. Sheila Jasanoff and Sang-Hyun Kim (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 20.

By this definition, the Rwandan state is definitely producing a master narrative. As explored by this dissertation, the state adheres to one version of history and one vision of the future, and these are not open for debate or revision. But a master narrative does not preclude the existence of a national imaginary. The master narrative shapes the national imaginary, but the people still produce their own consciousness of the nation based on a variety of factors and influences. As will be explored in this chapter, Rwanda's master narrative is a guideline to shape the built environment in order to control perceptions of the nation and its state. But while the master narrative tends to control what is visible on an urban scale, and which architecture gets built, it is not the only determinant. There is always an interplay between the master narrative and the national imaginary, as will be demonstrated by the case study on the Kigali Convention Centre later in this chapter.

THE APPEARANCE OF THE CITY

One of the primary opportunities for controlling perceptions of Rwanda is the interface between foreign visitors and the physical spaces through which they move during their time in the country. The desire to represent the nation impeccably to outsiders reflects the Rwandan culture of pride in appearance. Cleanliness and presentability are ingrained in the Rwandan consciousness; this can be observed in the tendency to dress fastidiously. However, there are also political and economic motivations behind the attention paid to the appearance of Rwanda, and in particular the capital city of Kigali.

As Bert Ingelaere has argued, there is an "urban bias" in foreigners' understanding of Rwanda.[20] Most expatriate workers and volunteers experience only Kigali, or perhaps a secondary city like Huye, on a regular basis. Tourists do drive through the countryside to visit the gorillas in the west or Akagera National Park in the east — and in fact, settlements along these routes are often the first rural places to get spruced up, because they will be the most visible to outsiders. But Kigali is the center of the nation, both geographically and figuratively. It is the site of the international airport, the home base for tourists, and the hub for conferences and meetings of foreign dignitaries. The goal is for all visitors to perceive Rwanda as safe, clean, stable, and above all, "modern." To that end, visual aesthetics and spaces of encounter in Kigali are molded in order to control visitor perceptions.

To some extent, this is aided by natural topography. Rwanda is known as the "Land of a Thousand Hills," and Kigali is built atop several of them. Topography serves to separate people by class due to property values. Traditionally, Rwandans dwelt on or near ridges where the ground was more level and easier to cultivate, while the valleys tended to be swampier and have more mosquitoes. Today, increased density has necessitated some movement down the slopes. Important buildings continue to be sited on prominent sites at higher elevations, and people with the highest income live near the ridges and peaks of the

[20] Bert Ingelaere, "Do We Understand Life after Genocide? Center and Periphery in the Construction of Knowledge in Postgenocide Rwanda," *African Studies Review* 53, no. 1 (2010): 50.

hills. Those with lower income live down on the hillsides, creating a natural separation of high- and low-income segments of the population.

Because they connect important sites which are at higher elevation (and also due to the issues that might arise from building roadways on swampier ground), major arteries through Kigali tend to follow the ridges. This means that it is possible for a visitor to arrive at the airport, drive to their hotel or the Convention Centre, and never pass through the low-income slums. A great amount of effort is put into the beautification of the main boulevards, with street lighting, palm trees, and painted curbs (Figure 5.2). One could travel from the Kigali airport to a meeting at a large NGO or ministry, to a restaurant downtown, and then to a hotel, and think that the whole of the city is paved like this. In reality, however, the lower side streets, which lead to the neighborhoods where most city residents actually live, are most often still dirt, with no street lights or sidewalks (Figure 5.3). In the better cases, the dirt has recently been smoothed and compacted, and the road is wide enough to fit a vehicle. In the worst cases, the road is more like a ravine, and there is no access to some houses except on foot.

FIGURE 5.2. One of the main roundabouts on top of a hill in Kigali.

FIGURE 5.3. A lower side street, Kigali.

This selective beautification again ties to the government's need to encourage continued external aid and investment. Thus, the greatest effort is made in the places that will be seen and experienced by the typical political ambassador, philanthropic donor, or NGO director. This desire to sequester and dazzle the international visitor is evident in the city's master plan, which describes particular projects to be undertaken within several developmental zones within the city. According to the City of Kigali's website, the plan for Rebero, a neighborhood "on top of one of Kigali's hills with an exquisite view," is for it to undergo a "beautification process" to become an "alternative resort area" that will support "5-6 star exclusive hotels." The description goes on to say: "With the growing influx of tourists and investors attending a variety of meetings, this will not only provide a peaceful environment away from home, but also a secluded area for key meetings that call upon a large delegation of participants."[21] The word "secluded" is particularly telling in this context. It is important for these visitors – the "tourists and investors" -- to perceive not only that Rwanda is succeeding, but that it is also a stable and economically promising sink for investment money; thus outsiders cannot be allowed to see the slums or the poor, lest that image of success be dispelled. This is the crux of the urban beautification agenda. Selective beautification is not unique to Rwanda, but in this case, it carries a lot of weight for the entire nation. It reflects the orchestrated control of the visible built environment to present

[21] "Kigali Master Plan Implementation Projects," Republic of Rwanda: City of Kigali, accessed November 22, 2018, http://www.kigalicity.gov.rw/index.php?id=96&L=0.

a specific image of "Rwanda" to certain people, in order to encourage investment in the country.

But the problem is that Kigali's hilly topography also means that the poor, while not always proximate, are often still visible. The existence of poor neighborhoods in the capital of Kigali cannot be fully denied when the blighted areas can always be seen across a valley. According to a survey conducted in 2010-2011, 62.6 percent of households in Kigali were in "unplanned" areas.[22] There was no official property registry in Kigali until 2002, and no building code in Rwanda until 2007. Even after these were established, most residents were unable to register property because their plots did not qualify (being too far from a road and basic infrastructure, or too small) or they were unable to build to code because the code-required materials were too expensive and traditional materials such as adobe or wattle-and-daub were not acceptable. Furthermore, city regulations required Kigali residents to buy a house in a subdivision, so people could not legally build their own house in a location of their choice.[23] These regulations ironically led to the existence of many informal settlements.

To hide these informal settlements, urban design measures have been implemented in Kigali to ensure that the informal settlements cannot be seen up close, such as the placement of tall concrete walls painted with brightly-colored ads to hide the slums from the eyes of drivers and passengers on the street. But more drastic measures have also been taken by the government to reduce the visibility of the poor. On certain main boulevards in Kigali, entire neighborhoods have been razed, seemingly overnight. Authorities justify this using the dictates of the Kigali City Master Plan, but it is also a way of controlling what can be seen. One way to make the poor invisible is to make them simply disappear. A settlement in the Kacyiru neighborhood of Kigali is a typical example of the informal settlements that have been razed (Figure 5.4). This settlement was visible from a major road, and located right near the American Embassy and several government ministry buildings. It was not a surprise, therefore, when it disappeared one day in 2012. Children used to run and play in the narrow spaces between houses, while chickens ran around and squawked. Then one day, there was only dirt (Figure 5.5).[24]

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[22] "The Third Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey (EICV3): Main Indicators Report" (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2012), 58, http://www.statistics.gov.rw/publication/eicv-3-main-indicators-report.

[23] Antje Ilberg, "Beyond Paper Policies: Planning Practice in Kigali" (N-AERUS, Edinburgh, 2008), http://n-aerus.net/web/sat/workshops/2008/Edinburgh/papers/NAERUS_2008_Ilberg_.pdf.

[24] Personal observation.

FIGURE 5.4. Informal settlement in Kacyiru, Kigali (2011).

FIGURE 5.5. Same neighborhood, after demolition (2012).

Beyond the value placed on appearance by traditional Rwandan culture, as well as the importance of attracting contemporary visitors and investors, we also cannot discount the influence of the colonial period on beautification efforts. Colonial-era urban policies upheld the idea that a more orderly built environment was a more "modern" one. Colonial ideas about order were imposed onto cities in Ruanda-Urundi through mandates such as the requirement for consistent setbacks of building facades from street edges.[25] Other colonial policies focused on delimiting the space in which the indigenous population could undertake commercial activity. For example, the Belgians issued ordinances focused on directing commercial activity into defined market spaces and restricting itinerant trade;[26] they specifically prohibited selling goods along public roads.[27]

The echoes of these attitudes about commercial space continue to resonate today. The current city government has enacted measures to rid Kigali of informal hawking and other commercial activities that are perceived as too disorderly.[28] They have outlawed street vending and funded the construction of new covered markets to provide a place for former street vendors to sell their goods, but also to control and fix them in a particular space, and render them liable for taxation.[29] A law was passed in 2016 that even formal brick-and-mortar shops are no longer allowed to display their goods on the sidewalk outside of their shop.[30] These regulations have led to financial hardship and worry, both for those people who traditionally made a living in the informal sector but now have no place to sell their goods, and for those in the formal sector who are concerned about losing visibility.

The government also aims to replace older, traditional commercial spaces with cleaner and more orderly buildings and markets. Kimironko Market is one of the last remaining traditional, open-air style markets in Kigali (Figure 5.6). Many vendors depend on these markets for affordable selling space, and many city residents go there who cannot afford to shop in the shiny new grocery stores. But these markets have been characterized as dirty, disorganized, and unhygienic, and have been targeted for demolition or redevelopment. They are being replaced by modern markets and shopping malls -- more solid buildings with better utility connections, cleaner surfaces, and a more orderly appearance. Recent years have seen the construction of huge amounts of commercial space in large buildings which are

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[25] "Ordonnance no. 61/53 du 28 mai 1951 relative à l'alignement des façades des bâtiments longeant la voie publique dans les circonscriptions urbaines de Kigali, Astrida, Kitega, Kisenyi, Shangugu," May 28, 1951, Rwanda National Archives.
[26] "Ordonnance no 41/2 du 15 janvier 1951 règlementant le commerce ambulant," January 15, 1951, Rwanda National Archives.
[27] "Ordonnance no 41/398 du 24 novembre 1952, Police des marches publics," November 24, 1952, Rwanda National Archives.
[28] Kieron Monks, "War on the Poor? Kigali Cracks down on Street Trade," *CNN*, August 2, 2016, http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/02/africa/kigali-street-traders-mpa/.
[29] "The City of Kigali Builds Markets for Street Vendors," Kigali City Official Website, accessed September 10, 2016, http://www.kigalicity.gov.rw/spip.php?article1372.
[30] "Nyarugenge Traders Decry Policy Banning Display of Goods on Shop Verandas," *The New Times*, November 23, 2016, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/205631.

now vastly under-occupied.[31] An expatriate who visited the vast CHIC complex downtown two months after it opened observed, "Very shiny, but absolutely deserted."[32] The new Kigali Heights complex, prominently located across a roundabout from the Kigali Convention Centre, reads more like a Western shopping mall (Figure 5.7). With bright lighting, large spaces, and an interior corridor, it seems very "modern" to many Kigali residents. But who is welcome to shop at Kigali Heights? It seems likely that only people with an air of sufficient affluence will get past the security guards.

FIGURE 5.6. Kimironko Market, one of the last open-air markets in Kigali.

[31] Kabona Esiara, "Office Rental Prices in Kigali down by 20pc," *The East African*, August 6, 2017, https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/rwanda/Business/Office-rental-prices-in-Kigali-down/1433224-4047484-qrarwn/index.html.

[32] Marion Grace Woolley, "So, case made for moving businesses into shopping centres. It was my first time inside the Chic Building today...," Facebook, February 2, 2017.

FIGURE 5.7. Kigali Heights, a new shopping mall that opened in 2016.

In recent years, the Rwandan government has also shown growing interest in commercial and industrial zoning on an urban scale. Pushing back against the prevalence of small businesses run out of people's homes – which until recently had numbered in the thousands – a 2017 directive from the City of Kigali mandated that all offices must be located in commercial buildings.[33] Regulations increasingly forbid any business transactions outside of prescribed building types. In addition, the city of Kigali has developed the Special Economic Zone in order to provide space for business and industrial development.[34] Commercial spaces and jobs are being increasingly separated from residential communities.

As described thus far, Rwanda's urban planning initiatives have ostensibly focused on selective beautification, removal of informal settlements, and a higher degree of order and zoning in the city. However, these efforts do more than simply improve appearances by removing visible poverty. They are also a form of reorganization of the population according to specific property laws and taxes. The RPF-led government has used the rhetoric of organizing, cleaning, and modernizing to justify the displacement of poor and informal settlements in favor of projects that are in the "public interest." As urban studies

[33] Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, "Businesses Operating in Residential Facilities given 3 Months to Relocate," *The New Times*, January 5, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/206842.
[34] "Special Economic Zone Policy" (Government of Rwanda, May 2010).

scholar and political scientist Tom Goodfellow has noted, "The idea that a well-organized city is necessary to court investment, and that urban cleanliness and modernity are constitutive of the 'New Rwanda'" have been "central discourses" supporting strong expropriation laws.[35] This, combined with lax property taxation, has spurred patterns of real estate investment which have produced enclaves of high-end residential property. This is effectively a form of economic segregation within the city. But because economics are often tied to ethnicity (as many of the wealthy elites are Tutsi), this also runs the risk of being an ethnic segregation, which could obviously run counter to stated goals of unification.

Furthermore, the deeper paradox of the urban beautification campaign is what it reveals about the relationship between tradition and modernity. The state is using the rhetoric of "modernity" to carry out these exercises of urban image control. However, as Goodfellow has argued, the specific mechanisms for Rwanda's urban image control project – from expropriation to city cleaning -- are *also* connected to traditional (precolonial) rituals and forms of governance, like the Home-Grown Solutions (see p. 35-36). While Rwanda seeks to convey a modern image, tradition is embedded in the built environment through state practices that maintain a particular political settlement by mapping new formal institutions onto traditional norms and rules. In some cases, the traditional norms continue to function below the surface, such as the mapping of a formal institutional framework "onto existing structures of power and existing informal norms deriving from Rwanda's long history of hierarchy and centralized governance."[36] In other cases, there are more explicit efforts to shape informal traditions into formalized activities, such as the practice of umuganda, which is a monthly community service day that is supposedly based on the traditional coming together of members of the community to achieve cooperative tasks.[37] Umuganda usually takes the form of a community cleanup, and it is one reason that Rwanda is as clean as it is. However, today's form of umuganda is not voluntary, as it is monitored by the police and enforced with fines.[38] This expresses the complex relationship between tradition and modernity in Rwanda: tradition is proudly referred to as a foundation of the modernizing project, and yet traditional practices are also transformed into modern forms. In this manner, the distinction between tradition and modernity is blurred.

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[35] Tom Goodfellow, "Rwanda's Political Settlement and the Urban Transition: Expropriation, Construction and Taxation in Kigali," *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 8, no. 2 (April 3, 2014): 317, https://doi.org/10.1080/17531055.2014.891714.
[36] Goodfellow, 324.
[37] "Umuganda," Rwanda Governance Board, accessed November 22, 2018, http://www.rgb.rw/index.php?id=37.
[38] Amy Yee, "How Rwanda Tidied Up Its Streets (And The Rest Of The Country, Too)," *National Public Radio*, July 18, 2018, https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2018/07/18/628364015/how-rwanda-tidied-up-its-streets-and-the-rest-of-the-country-too.

THE IMAGE VALUE OF MODERN-LOOKING ARCHITECTURE

Another factor that shapes Rwanda's contemporary image is the construction of modern-looking architecture. I call it "modern-*looking*" because, as will be shown in this section, it is typically the external appearance of the building that is most prioritized. The utilization of modern-looking architecture as a symbol of Rwanda's modernity is illustrated by its appearance on the covers of several state-issued publications shown below (Figure 5.8). On the left, two books convey a message of progress after a difficult past: *Rwanda: A remarkable turnaround of a nation,* and *Rwanda: Rebuilding of a Nation*. These books display architecture as evidence that Rwanda has progressed since the days of the genocide. On the right, the *RPF-Inkotanyi* magazine printed for the 25th anniversary of the birth of the ruling political party shows some of Kigali's tallest existing buildings, and two other signs of development: a construction crane and electric lights. Here again, the state is using architecture as a sign of the progress which Rwanda has achieved under their rule. These buildings have use value, but they also have *image* value. They appear on the covers as visible symbols of Rwanda's "remarkable turnaround," "rebuilding," and "prosperity and dignity."[39]

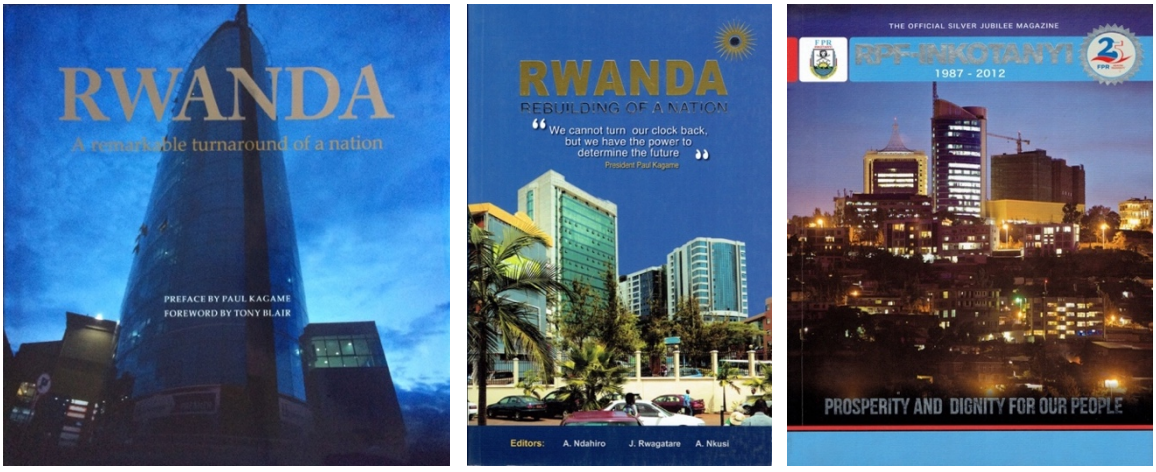

FIGURE 5.8. High-rise buildings of glass, steel, and concrete are featured on the covers of state-issued publications as evidence of progress and modernity.

It is clear that modern-looking architecture plays a role in Rwanda's master narrative, but how is it incorporated into the national imaginary? Which buildings shape the way Rwandans see themselves, and why? I asked a group of students in the University of Rwanda architecture department to provide examples of "modern architecture" in Rwanda. Their answers displayed a consistent set of criteria including height, materiality, and technology. Almost without exception, the buildings they named were high-rises; only one

[39] James Akena, *Rwanda: A Remarkable Turnaround of a Nation* (Kigali, Rwanda: Independent Publications Limited in collaboration with the Rwanda Development Board, 2014); A. Ndahiro, J. Rwagatare, and A. Nkusi, eds., *Rwanda: Rebuilding of a Nation* (Kigali: Fountain Publishers Rwanda Ltd., 2015); *RPF-Inkotanyi 1987-2012* (Kigali: Great Lakes Communications and Media Centre, 2012).

student identified a building of less than seven stories. Their examples were made of a combination of three particular materials: steel, glass, and concrete. They also displayed the use of technology through lighting, moving parts, advanced facade systems, or complex engineered structures. Most students specifically identified the Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali Heights, and Kigali City Tower as modern buildings (Figures 5.9 – 5.11).

FIGURE 5.9. The Kigali Convention Centre.

FIGURE 5.10. The Kigali Heights shopping mall.

FIGURE 5.11. The Kigali City Tower.

It was clear that these buildings were commonly understood as "modern." In order to understand if these same buildings also seemed important to the national imaginary, I gave the same group of students an assignment to draw an imagined skyline of the capital. I showed them the following example depicting cities around the world (Figure 5.12):

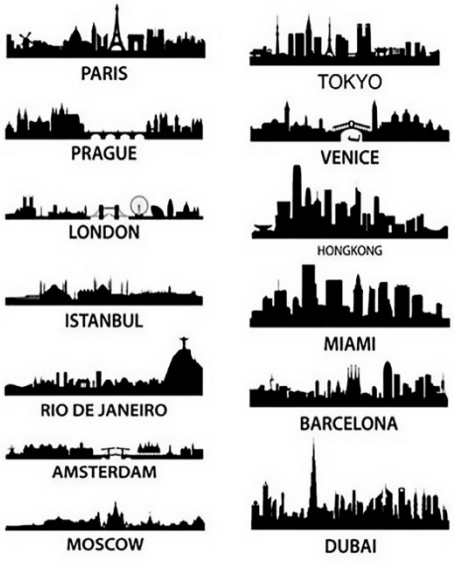

FIGURE 5.12. Example imagined skylines of cities around the world.

In the skylines produced by the students, the Kigali Convention Centre, Kigali Heights, and Kigali City Tower are again commonly represented as defining and important buildings (Figure 5.13). It is interesting that, although all of the skylines in the example above are laid out on a straight horizontal base, the ones drawn by the students usually incorporated the hilly topography of Kigali. This shows a deep consciousness of topography as a defining element.

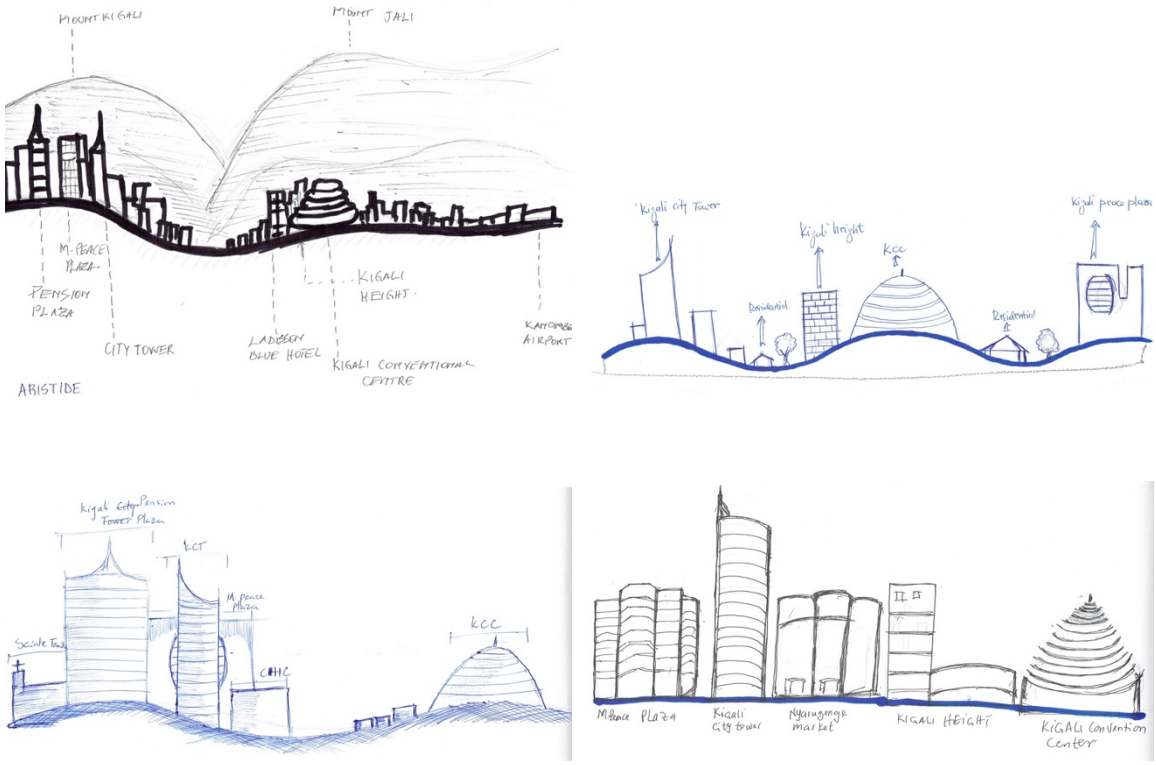

FIGURE 5.13. Skylines of Kigali, as drawn by students at the University of Rwanda.

It became clear that there was a very close correlation between which buildings appeared to be modern and which buildings were felt to represent the capital city. And these buildings had several attributes in common. These attributes can be recognized visually from afar (not necessarily from personal experience of visiting the building), and they can be categorized into three groups: technology/materiality, size/visibility, and distinctive form.

With respect to technology and materiality, all of the buildings displayed the use of advanced construction technology, meaning that they could not be built by hand, but required heavy machinery and complex sequencing. They also were built with what students considered "modern" materials: glass, steel, and concrete. Furthermore, many of the finished buildings themselves displayed technology such as solar panels, LED-lighting, or elevators (still comparatively rare in Rwanda). According to Sheila Jasanoff, the

"sociotechnical imaginary" is a key component of modern identity. She defines sociotechnical imaginaries as "collectively held, institutionally stabilized, and publicly performed visions of desirable futures, animated by shared understandings of forms of social life and social order attainable through, and supportive of, advances in science technology."[40] The notion of movement toward the *future* and the confidence in the power of human control over nature (i.e. technology) are two key elements of the modern experience — this is why the sociotechnical imaginary is critical to a nation's identity as "modern." And it is particularly important in Rwanda because the state has emphasized technology as a critical factor in Rwanda's development into a middle-income nation.[41] Therefore, buildings that express technology in construction and materials are an important part of the new image of Rwanda.

Size and visibility were another factor in the selection of buildings for the students' skylines. It makes sense that large buildings would stick in the mind's eye, but the extent to which particular projects have come to symbolize Kigali is also a testament to the success of the authorities' master plans for the city. Architectural historian Anne-Marie Broudehoux, who has written about architectural spectacle as a technique of governance and a tool of political hegemony in China, suggests that "one of the chief roles of the spectacle is to maximize the visibility of the state in the landscape."[42] This is why such buildings are placed atop hills, at the end of urban axes, in the center of an open plaza, or otherwise situated so that they can be seen from a distance by as many people as possible. Broudehoux also references Walter Benjamin's analysis of the spectacle as commodity, in which the consumption of the spectacle serves as a distraction from debate over public affairs. In this manner, an architectural or urban spectacle can become a catalyst for further urban transformation: "Hosting high-profile spectacular events not only boosts global visibility by promoting the image of the city as a vital and dynamic place, it also helps legitimize large-scale transformations, giving local governments the license to reprioritize the urban agenda without the public scrutiny they normally receive."[43] In other words, the more that Kigali residents are impressed by the Kigali Convention Centre or the Kigali Heights mall, the less they will question the Kigali City Master Plan.

Lastly, distinctiveness of form was a factor that played a role in which buildings seemed to be significant for identity. The Kigali City Tower has a distinctive angled roof; the Kigali Convention Centre is a large dome; the Grand Pension Plaza has an Eiffel-Tower-like structure on its roof; the Makuza Peace Plaza has a sail-shaped curving element attached to its façade. These distinctive physical elements and shapes help make these buildings more

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[40] Jasanoff, "Future Imperfect: Science, Technology, and the Imaginations of Modernity," 4.
[41] Bowman, "Imagining a Modern Rwanda: Sociotechnological Imaginaries, Information Technology, and the Postgenocide State."
[42] Anne-Marie Broudehoux, "Images of Power: Architectures of the Integrated Spectacle at the Beijing Olympics," *Journal of Architectural Education* 63, no. 2 (2010): 52.
[43] Broudehoux, 54.

visually memorable, and thus allow them to capture a place in the minds of the population, as shown in the students' imaginary skylines.

These buildings represent more than just Kigali; they symbolize Rwanda. Buildings are always fundamentally related to the national imaginary. Architectural historian Raymond Quek has suggested that our sense of cultural belonging and identity is intrinsically linked to the way we build our domiciles; in other words, there is a direct link between the architecture of our "home" and the consciousness of our "homeland."[44] While we all live in some kind of shelter, our shelters tend to vary from place to place; thus, our ways of building serve to identify us with our own community, but also to distinguish us from other people. Thus, national identity is shaped by and reflected in the everyday cultural landscape. But as nations became the primary political unit on a global scale, agents of power have increasingly used architecture as a medium for the expression of power and glory. As Quek has stated, "As one of the most powerful collective representations of a nation, architecture engages the global arena by expressing, defining and sometimes negating a representation of nation in order to participate in the international world."[45] But exactly how can architecture be a meaningful expression of national identity? There are two ways. The first is that "Architecture orders space and in that process embodies the power to construe."[46] By shaping the very space through which we move, architecture shapes meaning. The second is that architectural style allows for variation of particular details within a common language. Thus it is possible to develop a visual lexicon that is associated with a particular nation and can express national identity.

As urban planning scholar Lawrence Vale has noted, postcolonial societies provide some of the most apt examples of the expression of national identity through architecture because there is a major transition in leadership and a new national identity to be forged. Vale has made the important distinction that national identity "is not a natural attribute that precedes statehood but a process that must be cultivated for a long time after a regime has gained political power."[47] The new regime must both legitimize itself and house a new form of government, which is typically (at least, in the beginning) a self-governing democracy. Although the state usually aspires to express broad democratic and nationalist ideals, "the design of these buildings remains closely tied to political forces that reinforce existing patterns of dominance and submission."[48] So while they might want to convey "nationalism," state-sponsored buildings often end up expressing the state instead.

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[44] Raymond Quek, "Nationalism and Architecture: An Introduction," in *Nationalism and Architecture*, ed. Raymond Quek, Darren Deane, and Sarah Butler (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012), 1.
[45] Quek, 3.
[46] Quek, 11.
[47] Lawrence J. Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 45.
[48] Vale, 10.

However, as Vale suggests, the initial design goals are not the only factor shaping a building's meaning: "The designers and their clients interpret the meaning of a building *before* it is built. As it gets built and after it is finished, it is viewed by a much broader public and is subject to a far greater range of interpretations, assessments which will change and multiply over time."[49] So, again, the contribution of a work of architecture to the national imaginary is strongly influenced but not *entirely* controlled by the state's master narrative.

My work with the students at the University of Rwanda revealed that these "modern-looking" buildings were indeed important to the national imaginary – at least as that imaginary was expressed by urban-dwelling and educated young Rwandans. In further study, it would be interesting to explore whether rural-dwelling or lower-income Rwandans would have the same architectural references in mind. However, a recent post on social media suggests that might be true – at least when it comes to the Kigali Convention Centre.

ICON: THE KIGALI CONVENTION CENTRE

In 2017, a photo posted on Twitter captured the attention of many people living in Rwanda, both Rwandan and expatriate. It showed a young boy posing next to a model of the Kigali Convention Centre that he built out of clay and mud. Many who saw the photo commented that it was an amazing display of skill and innovation. Approximately 6,000 people interacted with the Tweets and Facebook posts shared by the Radisson Hotel (based at the Kigali Convention Centre), leading to five news articles and coverage on the national television station. It turned out that the boy in the photo is actually a friend of the boy who really built the model, whose name is Gisa. The Radisson was able to locate Gisa, and they invited him to visit the Convention Centre in person.[50] Gisa was later invited to participate in the annual gorilla-naming ceremony, which is a great honor in Rwanda. Gisa intends to pursue a career in architecture or engineering someday. He has still not been inside most of Kigali's major buildings, and was quoted in the national newspaper saying, "It would be interesting to see what they look like inside. I would like to connect the outside to the inside but maybe one day I will have my chance."[51]

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[49] Vale, 288.
[50] Saadiyah Hendricks, "Gisa's Story," Radisson Hotel Group, July 13, 2017, https://momentum.rezidor.com/view/post/gisas-story.
[51] Nasra Bishumba, "Gisa on His Pursuit of an Engineering Dream," *The New Times*, July 1, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/215301.

FIGURE 5.14. This photo of a boy posing in front of a handmade model of the Kigali Convention Centre went viral on Twitter in Rwanda in 2017.

This story suggests that the image value of a building is more than superficial – it has meaning and the power to inspire. The Kigali Convention Centre is an example of architecture designed for a particular kind of image value, which is based on the expression of modernity through form and materials, as well as the capacity to become an iconic image of a place though reproduction. Under these terms, the value of a major project may be placed on its prominence as a skyline icon or its potential to be a digital photo opportunity, rather than accessibility to the public. However, the successful popular reception of the Kigali Convention Centre suggests the inherent power of the image in cultivating the imaginary, and the imagination.

Timothy Mitchell has argued that representation is the essence of capitalist modernity, in which images promise the forthcoming "really real." For Mitchell, the image has power because it dictates what is going to exist in the future.[52] And the increasingly horizontal and multi-participant nature of image-sharing — as phones become more ubiquitous in developing countries, and social media allows *everyone* to be the "media" — means that regular people become more complicit in ensuring which images shape the

[52] Timothy Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis, Minn: Univ Of Minnesota Press, 2000).

national imaginary. With the growth of bandwidth capabilities, websites and social media are increasingly image-heavy, and images have become more important than ever to proclaim one's identity — an identity that is often based on national affiliation, whether innate or adopted. (One might recall, for example, how many people on Facebook overlaid a translucent French flag on their profile photo after the terrorist attacks in Paris in November 2015.) Guy Debord predicted a great deal about twenty-first century life when he wrote *The Society of the Spectacle* in 1967: "The spectacle is not a collection of images; rather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images."[53] In the digital age, images are more important than ever to our imaginaries and our identities – and images are increasingly collectively produced. And if there is one project in Rwanda that exemplifies the significance of a collectively shared image, it would be the Kigali Convention Centre.

Sitting atop one of the hills of Rwanda's capital city, the Kigali Convention Centre can be seen from almost any part of the city. The large glass dome of the convention hall, which is said to recall the domed shape of traditional Rwandan dwellings, serves as a visual landmark by which people can orient themselves. At night, the dome lights up as a multicolor technological spectacle on the skyline. The Kigali Convention Centre is the most explicit architectural manifestation of the Rwandan government's claim to govern by the dual pillars of tradition and modernity. And above all, it is a symbol of the "new" Rwanda.

The Kigali Convention Centre opened in time to host the African Union Summit in July of 2016. The summit was lauded in both local and international press as a success, with AU Commission chairperson Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma calling it "the best Summit we've had" on Twitter.[54] This meeting was a feather in the cap for Rwandan leaders, and a key step toward their goal of becoming a premier MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) destination in East Africa. But the Kigali Convention Centre is much more than just a new venue for large gatherings. It is the anchor of a new commercial and meeting hub in the capital city. Its construction rerouted streets and sparked adjacent development. It sits on a roundabout which was once notable mostly for the formal landscaping that made it popular for wedding photographs, but today also hosts the sizable new Kigali Heights shopping complex and the adjacent Kigali Business Centre which is nearing completion. City leaders have planned for this traffic circle to become an important new node of activity in the city (refer to Figure 5.9).

The Centre may be a success, but it was a long time coming. German architect Roland Dieterle was invited by the Rwandan Embassy in Germany to visit Rwanda and help generate ideas for several construction projects, and he began work on the design for the Kigali Convention Centre in 2004. In 2009, a Chinese construction firm called the Beijing Construction Engineering Group was hired to build the project, to be completed by 2011.

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[53] Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (1967; repr., New York: Zone Books, 1995), 12.

[54] Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, "This Is the Best Summit We've Had," Twitter, July 19, 2016, https://twitter.com/DlaminiZuma/status/755352646278647808.

But something prompted the termination of this contract. *The New Times Rwanda,* a state-controlled newspaper, attributes it to problems in the working relationship between the Chinese firm and the Rwandan building contractor, but *The East African* reported that there was a lack of funds due to reluctance of private investors who felt the project was too ambitious.[55] In any case, the completion of the project was awarded to Summa, a Turkish engineering firm, and it was finished by 2016.[56]

Some critics have questioned whether conferences and tourism will actually generate enough revenue to justify the high construction and operating costs of the Convention Centre. And while many Rwandans have embraced the image of the Convention Centre, not many of them can actually visit. While highly visible from afar, the complex is not actually easily accessible from up close. During my first visit to the site, I noted, "Somehow the Convention Centre seems harder to see into than it is to see out," and "Although it sits at the confluence of many major roads, it feels like a site that you can't enter." The Centre is in fact difficult to access for a reason. In order for Rwanda to bolster its reputation as a good site for important international meetings, security at the Convention Centre must be taken seriously. To enter the complex, you must drive through security gates and get out of your vehicle while both you and your car are carefully inspected. It is important to seem like you belong there. Although Rwanda has made vast strides in recent years, 39 percent of the population is still below the poverty line, so this would likely bar a sizable proportion of Kigali residents from entrance. And not many locals can afford the nightly rate for a room in the hotel, so when there is no convention in town, the occupancy rate is often very low.[57] It is ironic that a building with so much symbolic association with "Rwanda" is experienced by numerous foreign visitors, but inaccessible to some of the local population.

But even those who cannot get in to the Centre can see it from the street, and from across the valleys -- or even on social media. Despite not being able to experience the building, they still have an interface with it, even if that interface is only from afar, or online. And the foreign visitors who come to the Convention Centre and take photographs of it and share those images on their social media are helping to perpetuate this building as a symbol of Rwanda to a broader global audience. In the age of mobile internet access, social media, and digital memes – all of which are increasingly prevalent in Rwandan society – the shared digital image of architecture is often more accessible than the actual experience.

The image of the Convention Centre has captured the imagination of the people and contributed to the spirit of optimism and progress in Rwanda today. This is why young

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[55] "Turkish Firm Wins Contract to Finish Building Kigali Centre," *The East African*, April 25, 2015, https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/Turkish-Summa-contract-Kigali-Convention-Centre-Chinese-out/2558-2696794-w0svep/index.html.

[56] Athan Tashobya, "Kigali Convention Centre, the Story of the 'Rwandan Spirit,'" *The New Times*, July 9, 2016, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/201530.

[57] David Himbara, "Kagame's Kigali Convention Centre Is Dying," Medium, February 19, 2017, https://medium.com/@david.himbara_27884/kagames-kigali-convention-centre-is-dying-daily-occupancy-of-radisson-hotel-as-low-as-16-guests-a6dce25b3d91.

children in Rwanda have been inspired to make mud models of the Convention Centre even though they have never visited it in person (refer to Figure 5.14). In a country with a particularly painful past, the Convention Centre symbolizes hope and movement toward the future. And yet, while its image is popularly shared, this is also a building whose image is carefully guarded. The first time I visited the Convention Centre, I walked around outside to see the exterior spaces surrounding the hotel and the Convention Centre dome. I walked around by myself taking pictures with my iPhone and no one seemed to mind. The second time, I took a formal guided tour of the complex and I had a real camera. On this visit, as I was photographing the glass dome, a security guard came rushing up to me saying "Excuse me! Excuse me!" He asked if I had a photography permit and walked me down to reception where, after some minutes of discussion, the guide informed me that taking "quick photos" while inside on the tour was fine, but that to take exterior shots of the building we had to speak with the head of Public Relations. To me, the difference between the two visits was telling. They did not mind when I was snapping photos with an iPhone, probably looking like a tourist. But with an expensive and larger camera, I may have looked more like a journalist taking photos for publication. The concern about photography thus seemed to be not about security, but about controlling images of the venue. This is because image value is also both commercial value and political value.

In his seminal essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Walter Benjamin argued that the work of art that is reproduced becomes a commodity whose character and value is determined by its reproducibility.[58] This is highly relevant to architecture, which can be designed in a manner that prioritizes not the spatial experience but rather the image (the rendering or photograph). With the Guggenheim Bilbao as a precedent, many cities have embraced the power of the image of an iconic building to draw visitors (and capital) from afar. In some instances, these buildings attempt to be "international" in style, in order to lay claim to "global city" status. But in other instances, the designers and clients of these buildings attempt to make some connection to local or traditional culture, in order to emphasize the unique identity of that place and pique the interest of potential visitors. But this allusion to tradition can also be done for political legitimation. For example, architectural historian Abidin Kusno has described the legitimation of the New Order's authority in Indonesia through the combination of an international "modern" architectural language with reference to "tradition." Kusno shows how tradition and modernity can be expressed in conjunction within the same work of architecture in order to depict a desired image of national identity.[59]

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[58] From the 1935 essay by Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Press, 1969), 218.

[59] Abidin Kusno, *Behind the Postcolonial: Architecture, Urban Space and Political Cultures in Indonesia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000).

The design of the Kigali Convention Centre has a similar function. In a 2016 interview with *The New Times*, architect Roland Dieterle pointed to the country's tradition of round buildings, particularly the King's Palace, as an inspiration for the project. He stated his belief that the Rwandan people would recognize their own tradition in a new architectural language:

> *Honestly speaking [the dome structure] is also the most complex part of this project, and people immediately understood why we did this –there is a tradition of round buildings in the country, particularly the rebuilt King's Palace which is also a dome-shaped building. Of course it's not just blowing up the same architecture, it's our own language which we developed, but people immediately understand that this is something which has to do with their own tradition.*[60]

And indeed, Rwandan residents have posted side by side collages of the Convention Centre and the King's Palace on social media, remarking on their similarity (Figure 5.15). Perhaps it is a superficial resemblance, at best – one based more on form than on function or culture. How is an LED-covered glass dome anything like a traditional thatched dwelling, other than its basic form? But, does it actually matter? If the architect claims that the Convention Centre recalls Rwandan building traditions, *and* the Rwandan people have embraced that claim, then in effect it is true. Thus, the Convention Centre signifies both modernity and tradition. It is built of glass and steel and is highly engineered, with an LED light display that is a public performance of the ICT-based sociotechnical imaginary Kagame has chosen for the nation. It firmly declares Rwanda to be a modern and advancing country, and shows that Kagame's government is able to lead Rwanda into the future. Yet, the public also associates the building with traditional Rwandan building forms. The idea that this building is "Rwanda" has captured the public imagination.

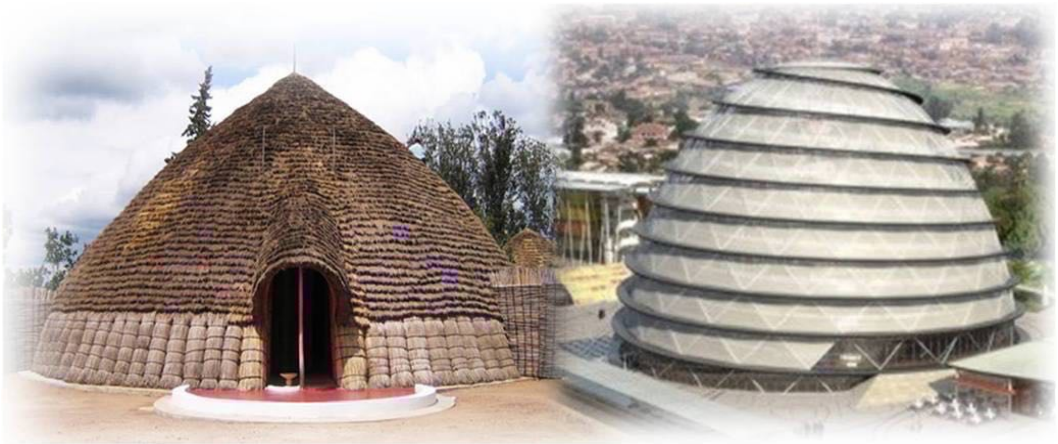

FIGURE 5.15. This side-by-side comparison of the traditional King's Palace and the Kigali Convention Centre was shared on Facebook and Twitter in 2016.

[60] Moses Opobo, "Tracing the Story behind the Kigali Convention Complex," *The New Times*, June 18, 2016, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/200926.

This successful popular reception — rather than the original intent of the state — is what has allowed the building to become a symbol of Rwanda. In calculating the power of architectural symbolism, the significance of popular reception is often underestimated in favor of the aims of powerful elites. As Lawrence Vale has argued, government buildings (or major projects that require the power of the state to be realized, such as the Convention Centre) — have three important frames of reference: 1) the preferences of the sponsoring regime, 2) the architect's agenda, 3) the government's attention to building international identity through modern architecture and planning, which may be tied to issues of economic development.[61] But as Vale also points out, while the state may task architects to articulate a particular expression of national identity, neither the state nor the architect can control the perception of the building in society. People can have a reaction to a building that is independent of the original intent.[62] A building may become a symbol, but all symbolism depends on interpretation and acceptance.

The Kigali Convention Centre has become an icon because it is both unique enough to be representable with a few lines, and widely-recognized enough to become indelibly associated with a particular place. No other contemporary urban building of this size in Rwanda has a domed form and spiraling façade; these elements are instantly identifiable, and thus the design of the building has lent itself to being simplified into a logo, like that of the Rwanda Convention Bureau. The Kigali Convention Centre is also one of the most photographed buildings in Rwanda. It appears in news stories, promotional brochures, and the background of selfies taken by visitors and locals. Thus, the Kigali Convention Centre has rapidly become a symbol of Rwanda, in the same way that the Eiffel Tower is a metonym for France, or Louis Kahn's National Assembly Building is associated with Bangladesh. It proclaims Rwanda as a destination on the map. It is architecture as advertisement, representing Rwanda as a modern nation worthy of your attention, tourism, and investment (Figure 5.16).[63]

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[61] Vale, *Architecture, Power, and National Identity*, 53.

[62] Vale, 288.

[63] This mode of exhibition is much more self-empowered than the open-air displays that Belgians used to exhibit African buildings (see Figure 3.1 in Chapter 3), and yet it is, in some ways, similarly exoticizing, in order to attract tourism.

FIGURE 5.16. Rwanda's booth at the Internationale Tourismus Börse (ITB) tourism expo in Berlin in 2018, where a model of the Kigali Convention Centre is used as advertisement of Rwanda.

The Kigali Convention Centre is a particular kind of iconic building: a building that boldly declares modernity yet still evokes local architectural traditions. This has been asserted by other works of architecture in other places (such as the Japanese Olympic gymnasium by Kenzo Tange, and the Kuwait National Assembly by Jørn Utzon), but this building is sited in a country which explicitly draws upon its traditional past in its contemporary governance. In much of Africa, traditional governance structures continue to coexist with western-style democracy, but they are not formally adopted, and often coexist in a state of tension. In the case of Rwanda, when a superficial reference or motif recalling "tradition" appears, these architectural moves are inflected with an added weight due to programs like the Home-Grown Solutions. The Kigali Convention Centre is a representation of actual political philosophy.

There is another layer to the story, though. The Kigali Convention Centre dome and its surrounding complex (Figure 5.17) very strongly resemble the City of Dreams in Manila, Philippines (Figure 5.18). They share the same dome shape and the same adjacent building with vertical multicolored strips. So what happens when there are *two* very similar iconic buildings in the world?

FIGURE 5.17. The Kigali Convention Centre in Rwanda.

FIGURE 5.18. The Manila City of Dreams in the Philippines.

As discussed in the introductory chapter of this dissertation, Timothy Mitchell has suggested that each time there is a staging of modernity, there is a slight shift. This is the way that modernity expands, but it also the reason it is unstable and can be altered: "Every performance of the modern is the producing of this difference [between the image and the real], and each such difference represents the possibility of some shift, displacement, or contamination."[64] So while the Kigali Convention Centre and the Manila City of Dreams may look alike, they are located in different contexts, and there will inevitably be differences in the way they stage modernity. And perspective matters. Even if two buildings are exact duplicates, when placed in two different societies, they will have a different relationship to the people. Many accounts of the urban modernization of the developing world criticize the development of cities or buildings that "look like they could be anywhere." But do they look that way to local people? The truth is that most Rwandans are not familiar with the Manila City of Dreams. To them, the Kigali Convention Centre is a unique symbol of their nation.

CONCLUSION

Rwanda's focus on improving its image — in large part through architecture and urbanism — may be a good strategy in order to replace widely remembered images of the genocide, as well as lingering stereotypes about Africa as a dark continent. A positive image would indeed be beneficial for many reasons, including increased national morale and greater confidence for investors. But superficiality seems to be a motif in contemporary Rwanda. As a result of the focus on image, sometimes events become very performative. For example, Kigali has held a Car-Free Day every month since May 2016. On this day, several major roads in the city are shut to motorists, and people gather at the stadium in Remera to jog or walk the streets together. It is generally a fairly sizable crowd. However, one day a Rwandan friend told me that the Rwandans who we saw participating in Car-Free Day were there because they had to be. They were government employees and if they did not show up to jog or walk, their boss would ask where they were or reprimand them. The event is publicized as if it is totally voluntary, when it is in fact a kind of mandatory performance.

Various sources have raised concerns that if Rwandan leaders continue to focus on surface improvements and superficial metrics, Rwanda's bubble of success could burst. As previously mentioned, after a downtown construction boom in the past several years, the government has had to mandate that businesses move out of homes and into office buildings because there is so much empty office space in the city.[65] Meanwhile, the much-hyped Vision City housing development has slashed its prices because no one is buying the

[64] Mitchell, *Questions of Modernity*, xiv.
[65] Mbonyinshuti, "Businesses Operating in Residential Facilities given 3 Months to Relocate."

units.[66] What will happen to an economy in which so much capital has been invested into developing the built environment, if there is very little real return?

But at what point does the image blur into the real? What is the effective difference between performance and reality, if the end result is the same? In the case of Car-Free Day, does it matter whether the people want to be there or not, if they still show up? Does it matter if the Kigali Convention Centre is truly based on Rwandan tradition, if most Rwandans believe that to be true? Sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard was the first to propose the notion of hyperreality, a state in which one can no longer distinguish the real from the simulation.[67] In a state of hyperreality, the real and the fictional blend together so that there is no longer a clear distinction between where one ends and the other begins.[68] Architecture is a particularly rich nexus of hyperreality because it is a process in which the image literally becomes real. That is the power of the architectural rendering — the power of the image to shape reality. With architecture, a building comes from an image (a rendering), and it becomes an image (a photograph). Both of these images yield immense power: the first to shape what is going to come, and the second to shape the interface between societies or nations. The Kigali Convention Centre shows that tradition and modernity can have a superficial relationship in a work of architecture, and yet this architecture can still legitimize the state, because it is the building's *image* that matters most in terms of promoting national identity.

Furthermore, the manipulation of perception is a thread that runs deep in Rwandan culture. In traditional Rwandan culture there is a particular value that governs many social interactions; it is called *ubwenge*. *Ubwenge* is a mode of communicating in which words do not necessarily correspond to either objective reality or what one truly thinks, but rather are moderated according to the status and social position of the speaker and the listener. While a Westerner might jump to assess this as a "lie," it is more of a distortion or misrepresentation of the truth, in which language conceals at the same time that it reveals. The ability to make declarations becomes more important than the actual content. *Ubwenge* was both a validation of one's own power in the situation, as well as a means to direct attention in a way that benefits oneself.[69] The Rwandan state is, in some way, practicing *ubwenge* when it conceals coercion, diverts attention to flashier things, or says one thing while doing another. Perhaps, by Western architectural standards, Rwanda's claims to reference tradition in the Kigali Convention Centre might be considered superficial and even possibly duplicitous. But by Rwandan standards, it is less black and white. There is room for gray.

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[66] Jean d'Amour Mbonyinshuti, "Developer Slashes Prices for Vision City Homes," *The New Times*, July 11, 2017, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/215787.
[67] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (1984; repr., Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).
[68] John Tiffin and Nobuyoshi Terashima, *HyperReality: Paradigm for the Third Millenium* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001).
[69] Ingelaere, "Do We Understand Life after Genocide?," 54.

The Rwandan authorities use the built environment to project an image of modernity. This image is projected to both the international audience and the domestic population, in an act of state-making. In most of Africa, this happens by constructing "global city" buildings that could be anywhere. But in Rwanda, the Kigali Convention Centre suggests a way of staging modernity as a telos based on one's own past. It may be superficial, but does that matter? It works because the image of tradition combined with modernity has power: the power to persuade the Rwandan people that Rwanda can forge its own path to the future.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

SUMMATION AND DISCUSSION

This dissertation has sought to examine the relationship between historiography and modernization by addressing these key questions: (1) Is Rwanda truly the "future of Africa," and if so, why? (2) How can a developing country simultaneously pursue modernity within the framework of "development" and yet not be repressed by the Western-oriented model that it implies? To answer these questions, I have claimed that Rwanda is an exceptional case, but may also be a case that can be emulated by other nations. Rwanda has retained the ideal of linear development-based modernity which originated in the West in order to instill hope for a better life, but it has knit this trajectory together with its recovery from genocide, as well as its more distant past. As both a postcolonial and post-genocide nation, Rwanda proves that multiple complex and painful histories can be housed simultaneously in a national narrative and utilized to build an image of progress. This has been accomplished through a nuanced and multivalent project of historiographical manipulation in which historic sites appear to perform a distancing and sequestering of the past, yet actually exhibit a contemporary layering of the past and present in a way that disrupts the construct of a linear timeline. In this almost paradoxical manner of both upholding and disrupting a historical timeline, I claim that Rwanda demonstrates one possible future for Africa.

In examining Rwanda as a case study, this dissertation has contributed to the literature on architectural modernity in developing countries by showing that modernity in the built environment of development nations can be more than just a negotiation or a hybridization of local and imported forms — it can be the capacity to actually manipulate the historical timeline through a layering of time periods which is expressed in both physical and narrative palimpsest. This dissertation also enriches the literature on alternative modernities by suggesting that non-Western nations can create a form of modernity that has a superficial relationship to tradition but still captures the public imagination, because the *representation* of tradition has power and meaning.

This dissertation has also sought to disrupt common outsider perceptions of Rwanda. Most Westerners still perceive Rwanda as an underdeveloped nation that underwent an episode of devastating tribal violence from which it is still struggling to recover. Those who visit the country might observe a nation that is still largely poor and dependent on subsistence agriculture and think that it has barely begun to modernize, even though there are some shiny new buildings in the capital city. But as I have shown over the course of this dissertation, Rwanda might be the most modern nation in Africa largely because of its genocide. The genocide cleared the way for a new state to come to power and fostered a new engagement with the international community. It also cleared the way for a massive social engineering to take place – but unlike Western projects in which powerful actors sought to

create a tabula rasa, the Rwandan state has used its debris, history, and traditional culture in order to enact that social engineering. This is a nuanced form of creative destruction which embraces the fact that destruction is not always total. In its quest to legitimize itself as the government of a modern nation, the Rwandan state has held on to certain remnants of the past and used them to help define a self-serving narrative. But although the state has a high degree of control over historic sites and new construction, notions of modernity in Rwanda have been shaped by a variety of internal and external agents, such that modernity is not just a legacy of colonial or Western influence nor just a mission of the contemporary state; it is a shared project with many contributors.

Rwanda also demonstrates the power of combining tradition and modernity to express identity through architecture. Many African cities have seen the recent construction of bland skyscrapers expressing a globalized language of architectural modernity. But the building that most Rwandans perceive as Rwanda's most modern building, the Kigali Convention Centre, combines both "traditional" and "modern" tropes into a national icon. This suggests the potential success of a more localized architectural language – one which is still based on international forms and materials but begins to become inflected with local accent. Of course, this is not new – the idea of critical regionalism has been around for decades, and many architects, including African architects such as Demas Nwoko and Beda Amuli, have worked on creating a synthesis of native and imported architecture. But Rwanda's Kigali Convention Centre suggests that a superficial relationship to traditional forms can combine with contemporary digital technology and online image-sharing to reach new heights of mass popularity and iconicity. The Kigali Convention Centre has truly become a symbol of Rwanda. This suggests a renewed potential for an architectural synthesis of past and present to express national identity in the built environment.

Of course, there are limitations inherent in attributing "identity" to any built environment which has been shaped by so many complex influences. Dell Upton has argued that buildings have no inherent, essential identity, but are "products of multiple, only partially overlapping, circles or realms of knowledge, practice, and significance."[1] A building represents the intersection of those who designed it, those who constructed it, the materials it is made of, the users it is made for, networks of finance, cultural stylistic conventions, specific cosmological beliefs, etc. A building does not have an innate identity, but has labels of identity given to it by people who interact with the building in some way – and these labels may be different depending on who is looking at the building. It is inevitable that, in trying to read the intentions of various actors through the physical evidence of the built environment, one makes certain assumptions that are unavoidably shaped by one's own point of view. When a researcher is an "outsider" in a particular culture, there is always the risk that their particular assumptions or understandings are different than those who are

[1] Dell Upton, "'Authentic' Anxieties," in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, ed. Nezar Alsayyad (New York: Routledge, 2001), 301.

native to that culture. I have tried my best to learn about and understand Rwandan culture and society over two year-long periods living in Rwanda (the first as an architect, the second as a researcher) as well as several years studying Rwanda in various literature and media, but it is possible that I have misinterpreted certain intentions or reactions. I have endeavored to draw accurate conclusions to the best of my ability as an "outsider" in Rwanda.

This research may seem geographically limited because it only addresses one tiny country in Africa. However, I argue that it has broader applicability beyond Rwanda's borders, and can contribute toward larger bodies of knowledge. Although a case study is by nature a bounded inquiry, the goal is generalizability. The external validity of the case study (how applicable it is to a wider field of knowledge) is determined in part by replicability – in other words, how does the theory hold up in other countries? As will be discussed in the next section, comparative case studies could help to determine whether Rwanda is a paradigmatic case which speaks to a broader potential for developing countries, or an exceptional case which is unique and revelatory, but less indicative of conditions outside of itself.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR RESEARCH

There are several specific opportunities to expand this research in the future that I would like to mention here. I will first address possible research to be done in Rwanda, and then talk about potential studies outside of Rwanda.

Over time, further developments in Rwanda could either bolster or detract from my conclusions. One significant development in the management of Rwanda's historical material is the recent start of construction for a new national archive building.[2] The archival material that exists in Rwanda today is the surviving remnants of several rounds of disruption and destruction. Colonial authorities had extracted a good deal of Rwanda's historical materials to send to Belgium,[3] and all the regalia and information about the monarchy that remained in Rwanda was deliberately destroyed during the decolonization struggle in 1959.[4] In the course of the genocide and war in 1994, the archives were again heavily damaged.[5] In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, the remaining holdings of

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[2] Athan Tashobya, "Rwanda to Get a National Archives Centre," *The New Times*, July 11, 2018, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/rwanda-archives-centre.

[3] James Karuhanga, "Rwanda Confirms Belgium Willing to Return Archives," *The New Times*, September 30, 2018, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/rwanda-confirms-belgium-willing-return-archives.

[4] "National Archive Construction Set to Start- Minister Habineza," *The New Times*, October 29, 2014, https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/182493.

[5] Musa Wakhungu Olaka, "The Role of Genocide in the Development of Libraries and Libriarianship in Rwanda," in *International Paper Session* (International Relations Round Table, Chicago, 2009), http://www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org.rt/files/content/irrtcommittees/irrtintlpapers/Musa_Olaka-paper-200.pdf.

the National Archives were relocated to the Amahoro Stadium; during this relocation, additional material was lost.[6] Since the establishment of the Rwanda Archives and Library Services Authority (RALSA) in 2014, government workers have made efforts to scan and catalogue the remaining archival material.[7] At the time of my fieldwork, the National Archives were tucked away on the third floor of a large commercial building in Kigali. The office was very difficult to find, and the materials were only partially organized. After the new archive building is constructed, how will access to Rwanda's historical materials change when the archives are housed in a specially designed and clearly identified building? And what will the building look like? In a post-genocide context, this archive will play the same role that Benedict Anderson suggested for the museum in a colonial context: positioning the state as the righteous protector of the nation's history.[8] The architecture of these buildings is critical because it both expresses identity and shapes user experience. "The archive has neither status nor power without an architectural dimension," writes Achille Mbembe; "the physical space of the site of the building, its motifs and columns, the arrangement of the rooms, the organisation of the 'files', [and] the labyrinth of corridors" are imbued with a certain character that is supposed to reflect the state and nation, while simultaneously regulating access to knowledge by determining which materials are presented and which are put out of reach.[9] A study of the archive building to be constructed in Kigali would provide valuable insight on how the state intends for its own history to be preserved and accessed.

Another potential area for future study is the "cultural village." One of the newest developments in Rwandan heritage tourism is an open-air museum called the Rulindo Cultural Center. The Rulindo Cultural Center is an agglomeration of recreated buildings from different periods of Rwandan history. It is unique because other heritage sites in Rwanda showcase buildings that are significant because they represent the precolonial era (i.e. the King's Palace) or because they housed an important person (i.e. the Kandt House Museum), whereas the Rulindo Cultural Center is intended to show how typical vernacular buildings evolved over time. Rather than a preserved site where historical events actually occurred, the cultural village functions more like a theme park, putting together disparate examples of vernacular architecture from different eras and locations. The Rulindo Cultural Center is a new approach to heritage in Rwanda, and an interesting move toward a more inclusive and interstitial treatment of Rwandan history. It could be studied in comparison to the Congolese "cultural villages" that were established in Belgium in 1897 (refer to Figure

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[6] Olaka.

[7] Republic of Rwanda, "Law No 12/2014 of 09/05/2014 Establishing Rwanda Archives and Library Services Authority (RALSA) and Determining Its Mission, Organization and Functioning," Official Gazette no. 26 of 30/06/2014 § (2014).

[8] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (1983; repr., London: Verso, 2006).

[9] Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and Its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, ed. Carolyn Hamilton et al. (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 2002), 19, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-0570-8_2.

3.1) and 1958, as well as other places around the world where outdoor cultural villages and miniature parks have been established.

A third direction for future research in Rwanda would be to trace the future trajectory of some of the examples illustrated in this dissertation. For example, what will happen to the Kigali Convention Centre over time? Will it be well used for many conferences and thereby justify the financial investment? Will it benefit from the increased visitation to Rwanda which may be fostered by the new international airport which is under construction in 2018? Or will it be labeled a failure due to some presently unforeseen events? This would shed some light on the endurance of this architectural icon and its power to promote state visions. Another site of interest over the next several years would be the National Liberation Museum Park. Will the proposed new museum building be constructed? Will the new hotel and zipline come to pass? Will this bring more visitors to the museum, and how will this affect the surrounding area? The visions for this museum are grand, but as of the writing of this dissertation, they are still mostly on the drawing board.

Outside of Rwanda, there are potential fruitful comparisons which could test the theories put forth in this dissertation. It would be productive to compare Rwanda to other small nations that have transformed or seek to transform from an agrarian subsistence economy directly to a middle-income, information technology and service-based economy. As Rwanda has been called "the Singapore of Africa," Singapore would be an obvious place to start. As a post-genocide nation, one could also compare Rwanda to the way that Cambodia has handled the evidence of its genocide. Rwanda and Burundi, once joined together as a single colony, have developed quite differently under contrasting political circumstances. All of these comparative analyses would shed further light on Rwanda's own path.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF "AFRICAN ARCHITECTURE"

I would like to conclude with some thoughts on the broader historiography of African architecture. This dissertation has explored the effects of historiographical manipulation and tradition-based modernization on the built environment and on historical narratives. What does the disruption of a singular timeline or the increasingly diverse agency of modernization mean for the broader future of African architecture history and theory as a scholarly discipline?

The answer starts with remembering that there was a time when non-Western architecture was not even considered "historical." European historians from Viollet le Duc to Banister Fletcher portrayed the architecture of Asia and Africa as an architecture without history — timeless, unchanging, and primitive. But as academic perspectives broadened in the late twentieth century, more recent scholars have explored the historical evolution of colonial, postcolonial, and non-Western architecture. In the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, two generations of scholars have focused on the significance of the colonial,

postcolonial, and non-Western modern to architecture history. As stated by architectural historian Kathleen James-Chakraborty: "Until Said, books on Chinese, Islamic, and Japanese architecture generally ended before the architecture that was their subject was 'tainted' by industrialization and contact with the west."[10] However, more recent works have examined the broader context and historical evolution of non-Western architecture, allowing a fuller story to be told.

The first notable Western interest in African architecture history was a book written by the German historian Udo Kultermann called *New African Architecture* (1963).[11] This was followed by *New Directions in African Architecture* (1969).[12] These were both survey books intended to introduce readers to work being produced on the African continent. They presented a range of different types of buildings illustrated by black and white photos and accompanied by text descriptions. Kultermann tried to identify what was uniquely special about African architecture (although most of the architects in the first book were actually European architects working in Africa; the second book did include more African architects). Kultermann believed architecture on the African continent should combine African "tradition" with imported construction techniques. Kultermann influenced other scholars including Janet Abu-Lughod, Gwendolyn Wright, and Zeynep Çelik.[13]

The survey of African architecture continues to appear in recent publications such as David Adjaye's *African Metropolitan Architecture* (2011) and the edited volume *African Modernism* (2015).[14] However, I believe that surveys of African architecture will become increasingly irrelevant as the concept of "African architecture" becomes meaningless due to divergent experiences across the continent. As argued by Achille Mbembe, we must acknowledge the unique circumstances of different countries or regions, and recognize that the temporality of the city may be completely different than that of the rural hinterland.[15] For example, even though they share a border, the people of Congo and Rwanda likely experience time quite differently, with the one country stagnant for decades and the other attempting to hurtle itself ever forward. Even Burundi, which was Rwanda's former colony-mate (as part of "Ruanda-Urundi"), is on a very different trajectory than Rwanda since the end of colonization. And within nations themselves, we must acknowledge that the temporality city-dwellers may be completely different than that of the subsistence farmers.

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[10] Kathleen James-Chakraborty, "Beyond Postcolonialism: New Directions for the History of Nonwestern Architecture," *Frontiers of Architectural Research* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 2014): 3, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foar.2013.10.001.
[11] Udo Kultermann, *New Architecture in Africa* (New York: Universe Books, 1963).
[12] Udo Kultermann, *New Directions in African Architecture*, trans. John Maass (New York: George Braziller, 1969).
[13] Nnamdi Elleh, *Architecture and Power in Africa:* (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2002), xx.
[14] David Adjaye, *African Metropolitan Architecture*, ed. Peter Allison (New York: Rizzoli, 2011); Manuel Herz et al., eds., *African Modernism: The Architecture of Independence* (Zurich, Switzerland: Park Books, 2015).
[15] Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

Also, it will no longer work to publish a collection of photos of new buildings when they were first built, recording and analyzing them as if frozen in time. In the dynamic circumstances of sub-Saharan Africa, one cannot ignore how buildings get built in the first place, nor can one assume what will happen to a building over the course of its lifetime. The complete story of a building includes the trajectory from its first conception through current usage to its demolition or abandonment. Kathleen James-Chakraborty has pointed out that scholars who study colonial space have been particularly willing to study changes in how buildings are used over time, overturning architectural history's "longstanding focus upon design intentions."[16] However, there is still a dearth of these long-time-scale studies in sub-Saharan Africa, and especially for buildings built after the colonial period. These are the stories that need to be told. Nnamdi Elleh's *Architecture and Power in Africa* serves as an excellent example of how to write a detailed narrative over time. Elleh tells the story of the construction of two religious buildings in West Africa, analyzing them not only in a material sense but also illuminating the various agents involved and their complex negotiations, oppositions, and mediations.[17] In this kind of study, time is an agent, and change over time is a critical element of the architectural story. It is my hope that someday I will return to the sites described in this dissertation in order to address what has happened since I last told their story.

[16] James-Chakraborty, "Beyond Postcolonialism," 5.
[17] Elleh, *Architecture and Power in Africa*.

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Appendix

Table 1: Visitation to King's Palace Museum in 2017-2018

Visitors	Type	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Total
Nationals	Paid	2626	1660	1197	687	833	636	877	833	2083	1495	2004	2116	17047
	Non-paid	1062	1122	1202	729	430	613	2369	430	3253	11027	777	318	23332
International, EAC & CEPGL	Paid	383	508	474	577	421	359	426	421	850	917	378	465	6179
	Non-paid	190	38	473	53	25	54	34	25	182	182	110	47	1413
													TOTAL	47971

Source: INMR website, www.museum.gov.rw

Table 2: Visitation to Kandt House Museum in 2017-2018

Visitors	Type	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Total
Nationals	Paid	480	204	215	231	527	297	378	527	386	469	731	457	4902
	Non-paid	104	80	70	122	80	60	171	80	179	112	112	71	1241
International, EAC & CEPGL	Paid	138	209	110	274	308	263	207	308	488	446	362	251	3364
	Non-paid	63	53	48	121	48	38	49	48	24	87	150	28	757
													TOTAL	10264

Source: INMR website, www.museum.gov.rw

Table 3: Visitation to National Liberation Museum Park in 2017-2018

Visitors	Type	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Total
Nationals	Paid	1	1	1	2	4	0	47	4	499	5	65	137	766
	Non-paid	22	37	3	0	18	464	89	18	246	39	34	74	1044
International, EAC & CEPGL	Paid	2	2	0	0	6	6	0	6	56	6	2	12	98
	Non-paid	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	0	5
													TOTAL	1913

Source: INMR website, www.museum.gov.rw