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Memorializing the Genocide of the Tutsi Through Literature, Song and Performance

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Memorializing the Genocide of the Tutsi Through Literature, Song, and Performance

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

by

Anne Goullaud Mueller

2016

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Memorializing the Genocide of the Tutsi

Through Literature, Song, and Performance

by

Anne Goullaud Mueller

Doctor of Philosophy in French and Francophone Studies

University of California, Los Angeles, 2016

Professor Dominic R. Thomas, Chair

"Memorializing the Genocide of the Tutsi Through Literature, Song, and Performance" examines how the 1994 Rwandan genocide has been commemorated in literature, music, and theater performances. Over the past twenty years, in the goal of reconciliation, the Rwandan government has developed a single acceptable narrative of the atrocity; this discourse is enacted and perpetuated through cultural practices (such as yearly commemoration events and marches) and through selective silencing (discussions of ethnicity are illegal in Rwanda). Far from smoothing over the troubles of the past, this rewriting of Rwandan history creates a set of complex challenges for the scholar seeking to interpret representations of genocide, particularly insofar as the cultural texts in question produce counter narratives that question *both* the official story and their own capacity to represent the trauma of ethnic cleansing.

Literature has been the main focus of Rwandan cultural studies post-1994 (particularly the work of the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* project). My first chapter participates in and

simultaneously contests this narrow focus by analyzing how novels about the genocide – *Le passé devant soi* by Gilbert Gatore and *Murambi: Le livre des ossements* by Boubacar Boris Diop – suggest the insufficiency of the written word and, by extension, the urgent need to turn to other media. In subsequent chapters, I focus on two alternative cultural vectors – music and theater – forms that can perform commemoration in ways that literature cannot. The second chapter focuses on musical works performed at the 20th-anniversary commemoration ceremonies (known as *Kwibuka20*). Although they hew closely to government rhetoric, the lyrics, when read attentively, reveal a far more ambiguous narrative, particularly in their treatment of perpetrators and the supposed inevitability of the genocide. Finally, I turn my attention to theater, which, like music, was highlighted in 2014 and is also capable of reaching a wider population. By comparing these recent plays to previous commemorative productions, I demonstrate how the narrative of genocide continues to change in compelling and often unexpected ways.

The dissertation of Anne Goullaud Mueller is approved.

Lia N. Brozgal

Gil Hochberg

Dominic R. Thomas, Committee Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2016

Dedicated to the Victims

and Survivors of the Genocide

of the Tutsi in Rwanda

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

REMERCIEMENTS

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"The Solitary Scholar and the Horrors of the Twentieth Century." Presented at the 2016 International Colloquium on 20th and 21st Centuries French and Francophone Studies, March 2016, Saint Louis University, St Louis, MO.

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"Musical Mobility: Censorship and "Sanctionship" in Post-Genocide Rwanda." Presented at the 2015 Conference of the Society of Francophone Postcolonial Studies, Senate House, November 2015, University of London, London, UK.

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INTRODUCTION

Naming, Representing and Revising Genocide

In considering the Genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda, nomenclature is undeniably complex and significant. Many argue that the only way to name the genocide of 1994 as a genocide is to underline that the target population was a group of one ethnicity, the Tutsi. Yet, questions remain as to how to treat the Hutu who were politically aligned with the Tutsi or who were killed because of their familial associations with Tutsi. These debates remain central to Rwandan governmental policy as evidenced by a dialogue that ensued in 2014 as part of the Kigali International Forum on Genocide. This conference brought together Rwandan government members, dignitaries, scholars and internationals who had in one way or another participated in the genocide or the justice thereafter and addressed the theme of "After Genocide: Examining Legacy, Taking Responsibility".[1] Two panels – "Can Speech Kill?" and "Education: How do we talk about genocide?" – promoted a conversation regarding what to call the genocide and what effects this nomenclature would have on contemporary Rwanda.

Debate circulated about how to call the genocide: was it the Rwandan Genocide because it occurred geographically in Rwanda and targeted victims based on politics and ethnicity or was it the Genocide of the Tutsi because the goal of destroying a specific ethnicity is what qualifies it as genocide? This debate asked what impact the title has on Rwanda today – for example, does calling it the Genocide of the Tutsi continue to delineate differences in the population – differences that could potentially lead to further violence? As part of the ongoing debate,

[1] For example, two notable attendees were Linda Melvern, who was an attorney at the ICTR, and Carl Wilkins, who was the only American to stay in Rwanda during the genocide

Mahmood Mamdani, a political scientist, argues: "The estimates of those killed vary: between ten and fifty thousand Hutu, and between 500,000 and a million Tutsi. Whereas the Hutu were killed as individuals, the Tutsi were killed as a group, recalling German designs to extinguish the country's Jewish population. This explicit goal is why the killings of Tutsi between March and July of 1994 must be termed "genocide"" ("Thinking about Genocide"). Yet Mamdani continually calls it the Rwandan Genocide throughout his work. I raise these issues at the very beginning of this undertaking to highlight the political questions and terms that surround this issue – questions and issues that signal not only a complicated history and development of the genocide but also the inherent complexity of remembering it. Because it is the official stance of the Rwandan government I will use the terminology of "Genocide of the Tutsi" throughout this work, bearing in mind that victims include politically opposed Hutus.

In Rwanda between April 6, 1994 and July 4, 1994 over 800,000 people were murdered in what would be one of the most efficient genocides of the 20th century.[2] The killing spread across the entire country with neighbors slaying neighbors and families turning on their own relatives. Such atrocities raise a crucial question, namely: How were such diffuse and systematic killings inspired, organized, and implemented? Part of the answer lies in the methodical use of a range of media: from song to comics, hate speech was dispensed and infiltrated all aspects of Rwandan life. In a well-documented study, the speeches of President Habyarimana (the leader of a Hutu extremist group) were analyzed to better understand his use of hate speech, but the reality is that this hate speech spread much farther than the political pulpit.[3] For example, the popular

[2] Estimates range from 500,000 victims to more than 1 million and there is no official number.

[3] The article, by Philip Verwimp, argues that President Habyarimana put forth a prose that extolled the benefits of having an agricultural society. Because the Hutu were identified with agricultural work and the Tutsi were seen as a "feudal class", this theory of the importance of

magazine, *Kangura*, was founded in the goal of spreading divisive language. According to the Genocide Archive of Rwanda, "When the multiparty system was introduced in Rwanda in 1991, many newspapers were created. KANGURA was a newspaper that published the AKAZU and the presidential party's divisionist ideology. It was one of the major contributors to the hate media present in Rwanda before the Genocide".[4]

Among the articles espousing the boycott of Tutsi-led businesses and schools were many comic strips that emphasized the Tutsi as threatening and infectious. The following image was taken from the Gisozi Memorial Center in Kigali and it represents Hassan Ngeze,[5] an anti-Tutsi propagandist, and his therapist to whom he complains that the Tutsi make him ill.[6] Through this image, the Akazu propagated rumors of the harmful effects of Tutsi by portraying them as a contagious disease. In other words, if the Tutsi were not controlled, the harm they represent could become an epidemic. Published in March 1993 during the Arusha Accords meetings in

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agriculture clearly highlighted the important role of the Hutu and the oppressive role of the Tutsi. He argues that (like with the Nazi regime), "When dictatorial political power is legitimized with a peasant ideology, genocide becomes a political option". Verwimp, Philip. "Development Ideology, the peasantry and genocide: Rwanda represented in Habyarimana's speeches." *Journal of Genocide Research.* 2:3 (2010). Pages 325-361.

[4] The AKAZU was the organization of Hutu extremists that surrounded Agathe Kanziga, the wife of President Habyarimana.

[5] On August 12, 2003, Ngeze was charged with the crimes of Genocide, Crimes Against Humanity, and Deprivation of Life by the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and sentenced to 35 years imprisonment. His specific crimes included being a shareholder in the Radio Télévision Libre de Mille Collines, leading the *Interahamwe* and shooting a young girl, then stoning her to death. For more information see UN Report on Case ICTR-99-52-T.

[6] This image was actually published in the *Courrier du Peuple*, which served as the Francophone vehicle for anti-Tutsi journalism.

Tanzania, the comic was meant to show the threatening nature of the Tutsi seen as an illness that was preventing any peace from being signed in Arusha.[7]

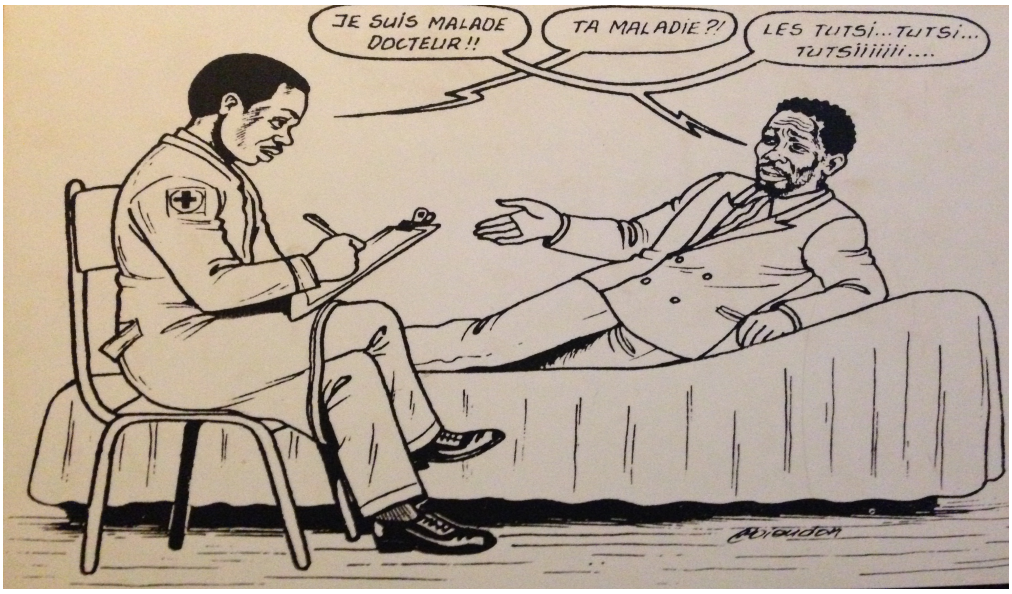

Figure 1. Artist Unknown. First Published in *Kangura* January 1992. Editorial Board: Hassan Ngeze, Célestin Mirasano, Stany Simbizi, Papias Rubera, Nyabyenda Issa, and Bonaparte Ndekezi.

Later, in *Kangura,* the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF – a Ugandan based army of Tutsi refugees) led by current President Paul Kagame, was represented as a machine of mass murder as they trod across the coffins of Hutu. The word bubble, from Kagame, reads "Inyenzi, eminent Inkotanyi [the tough fighters], let's go! We are coming to live by the force of those from whom we have robbed everything!".[8] The smiles on the faces of the RPF troops insinuate their joy at creating war in Rwanda (by invading from Uganda) and standing on the graves of those they've killed. Furthermore, the use of the word "Inyenzi" (cockroaches) once again highlights the parasitic and invasive representation of the Tutsi – the term would come to be used throughout the genocide as the government and radio stations called for the "extermination of the

[7] The Arusha Accords were signed on August 4, 1993 as a peace agreement between the Rwandan Patriotic Front and the government of Rwanda, mediated by the United States, France and the Organization of African Unity. Within 8 months of the signing, the genocide began.

[8] Translation provided by the Genocide Memorial in Kigali.

cockroaches". Published one month before the signing of the Arusha Accords, this comic clearly presents the Tutsi-led group (those with whom peace will be declared) as inhumane military monsters ready to continue destroying Habyarimana's Rwanda. This printed form of propaganda played an important role in circulating the hate speech that would form the base of genocide ideology.

Figure 2. Artist Unknown. First Published in *Kangura* July 1993. Editorial Board: Hassan Ngeze, Célestin Mirasano, Stany Simbizi, Papias Rubera, Nyabyenda Issa, and Bonaparte Ndekezi.

Yet, of course, this method of propaganda was not available to everyone in Rwanda and thus other means were used to dispense the anti-Tutsi doctrine.[9] The government-controlled Radio Télévision Libre de Mille Collines (RTLM) was a widely popular radio station that propagated Tutsi hate through the manipulation and introduction of music and songs that would

[9] According to the Institute for Security Services of Africa, the average literacy rate (literacy in those older than 15 years old) was at 63% in 1997, earlier data is not available.

be interpreted to support the extremist views of the Akazu. Darryl Li argues that the efficiency of the genocide was demonstrated in three main ways: highly diffuse killing, a routine rhythm of killings, and killings based on social intimacy. He explains that the animators of RTLM used a "western-style interactive broadcasting" that used frankness to develop listeners' trust – a trust that was then used to transform rumors into "fact" (16). Most famously, RTLM animators presented the music of Simon Bikindi alongside hate speech that could then be heard in his own songs. As will be discussed later, Jason McCoy's provocative dissertation attests that these songs were not inherently anti-Tutsi but were surrounded with such hate language that the metaphors and hyperboles within the songs could be heard as representations of Tutsi hate speech. The popularity of Bikindi's music led him to be charged with incitement to genocide, yet he was acquitted of most charges. The photo below not only captures his popularity but also demonstrates his allegiance to the Hutu extremist government of President Habyarimana, whose photo is on the shirts of Bikindi and the traditional dancers.

Figure 3. Photographer Unknown. Photo on display at the Genocide Memorial in Kigali.

I begin this dissertation with a discussion of these various modes of hate media to elucidate why the consideration of multiple genres of media is indispensable to a discussion of post-genocide commemoration and memorialization. In the chapters that follow I will show how,

like in the moments leading up to the genocide, a variety of media have been used in Rwanda and across the world to commemorate the genocide and lead the country towards reconciliation. I propose, in contrast to most scholarship that focuses on only one form of remembrance, to adopt a framework that will explore novels, songs and theater. To further this exploration, I probe the ways in which each genre contributes differently to the narratives of the genocide and of commemoration, particularly given the complex political climate and socio-demographic factors such as literacy, ongoing trials and the influence of the international community. This multilayered approach has the potential to offer the most accurate contextualization of the various responses that are available to the genocide, while also offering a discursive space in which these commemorative mechanisms have been deployed. This introduction begins with a brief history of the genocide then engages with theories of nation-building and trauma studies to highlight the need for a multi-layered approach to analyzing commemoration practices in Rwanda.

History of Genocide

The genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda was preceded by decades of violence and unrest, with Rwandan society marked by poverty and violence. To better understand post-genocide mechanisms of commemoration, the influences on the creation of modern Rwanda, including historical and cultural, must be taken into account. These influences include the historical development of ethnic strife in Rwanda; the role of colonial reign on these tensions; the role of popular culture in creating the 1994 genocide; and the lingering effects of language and culture in Rwanda today.

First and foremost, Rwanda was a unified kingdom as early as the 1500s, united under a

common language, king and religion. This kingdom consisted of numerous clans that were centralized for centuries before the German colonizers arrived in 1897. Yet as with any monarchy, tensions arose around inheritance and the right to the throne. Just prior to the arrival of the Germans, clan tensions and questions of royal lineage were influencing politics in Rwanda. For example, King Kigali IV Rwabugiri (the king at the time of the German arrival) had only attained the crown due to the murder of his predecessor. It is presumed that Rwabugiri's mother committed the murder in order to keep the royal power in her family and in the name of the preceding king (Prunier 24). Despite these royal tensions, clan violence had not been widespread in Rwanda prior to the arrival of the Europeans. Favoring indirect rule through the monarchy and local clan chiefs, the German rule of Rwanda only lasted about 20 years when in 1918 and their loss in World War I, the colony shifted to Belgian rule under King Albert I.[10]

King Albert also relied on indirect rule in Ruanda-urundi (the colonial name for the country). However, more specifically, his system relied solely on Tutsi chiefs to govern the country. The decision to favor the Tutsi was based on Roman Catholic missionary reflections that the Tutsi were more active, intelligent and popular (Prunier 26), moreover they famously

[10] Although a challenging task – due to its various methodologies and implementations – A.E. Afigbo attempts to define what is meant by the terms Indirect Rule. He writes that for the British case, "This Crown Colony system was the original concept of Direct Rule – meaning a system of rule using British institutions and implementing British ideas of government. Its opposite was a system under which British institutions and ideas were deliberately excluded; instead an attempt was made to rule through the indigenous institutions of the colonized peoples. This was the original meaning of Indirect Rule"(5). Setting Indirect Rule as the opposite of Direct Rule is more difficult in the Belgian case, where colonies, such as Britain's Sierra Leone, did not exist. In any case, Indirect Rule was the method by which many colonial powers sought to govern their empires. For more detailed analysis see: Mamdani, Mahmood. *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996. Print. and Afigbo, A.E. *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929.* London: Longman Group Limited, 1972. Print.

"looked" more like the white colonizers than did the more Bantu-looking Hutu.[11] This colonial logic stemmed from the Hamitic myth that argued that Tutsis were descendants of Ham who had invaded Rwanda centuries ago along the Nile River – an argument that was later used by the Hutu extremists to support the extermination of these "invading" Tutsi. After assigning power to the Tutsis, the Belgian colonizers were able to make decisions that were then administered by the Tutsi chiefs. Yet these were only the first steps in the utilization of an ethnic hierarchy. In 1931, the Belgian administration implemented a system of ID cards that included ethnic delineations of Tutsi, Hutu and Twa (Uvin 19).[12] In her book, *Terreur africaine: Burundi, Rwanda et Zaïre: Les Racines de la violence*, Colette Braeckman hypothesizes that these ethnic divisions were chosen and used by the Belgians in order to mirror the importance of ethnic divisions in Belgium – a country divided by language and culture (Braeckman 21).

While this system simplified Belgian rule in Rwanda, the education and privileging of the Tutsi eventually undermined the European nation's claim to power. In the 1950s, as independence movements spread across Africa, the highly educated Tutsi were well acquainted with such historical shifts and ideas of independence began to circulate in higher levels of Rwandan society. To prevent the Tutsi-led destruction of their rule, the Belgians began to rely more heavily on the Hutu who they believed were more likely, due to their Catholic education, to follow Belgian examples (Uvin 21). Eventually though, the influence of independence movements swept into Rwanda and in 1957 Grégoire Kayibanda, the future president, created the *Mouvement Sociale Hutu*, a political party that paved the road for independence. Within two years this movement developed into the more extreme group, the *Mouvement Démocratique*

[11] For more complete information see Catherine Coquio *Rwanda: Le réel et les recits.*

[12] The Twa make up about 1% of the Rwandan population and are rarely discussed in connection to the genocide despite their ongoing persecution. See Coquio or Lemarchand.

Rwandais ou Parti pour L'émancipation Hutu (*Parmehutu*) (Prunier 47). In response, the Tutsi created the group, *Union Nationale Rwandaise*, but it was Parmehutu that claimed power with independence in 1962.

Independence in Rwanda was not achieved peacefully. In 1959, the Hutu-led parties began what is known as the Social Revolution. This revolution marks the *Parmehutu* taking control of the Rwandan society not only through politics but also through violence and force. Burning Tutsi homes and murdering those in their way, this period of violence created over 130,000 Tutsi refugees in neighboring countries and an unknown number of Tutsi deaths. During this time, the Belgian authorities looked the other way while they allowed the newly privileged Hutu to take power. Finally in 1960 and 1961, the Belgians organized elections that secured the power in the hands of the *Parmehutu*.

Kayibanda's new government was based in ethnic divisions. For example, it instituted quotas in education and in civil service with 90% of the places reserved for Hutus and 10% for Tutsis. These quotas and the Hutu desire to regain power they had lost during colonization led to continued massacres of Tutsis throughout Kayibanda's regime. In fact, exploiting the massacre of Hutus in Burundi by displaced Tutsis, he reminded the Hutu of the ever-present threat of the Tutsi. Yet this antagonizing stance would lead to Kayibanda's downfall as near the end of his reign, strife between Northern and Southern Hutus divided the country and it is through this schism that the General Habyarimana took power with a coup d'état in July 1973. While continuing the use of quotas and ethnic discrimination, Habyarimana attempted to build bridges with the international community, recognizing the aid Rwanda desperately needed. With development aid from Belgium, Germany, the U.S. and Canada, from 1962 to 1987 Rwanda moved from the third poorest country in the world to the 19th poorest based on GDP.

Although the French government was not giving direct financial aid, its presence and influence in Rwanda began to grow over the course of Habyarimana's regime. In 1974, during the oil crisis, President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing organized the convention of Lomé at which European countries met with members of the developing world to develop trade between Africa and Europe (Melvern 48). By promising more aid to Africa, European countries now had more influence in controlling prices of raw materials. To solidify this influence, in 1975, President d'Estaing signed a military accord with Rwanda promising soldiers and weapons to Rwanda to support Rwanda's important role in the Great Lakes Region where France hoped to increase their influence. The value the French placed on continuing their influence in Africa has its historical roots in the Fachoda event that pitted French authority against British in 1898 in the Sudan. This peaceful confrontation ended in a French retreat from the Sudan, ceding power of the region to Britain imperialism. This event, treated as a war scare in Europe, ingrained in the French imagination the need to uphold their influence in Africa. In *Françafrique*, Mammadu describes Fachoda as "la lutte des Français contre les Anglo-Saxons pour la colonisation de l'Afrique" (19), thus using the name of the place to define the French desire for influence in France. Even after decolonization this desire was manifested through linguistic and cultural influence. Fachoda now plays a role in linguistic decisions in post-genocide Rwanda, as well as in the choice of commemoration practices.

Throughout the 1980s, as the world economy slowed, so did Rwanda's, leading to poverty and violence. Tutsi refugees continued to be pushed out of the country into Uganda where a large group of Tutsi rebels were already forming Paul Kagame's military movement, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Growing and developing in Uganda, the RPF took on an Anglophone identity that challenged the Francophone roots of the Hutu in Rwanda. Finally, on

October 1, 1990, the RPF invaded Northern Rwanda in the goal of reintegrating Tutsis into modern Rwandan society. Of course, this attack was taken as an act of war by the Hutu government and by its supporters, the Belgian and the French, who also sent in troops. In 1993, peace talks in Arusha, Tanzania led to the signing of the Arusha Accords, which called for a ceasefire, a sharing of government between the RPF and Habyarimana's regime and the repatriation of refugees and soldiers. To support this peace the UN sent its own Canadian and Belgian-led mission, referred to as UNAMIR (United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda). Yet despite the efforts of peacemakers, political propaganda was already ingraining hatred and fear into Rwandans. Beginning in 1990, the popular French/Kinyarwanda (available in both languages) magazine *Kangura* was published and proliferated the hate speech of the Hutu extremists against Tutsis. These printings culminated in the publication of the *10 Hutu Commandments* that underlined the dishonest nature of the Tutsi to whom the Hutu should no longer show mercy.[13]

[13] The *10 Hutu Commandments* were inspired by the anti-Tutsi "Manifeste des Bahutu" that was pronounced in 1957 as part of the multi-party ethnically-based political system. See Coquio page 35. (Bahutu is the plural of Hutu in Kinyarwanda).

Figure 4. Cover Designer Unknown. First Published in *Kangura* January 1992. Editorial Board: Hassan Ngeze, Célestin Mirasano, Stany Simbizi, Papias Rubera, Nyabyenda Issa, and Bonaparte Ndekezi. This issue calls for a boycott of the Tutsi-led university.

In early 1994, the leader of UNAMIR (Général Roméo Dallaire) warned the UN of impending ethnic violence but his message was ignored and he was told not to act.[14] On April 6, 1994, returning from Tanzania with the president of Burundi, President Habyarimana's jet was shot down upon its descent into Kigali. Although the source of the missile is disputed, most reports, including French, Rwandan and British reports, agree that Hutu extremists shot down the plane in order to inspire the beginning of the genocide.[15] Laying blame on RPF Tutsis for killing

[14] This warning came in the form of a telegram in which he stated that his informant Jean-Pierre, a member of the Interhamawe, was part of "a plan to create a series of highly efficient death squads that, when turned loose on the population, could kill a thousand Tutsis in Kigali within twenty minutes of receiving the order" (Dallaire 142). Dallaire sent this telegram to the UN on January 11, 1994 but was told not to act. For a detailed account see Dallaire's memoire *Shake Hands with the Devil.*

[15] See Marara, Igo. "French Judge Releases Report on the Plane Crash used as a Pretext to start Genocide in Rwanda." Rwandan Government Website. January 2010. 10 March 2016. and Warden, Mike and Alan McClue. "Investigation into the Crash of Dassault Falcon 50 Registration Number 9XR-NN on 6 April 1994 Carrying Former Presdient Juvenal

their president, Hutu extremists, including the presidential guard and local militia (*Interahamwe*), called upon their fellow Hutus to exterminate the Tutsis. Relying mainly on the governmental radio (Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines - RTLM), messages of hate were diffused across the country and roadblocks strictly controlled the movement of Tutsis. While some murders and massacres were carried out by official government troops, average Rwandan Hutus perpetrated most of the violence.

Estimates for the number of people killed during the genocide range from 800,000 to one million. The genocide ended on July 4, 1994, when RPF armies claimed power over Kigali and the French-led UN mission (Opération Turquoise) moved in from the south, instilling peace if not completely understanding the violence that had occurred. Today in Rwanda and elsewhere, many argue that the French mission in fact protected many perpetrators and the UN soldiers notoriously are known for having played volleyball on recently filled mass graves at Murambi. It is clear from these instances and the historical role of the French in Rwanda that their influence would continue to play a complex role in the commemoration of the genocide. Over the next few years, the RPF led a re-organization and rebuilding of the country that again favored Tutsi participation despite Kagame's claim that all Rwandans are Rwandan first and not defined by their ethnicity.

Nation-(Re)Engineering After Trauma

As Rwanda emerged from the genocide of 1994, the government was faced with re-building the national economy, infrastructure and identity. In Dominic Thomas' *Nation-building, Propaganda and Literature in Francophone Africa*, he discusses the challenges of, what he calls,

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Habyarimana: Contract Report." Defence Academy of the UK. 27 February 2009. 10 March 2016.

"engineering the nation".[16] He writes:

> In its incorporation of revolutionary and reconstructive practices, the term *engineering* then has the possibility of situating those voices attempting to exercise control over the various mechanisms of power, while recognizing that this pluralism emerges from often antagonistic coexistence, that its polyvocality inherently functions, negotiates, and competes at different levels, and that various identities are not freely or independently formed but rather mechanically clash in a constitutive framework (Thomas 2)

In other words, Thomas makes a rhetorical move beyond "building the nation" to "engineering the nation" because of the different forces that are at play, with and against one another, in the attempt to construct or yield a framework of national identity. The creation of this national identity stems from a deterministic propaganda plan of the government as well as from dissenting views in popular culture, and sometimes from within the government itself. In Rwanda, after 1994, the circumstances warranting such engineering were infinitely more complicated than they were in 1962 when the country first established its own national identity.[17] Not only did the country need to wait two years for a strong, united force to take over the national government, Rwanda also had to newly establish their identity on the international scale, where the country was now only seen for its violence.

In re-engineering nationhood in Rwanda, the government relied on the genocide as a unifying factor, highlighting the fact that all Rwandans suffered. Of course, this rhetoric did not

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[16] "Engineering", as Thomas suggests it, is based in part on Noam Chomsky's development of "historical engineering" in *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* and *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* in which he uses the term to discuss the case of US intervention in Nicaragua among many others.

[17] Of course, it can be argued that the national boundaries on which the Rwandan nation of 1962 was built were not boundaries or identities created by Rwandans, but simply left over from colonialism, thus the idea of self-directed identity building is contentious.

find its way into all aspects of life in Rwanda where perpetrators were treated very differently from victims and thick lines were drawn between good and evil, Tutsi and Hutu. In a quote widely attributed to Paul Kagame, the Rwandan President exclaims that his compatriots are no longer Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa but that "We are all Rwandan", thus dispensing with the divisive language of pre-genocide Rwanda.[18] However, in contrast to this language, the official title of the genocide remains "The Genocide of the Tutsi in Rwanda", thereby highlighting the role of ethnicity in the genocide. Although ethnic language is not tolerated in schools, it is underscored each time students turn to learning about the genocide. The genocide is, unfortunately, what unites Rwanda today as the national banter repeats ad hoc "Never Again", thus striving to avoid genocide not for some but for all. Despite claiming to be a country where ethnicity does not exist, differences in ethnicity are exactly what the country's unifying violence was based on, thus perpetuating the delineations of ethnicity, perpetrator, survivor and victim. As Thomas remarks in regards to the work of Emmanuel Dongala: "The manner in which ethnic considerations influence human relationships is significant here, since it underlines the futility of government efforts to promote national integration in a context in which inter-ethnic links cannot be freely formed due to their increased politicization and thus serves to question the feasibility of the construction of the national space along these lines" (130). The "feasibility of constructing a national space along ethnic lines" was strongly counteracted by the arrival of the genocide, which served as the epitome of the politicization of ethnicity. Therefore, in an attempt to prevent another genocide, ethnic lines were "erased" from the national rhetoric, yet the history of these terms in violence and genocide cannot be forgotten. As Thomas remarked, the human relationships that form the base of the society still recognize ethnicity thus undermining the

[18] For a complete discussion of the outlawing of divisive language see Marc Lacey's "A Decade after Massacres, Rwanda Outlaws Ethnicity" in the *New York Times* (9 April 2004).

efforts of the government to undo ethnic divisions.

It is clear that the idea of "We are all Rwandan" was an ideological move on the part of Kagame – a move designed to show a united face to his international investors and, in principal, to his own people. The ideology of nation building is an important aspect of understanding the role of media in commemorating the Genocide of the Tutsi. As the philosopher, Hountondji points out, ideology is often an outward facing mechanism. He writes: "Every such theoretical project, every attempt at systematizing the worldview of a dominated people is necessarily destined for a foreign public and intended to fuel an ideological debate which is centered *elsewhere* – in the ruling classes of the dominant society" (49). In the case of Rwanda, this ideology was not only a debate that would occur in the ruling class, it was also something that was deemed necessary in order to survive as a cultural entity. By saying to the "foreign public", "We are all Rwandan", Kagame's government was able to unify (albeit quite precariously) his own people against the rest of the world, which was not comprised of Rwandans. Now, instead of standing in contrast to one another, Rwandans stood in contrast to non-Rwandans and this "us-them" rhetoric has been indispensable in defining the national history of Rwanda. For example, in much of modern Rwanda's "re-engineered" national history, the question of the (lack of) intervention by the West during the genocide is continually raised. This line of blame allows for a delineation of "us" (those who suffered) and "them" (those who did not come to our aid), thus casting aside the more problematic ideas of ethnicity for a shared national identity that allows for reconciliation (at least at surface level) and forward movement.

Working Through Collective Trauma

National identity today in Rwanda is based on the idea of a shared traumatic experience

and a shared abandonment by Western powers. I refer to this as a national founding *myth* because, of course, the traumatic experience cannot be equally shared amongst Rwandans, yet despite this fact it is used to unite Rwandans against those who did not experience genocide. Dominick LaCapra argues that such a shared trauma (an historical trauma or event) can be worked through "in order to further historical, social, and political specificity, including the elaboration of more desirable social and political institutions and practices" (85), standing in contrast to a structural trauma (or absence) that could not be used in such a constructive manner. According to LaCapra, an historical trauma represents a loss and can be worked through because there is still a connection to the original status quo before the loss. On the other hand, a structural trauma signifies an absence and cannot be worked through because an era before the absence does not exist and thus cannot be recreated, returned to, or worked through. The question then becomes for Rwanda if ethnic violence is an absence or a loss, a structural or an historical trauma. Although ethnic violence has defined contemporary Rwandan society for the past century, most early accounts of Rwandan society do not show evidence of such ethnic violence; therefore, while it is used as a founding modern myth, genocidal violence is not a structural trauma in Rwanda but rather an historical event that must be and can be worked through.

According to LaCapra, this ability to distinguish between a structural and an historical trauma is an important step in working-through a trauma. LaCapra defines working-through as "an articulatory practice: to the extent one works through trauma (as well as transferential relations in general), one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future" (22). The ability to distinguish between a past event and the present is an important aspect of working through a trauma that allows for the victim to

continue living in that present without the trauma disrupting this present. The opposite of working through, according to LaCapra, is acting out, which means that a trauma or the memories of a trauma continue to interrupt the present of the victim making it difficult or impossible for the victim to distinguish between now and then. Acting out is similar to what we consider to be Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in which flashbacks and bad dreams haunt the survivor and interrupt their daily lives.[19]

In the context of this dissertation I argue for the utility of considering the Rwandan genocide as an historical trauma that can be worked through using public and private means of commemoration. LaCapra delineates the process of working through as follows: "These processes of working through, including mourning and modes of critical thought and practice, involve the possibility of making distinctions or developing articulations that are recognized as problematic but still function as limits and as possibly desirable resistances to undecidability, particularly when the latter is tantamount to confusion and the obliteration or blurring of all distinctions" (22). In other words, on the path to working through a trauma, distinctions (such as between perpetrator and victim) may be made that later may need to be problematized, but it is all within the process of critically thinking that these distinctions can be made and reworked. The fact that such critical thinking and analyzing is occurring is a sign that a trauma is being worked through and not simply acted out.

In Rwanda today, historical delineations and narratives are presented by the government and it is generally against the law to cast doubt upon such proclamations.[20] The strict nature of

[19] For full description see the National Institute of Mental Health's website.

[20] Even more critically, Nicki Hitchcott argues that the Rwandan government limits, not just the narrative that can be told, but when and where mourning (an important step of working through) can take place (namely during April each year). For more information see her article: Hitchcott,

the government's narrative is supported by a movement against genocide denial and negationsim. Yet, in her new book, *Rwanda Genocide Stories: Fiction After 1994,* Nicki Hitchcott shows how this simplified narrative is dangerous: "While it is extremely important to continue to combat genocide denial, the Rwandan government's attempt to reinforce a monolithic simplified version of the story suggests that subject positions during the genocide are always easy to identify"(2). In what ways does the government's use of a singular narrative complicate the process of working through the trauma of genocide? It seems that this narrative, as part of the founding myth of the newly rebuilt Rwanda, veils the complexities inherent in the history of Rwanda and the genocide. Because the genocide is not being critically assessed or worked through publicly by the government, is it possible that an acting-out of trauma is occurring in other ways? I argue that by turning our attention to other media besides the government narrative of genocide, we see not only an acting out of trauma which interrupts daily Rwandan life, but also a working through that is occurring in the various art forms analyzed in this dissertation: literature, song and theater.

Reading the Genocide: Representations of Atrocity

To date, most scholarship surrounding commemoration of the Genocide of the Tutsi has focused on the work of the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* project, an act that rejected the delay normally associated with trauma writing.[21] This project was initiated in 1995 by a group of 10

Nicki. "Between Remembering and Forgetting: (In)Visible Rwanda in Gilbert Gatore's *Le passé devant soi*." *Research in African Literatures* 44.2 (2013): 76-90. Print.

[21] This delay takes many forms. Cathy Caruth explains in *Unclaimed Experience* how trauma may be understood, acknowledged or expressed often in a belated manner. In fact, it may take until the second generation that a traumatic experience is reformulated and represented, such as

francophone authors who sought to visit Rwanda for two months and commemorate the genocide in their writings. This group was led by Nocky Djedanoum and financed by a Lille-based festival called "Fest'Africa". Nicki Hitchcott describes the motivation of this group: "It was precisely in reaction to the Western media's 'colonization' of the genocide that, in 1995, a group of African writers decided to organize the commemorative project "Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire"" ("Global Commemoration" 2). Distraught that Africans had to hear about a tragedy on their own continent from French news sources, Djedanoum was inspired to organize these authors to remember Rwanda in a purely "African" manner. Different authors chose different genres ranging from short stories to novels to travel narratives. While four authors chose to write fictional accounts, Hitchcott points out that even these four fictions are grounded in the reality of real locations in Rwanda, such as Murambi, Nyamata or Ntarama ("Writing on Bones" 57-58). The participants in this Fest'Africa project were Boubacar Boris Diop, Monique Ilboudo, Koulsy Lamko, Vénuste Kayimahe, Véronique Tadjo, Meja Mwangi, Jean-Marie Rurangwa, Nocky Djedanoum, Tierno Monénembo and Abdourahman Waberi – of these, only two were Rwandan (Rurangwa and Kayimahe). Hitchcott points out that these texts have been the main focus of Rwandan genocide literature since they were published in 2000 and states, "In particular, the novels by Boubacar Boris Diop, Véronique Tadjo and Tierno Monénembo have since been adopted as key texts for learning about the genocide in Rwanda" (*Genocide Stories* 8).[22]

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with Marianne Hirsch's concept of "post-memory" in which the second generation comes to understand their parents' trauma through the use of prosthetic memories, such as photos.

[22] As with Hitchcott's new text, this dissertation also seeks to elucidate the significance of writers beyond those of the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* project. Building off of her findings, I add in analysis of media beyond literature, opening the field to a discursive space even more inclusive of Rwandan authors, artists and performers.

Hitchcott argues that this pan-African approach elucidates more than just a unification of African writers. She explains: "The Fest'Africa commemoration is a project that looks in many directions: laterally between Rwanda and different nations on the African continent; vertically from Africa back to the former colonial powers of Belgium and France; and also transversally from Rwanda's genocide to the Jewish Holocaust. For Lionnet and Shih, such a multidirectional process or 'cultural transversalism' is a central feature of minor transnationalism" ("Global Commemoration" 7).[23] As we will see with the play *Rwanda 94*, these writings are not the only sources to reach across boundaries, as plays and movies since 1995 have worked to build bridges and connections between Rwanda's history and others. Recently, literature has been used to discuss the genocide such as during the 20th commemoration ceremonies in Kigali where the authors of Fest'Africa as well as Scholastique Mukasonga and the scholar, Josias Semujanga, were invited to participate in a *café littéraire* whose goal was to provide "a unique occasion for the public to share a moment of reflection, discussion and debate around the themes related to the memory of the genocide," according to the pamphlet. The presence of these authors in a public space of commemoration highlights an important trope of this dissertation – the intermedial and interdisciplinary approach to memorialization and commemoration where art – understood broadly – is used to connect to a wide audience.

The work of the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* authors has been read in several different lights. First and foremost, they are read as an act of memorialization with critics asking how successfully they commemorate the horror and lives lost. In particular, Alexandre Dauge-Roth in *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda*, asks how personal traumas fit into

[23] Despite the indication that France was a colonial power in this quotation, France was not officially a colonizer of Rwanda. The colonial powers were Germany from 1897 to 1918 and Belgium from 1918 to 1962.

and feed off of collective narratives. He writes: "the meanings of personal trauma cannot be separated from the collective memory shaped by literary authors and filmmakers through and within which survivors seek forms of social recognition" (26), arguing that the general forms of representation must be analyzed not only as entities of their own but also as a framework through which other personal traumas may be expressed and authenticated. Secondly, several critics, such as Boubacar Boris Diop and Josias Semujanga, ask why the medium of fiction in particular dominated the genres of these texts. Semujanga explains that fiction, as the most "human" of writing forms comes the closest to speaking the unspeakable (112), yet he also cautions, "la littérature se retrouve face à l'indicible et à l'irreprésentable, sous peine de verser dans le voyeurisme et l'obscénité" (126). By citing these risks, Semujanga points to the difficult role of trauma fiction particularly when a trauma occurs in the "Other's" domain. These accounts must avoid the pitfalls of exoticizing this trauma. Thirdly, Semujanga, Diop and others call for a politically engaged trauma fiction that would stir the emotions of its readership and serve as a call to action. This engagement perhaps plays the role of what LaCapra calls "empathic unsettlement", a tool through which readers and witnesses relate to and are affected by trauma fiction. He writes: "As a counterforce to numbing, empathy may be understood in terms of attending to, even trying, in limited ways to recapture the possibly split-off, affective dimension of the experience of others" (40). While these three tropes in the study of fiction regarding the Rwandan genocide can be separated, together they form the base of questioning that asks in what ways a trauma can be represented and what effects it can have on its readers.

Chapter Descriptions

Based in the pre-existing scholarship, this dissertation first examines the memorialization

of the Genocide of the Tutsi through literature written in French. The majority of literature regarding the genocide has been written by French-speaking authors such as other Africans or from the perspective of Francophone journalists, historians or humanitarians.[24] In the Anglophone realm, observers such as Samantha Power or Allison DesForges have addressed the genocide in their writing and Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed with Our Familes* has become a staple of American high school reading lists. Yet despite the popularity of such works, these texts are not being read in Rwanda, where arguably their reception should be the most important. The reasons are twofold: first, these texts are difficult to find in Rwanda where they are only available in the library in Kigali or Butare or at the international bookstore near Embassy Row in Kigali.[25] Besides accessibility, the second reason they are not being read is that they require literacy in a second language for Rwandans and the question of literacy has become more and more complicated in the past several years. In 2006 the Rwandan government, for reasons associated with increasing business, changed the official language of education from French to English and the transition was rapidly undertaken – meaning that many instructors who had been teaching in French for years were suddenly expected to teach fluently in English. However, these changes have had a minimal effect according to the CIA Factbook, which states that only .1% of the population speaks French and .1% speaks English. The majority of the population (93.2%) speaks Kinyarwanda despite English being the main language of instruction in many schools. While the CIA Factbook states that 70.5% of the population is literate, it does not indicate in which language that population is reading and writing, although it can be assumed that this literacy is in Kinyarwanda.

[24] For example see work by Jean Hatzfeld, Roméo Dallaire and Gérard Prunier.

[25] For a detailed investigation of the availability of literature in Rwanda see Nicki Hitchcott's *Rwanda Genocide Stories: Fiction After 1994,* pages 31-38.

Despite the fact that these texts are not being read in Rwanda, it would be irresponsible of this dissertation to not engage with the literature that has been the focus of so much scholarship. Therefore, my first chapter addresses the efficiency and significance of literary texts in commemorating the Rwandan genocide through two novels: Gilbert Gatore's *Le passé devant soi* and Boubacar Boris Diop's *Murambi: Le livre des ossements*. These two texts address the return of two fictional genocide refugees to Rwanda years after the genocide. In both novels, these characters seek to put together a representation or an understanding of the genocide, either through the form of a collection of testimonies in Gatore's text or through the writing of a play in Diop's. Yet the characters in both novels face immense challenges in reintegrating into Rwandan society and in seeing their creative projects to completion. Gatore's main character, Isaro, is derailed by another project that captivates her spirit – the fictional tale of a genocide perpetrator – and despite completing that project, in the last pages of the novel, we find her on the verge of suicide. Meanwhile, Diop's main character can only mock his original idea of representing the genocide in a play when, by the end of the novel, he must come to terms with the horrific role of his own father in the genocide. I argue that by highlighting the enduring complexities of modern Rwanda – where the "Perfect Rwandan" is both guilty and victim – and by challenging written representations of the genocide, Gatore and Diop both, call for a wider breadth of representation that goes beyond the traditional forms of testimony or novel.

My second chapter thus moves beyond the written word to the power of song in commemorating the genocide. At *Kwibuka20*, the ceremonies in Kigali that marked 20 years since the genocide began, the focus was put on spoken testimony, song and performance. Among the performers were many Rwandan artists and a Franco-Rwandan rapper, Gaël Faye. Also notable were those who were not present as performers, a list that includes a popular Rwandan

gospel singer who had been arrested just days before. The choice of performers displays the malleable nature of the Rwanda government's narrative of genocide and reconciliation, demonstrating that certain voices were valued and others were not. In analyzing two songs performed during the commemoration, as well as the work of Gaël Faye, I outline the narrative that is supported by the government, yet I also highlight moments where metaphor, language and musical style allow for other narratives to shine through. Strikingly, it becomes clear that despite the government's strict control over who speaks about the genocide in Rwanda, Gaël Faye's music calls for the participation of more voices and the telling of more narratives. Comparing these privileged voices and songs with the censored voices of Simon Bikindi and Kizito Mihigo, I demonstrate in what ways the narrative in Rwanda is fluid despite the government's attempts to control it.

Finally, in my third chapter, I analyze three theatrical productions that speak to the variety of means through which the genocide is represented and commemorated. In the American produced *Maria Kizito*, as well as in the Belgian *Rwanda 94*, the audience is faced with plays that open their eyes to the horrors of the genocide. Yet, neither play leads the audience blindly into the representation of genocide. Instead, they each offer a guide to the Western audience who demonstrates in what ways the spectator should interact with the play. In *Rwanda 94*, the writer Jacques Delculvellerie, uses the character of Madame Bee Bee Bee as a model of objective journalism. Madame Bee Bee Bee, haunted by images of the genocide, leads the audience on quest for "truth", believing that the only way to attain "Never Again" is through understanding how the genocide came to be. Meanwhile, in *Maria Kizito*, the audience follows the model of Sister Theresa who strips herself of her prior identity in order to connect with and understand a perpetrator of genocide.

These two plays stand in contrast to *Shadows of Memory,* which was performed as part of *Kwibuka20* in Kigali on April 7, 2014. This play is a 20-minute summary of how the genocide came to be and features haunting scenes of hundreds of actors lying as corpses across the field that served as a stage. A major challenge that this play faced is that the Western audience shifted their gaze onto the reactions of the Rwandan spectators, who were also present at the performance, instead of focusing on the play itself. Performed in front of Rwandans and Westerners, the violent images and testimonies encapsulated within the play ignited PTSD crises in many Rwandan spectators, and Westerners turned their gaze to those suffering in the audience. I argue in this chapter that part of the explanation for this turning away from the play was the fact that this play, unlike *Maria Kizito* and *Rwanda 94,* did not provide a guide for the western audience. This shifting of the gaze is what I call a mise-en-abyme of spectatorship. By shifting their gaze from the performance, journalists, scholars and humanitarians returned to their home countries not reflecting on the performance itself but on the state of Rwandan spectators. In this way, the relations between the layers of spectators tell us more about Western interest and Rwandan contemporary reality than does the play itself.

Reading these various media together allows a more complete image of the process of commemoration and "working through" to come to the fore. While the work of Gatore and Diop underline the complexities of modern Rwanda and points to the necessity of reading other types of media, song and theater allow for a more complete representation of commemoration and reconciliation to be seen despite the governmental attempts at cleanly delineating the contemporary identity of Rwanda within the history of the genocide. This dissertation demonstrates in what ways literature, song and theater allow for the creation and distribution of alternative narratives.

CHAPTER ONE

"The Perfect Rwandan": The Limitations of Writing in the Complex Context of Rwanda

"Est-ce que l'écriture sert à quelque chose? J'ai parfois l'impression qu'écrire est d'une futilité absolue" – Gilbert Gatore

In a 2008 interview with *Jeune Afrique*, Gilbert Gatore – the first Rwandan survivor to write a novel about the genocide – exclaims that he cannot always believe, in the aftermath of such horror, that writing serves any greater purpose. The statement was in response to a question in which he was asked about future writing projects. His complete response was the following:

> Je ne veux pas me confiner à un seul thème, mais je pense que le génocide est une expérience qui ne passe pas, qui reste à jamais devant soi. D'avoir connu les horreurs de l'extermination a fait naître en moi des interrogations fondamentales sur l'humain, sur l'identité, sur l'écriture qui se déclineront dans tout ce que j'écrirai. Comment un génocide est-il possible ? Est-ce que l'écriture sert à quelque chose ? J'ai parfois l'impression qu'écrire est d'une futilité absolue![26]

Clearly reflected in the title of his novel, *Le passé devant soi*, is the idea that the genocide has infiltrated all aspects of Gatore's life. For Gatore, it has brought into question not only humanity and identity but also a question of writing. In fact, if we can read a direct connection between the written word and the past, as that which is written is always past, it could be conceived that writing itself, not just the past genocide, lie ahead of Gatore according to the title. Writing, as something that always already been done, undermines its own efficacy in facing past problems. In response to this dilemma, Gatore – himself a novelist – cannot confidently label writing as a productive process; however, it is clearly a path he has attempted to navigate in order to respond

[26] Chanda, Tirthankar. "Gilbert Gatore." *Jeune Afrique.* Jeune Afrique, 2 Sept. 2008. Web.

to the genocide. One of the epigraphs of *Le passé devant soi* reads: "Que vaut-il mieux faire lorsque, sans aucun doute possible, il est trop tard?"(9). As the text of the novel follows this question, can it be gleaned that writing has, at least temporarily, been worth doing? Despite his spoken disillusionment with writing, Gatore still relies on it in the turmoil of post-genocide Rwanda. From here and from the seeming paradox of Gatore's words and his actions, I turn to the question of how and to what extent writing performs acts of memorialization in the context of the Rwandan genocide. To answer this question I analyze two texts – Gilbert Gatore's *Le passé devant soi* and Boubacar Boris Diop's *Murambi: Le livre des ossements* – in order to evaluate the effects of their writing and the treatment of writing within the texts.

Through their own acts of writing both Gatore and Diop highlight the challenges writing faces as it acts to memorialize the genocide. Moreover, through the trope of writing, both texts demonstrate the harmful and powerful effects of writing and the written word. After introducing the two authors and texts this chapter turns to the treatment of place within both novels and explores how location allows each author to explore the complex identities of post-genocide Rwandans through the main characters of *Murambi* and *Le passé devant soi*. Next, this chapter explores more specifically the prevalence of perpetrators in each text, demonstrating the value each author places on understanding many aspects of these post-genocide characters. Finally, because both novels feature main characters who wish to write, this chapter underlines the challenges both characters face in writing and how Gatore, Diop and other authors who write about genocide mirror these challenges.

Boubacar Boris Diop published *Murambi* in 2000 after participating in 1998's Fest'Africa. This literary gathering sponsored the visit of 10 African authors to Rwanda in order to experience the aftermath of the genocide and to express their experiences in whatever form

they found productive. Diop, a Senegalese author and journalist, spent a few months in Rwanda and reflected on his experience: "Il n'était plus question de collecter froidement des faits mais d'écouter des récits de vies détruites et de s'en faire fidèlement l'écho" (*Murambi* 248). After the visit, Diop chose the novelistic form in order to echo these stories, explaining that "*Murambi* reste un roman dans la mesure où s'y perçoit le tumulte d'une histoire tragique et, à travers diverses trajectoires individuelles, la subjectivité d'un auteur" (*Murambi* 248) – in other words, the novelistic form allowed him to explore the complexity of such a tragedy, while also including his own stance and the impact he felt. Diop admits that his style of writing morphed into a simpler, clearer form after his experience in Rwanda.[27] Moreover, the trip inspired him to reconnect with his own roots and write a novel entirely in Wolof in 2006.[28]

While the writing of *Murambi* is simple, the form and structure of this novel underline the complexity of modern Rwanda and modern Rwandans. The narrative varies between characters and perspectives with the main focus on Cornelius, a returning exiled young man. The stories of perpetrators, RPF members, victims and survivors are told in the first person and range in length. For example, the first ten-page vignette focuses on Michel Serumundo, a Tutsi business owner whose story reveals the first implications of the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane. The reader follows Michel from his video store to his home where he reflects: "je me suis rendu compte pour la première fois de la soirée que nous commencions à avoir peur de notre propre maison" (20), thus elucidating the fact that Rwandans immediately knew that the atmosphere had changed and no where was safe. Michel's story is followed and juxtaposed by the story of Faustin, a member of the *Interhamawe*, who leaves his family to do

[27] Diop, Boubacar Boris. "Genocide et devoir d'imaginaire." *Revue d'histoire de la Shoah.* Ed. Georges Bensoussan. 190 (2009) : 365-381. Print.

[28] Diop, Boubacar Boris. *Doomi Golo*. Paris, France: Edition Papyrus (2006). Print.

his "work" of murdering Tutsis.[29, 30] Then, the reader is introduced to friends of Cornelius such as Jessica, a member of the RPF, and Siméon, an elder from his village. Finally, in the section entitled "Génocide," fictional survivors and victims tell numerous accounts of murder in the first person. Meanwhile, the majority of the text – through longer chapters that are interrupted by those mentioned above – focuses on the third-person narrative of Cornelius who returns to Rwanda after years of exile in Burundi and Djibouti. Cornelius' return is marked by the explosive news that his father – a renowned Tutsi sympathizer – had orchestrated the largest massacre of the entire genocide at the *Ecole Technique de Murambi*. The narrative thus follows Cornelius' development from an innocent escapee to a guilty victim, carrying on the curse of his father's actions. Cornelius, who returned to Rwanda expecting to understand and write about the genocide, instead finds himself at a loss for words or explanations, yet always committed to the idea of using words to fight injustice.

Gilbert Gatore's first novel, *Le passé devant soi,* was published in 2008. The text follows two intertwined stories of Niko and Isaro. Isaro is a young Rwandan woman, raised in France by French parents who adopted her after the genocide of 1994 in which her family was brutally

[29] The Interhamawe were the militia organized by the government to do the majority of the killing during the genocide.

[30] The name Faustin harkens to Goethe's Faust who made a pact with the devil to sell his soul in exchange for unlimited knowledge and worldly pleasures. In the case of Faustin it can be argued that Faustin believes he is trading his soul through murder for the betterment of his own community by "purifying" it of Tutsis. Moreover, it is interesting to consider Goethe's work as an author who believed in both science and poetry as important contributors to society. This belief underlines a connection between science and cultural identity where culture can be substantiated by science. Such a relationship was often used to discriminate against certain peoples in the colonial period and after. For example, the cultural identity of Rwandans according to the Bahutu was based on the invasion of a different race of humans (the Hamitic Batutsi) and "scientific" evidence of the differences between these races was used to firmly root the cultural identity of Rwanda in hierarchical race relations.

murdered in their own home. The story begins as Isaro discovers her inner desire to know and to write. With promised funding by the "Foundation", Isaro sets off to Rwanda to collect testimonies for her text, "In Memory of…", which will feature interviews with survivors, victims, and perpetrators alike.[31] This title was inspired by a play she saw entitled "En mémoire de lui", whose main character reminded Isaro of her home country. Awakened from a trance-like state as she contemplates the current situation of Rwanda, Isaro is invited by a friend to see this play on the same night after hearing a radio story about overflowing Rwandan prisons. The play is described as follows:

> La pièce présentait un homme atteint d'une maladie incurable et dont le nom imprononçable insinuait un rapport avec ce pays qui avait brutalement reconquis son attention ce même matin. Elle [Isaro] identifiait très bien sa langue maternelle à défaut de savoir la parler. Dans cette pièce, l'homme recevait la visite de son ange gardien qui lui suggérait, en attendant sa mort prochaine, de passer le temps à rassembler dans une petite boîte tout ce qu'il voulait laisser de lui, tout ce qu'il voulait que, par la suite, on lui associât. La pièce s'intitulait *En mémoire de lui*. Pour une raison qu'elle ne s'avouait pas alors, elle la trouva belle mais insupportable, troublante. Quelques années plus tard, assise à son bureau, elle croit savoir pourquoi ce spectacle l'avait autant saisie. C'est peut-être à ce moment-là que s'est fait le lien entre le dégoût qui l'avait inondée et le projet auquel elle se consacre maintenant, à des milliers de kilomètres de là (40-41).

The question remains for the reader whether or not this play was about a Rwandan man or if

[31] In the novel the "Foundation" is not clarified any further than this but with it Gatore may be making reference to the *Fondation de France*, which supported the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* project in 1998. Putting the "Foundation" (which failed to completely support Isaro) in place of the *Fondation de France* can be read as a reflection of the limited role of the West in the genocide and in the recovery efforts in Rwanda.

Isaro was simply projecting her thoughts onto his character and struggles. It is clear that the idea of collecting memories for the next generation was an idea that inspired Isaro and that she valued so much she chose to undertake the challenge for the entire generation affected by the genocide. The play allowed the consuming emotions and disgust that Isaro felt to be transformed into a project that she could seemingly accomplish. Yet upon arrival in Rwanda, Isaro's funding is revoked without substantial reasons and she makes little progress on her work. Instead she develops a relationship with Kizito, her Rwandan taxi driver, and begins work on another project: the story of Niko. Although Isaro continues interviewing victims and perpetrators for her original text, it is the story of Niko that comes to dominate Gatore's novel.

Gatore's narrative does not take a linear form and for the majority of the text it is unclear why the two alternating stories are placed side-by-side. In the final pages of the novel it becomes clear the Isaro actually wrote the story of Niko, which she calls her "roman". Laid out in numbered, fragmented, paragraphs, this story is of a mute, ugly man who found his only source of self-assertion in the violence of the genocide. Ridden with guilt, the reader first finds Niko alone in a cave, presumably dying not only of starvation but also of shame. We find out that Niko's first murder was possibly of his own father and it is through that brutality that Niko ever found a means of self-expression. Shunned by society for all of his life and now haunted by his own guilt and fear, Niko becomes a sympathetic perpetrator in that he is portrayed as having experienced a trauma, even if it was of his own doing. Niko, as well as the characters developed above, become exemplary of the complicated modern circumstances in Rwanda and create for the reader a better understanding of the complexities of remembering the genocide.

Place and the Complexity of Identity

To better understand how these characters represent modern Rwanda and the challenges

of commemoration, I focus on "place" as a means of organizing their personal developments and obstacles. Cornelius and Isaro struggle to align their changing identities with their newly rediscovered Rwandan society. Because they both left at young ages they struggle in different ways to fit back into society. Cornelius seems to embrace his difference more so than Isaro, consistently relying on his friends to teach him about the new society. Jessica offers the most insight but it is his incidental interactions with Roger and Gérard that cements the new characteristics of Rwanda for Cornelius. At the Café des Grands Lacs, Cornelius witnesses the complexity of living with what one experienced in the genocide and it is at this same site that Cornelius understands his transformation from a spectator to an actor in post-genocide Rwanda.

Before he can go on his planned trip to Murambi to visit an older neighbor (Siméon), Cornelius spends several days in Kigali, living in a limbo state in a city that shows very few scars from the genocide that destroyed his family. Cornelius finds himself questioning the city as he sits in his café vantage point, "Est-ce que là, juste à l'entrée du café des Grands Lacs, il y avait des cadavres que venaient dévorer les chiens et les charognards?"(69). The narrator continues by reflecting, "Seule la ville elle-même aurait pu répondre à ces questions qu'il ne pouvait encore poser à personne. Mais la ville refusait d'exhiber ses blessures" (68). In this way Cornelius searches for the specific scars of war on his childhood city, he expects to see blood, bullet holes or old ditches. Instead, life goes on and the Café des Grands Lacs serves customers on a daily basis.[32]

The episodes Cornelius witnesses at the Café des Grands Lacs vary drastically. First, there is his interaction with Roger who "on soupçonne de s'être mal comporté pendant les

[32] It is possible that this café is based on *La Mise Hôtel* where Diop and the other *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* authors stayed during their visit of Rwanda, thus further establishing a mise-en-abyme of writing between Diop and Cornelius.

événements" (74). Knowing these rumors about Roger, Cornelius becomes incredibly frustrated by his acquaintance's repeated stories of heroism from the genocide period. Cornelius has learned to question everyone's role in the genocide and particularly Roger's, and this skepticism underlines the complexity of peoples' post-genocide identities. For example, it is unclear if Roger's self-promotion is overcompensation for the guilt he feels or if the rumors circulated about him are simply untrue and he is attempting to correct his reputation. It is through and because of his frustration with Roger that, during one of his long nights at the Café des Grands Lacs, Cornelius ends up telling Roger that he is thinking of writing a theatrical play about the genocide. The arrogance of Roger in contrast to the invisibility of the suffering along the city streets throws Cornelius over the edge.

Torn and frustrated between his hunt for scars and the arrogance of Roger, Cornelius finally expresses himself by making up a play about the genocide. While Cornelius originally did want to write a play about the genocide, the satirical improvisation he gives to Roger demonstrates that play-writing has also frustrated Cornelius' attempts to understand the genocide. The fake play begins with the portrait of a French general, distraught that his cat may have been killed during the genocide.[33] The general laments that his cat had nothing to do with the genocide – being neither Hutu, Tutsi nor Twa – why would they have killed him? In order to find the cat, the general sends a captain after their gardener who may or may not have already been killed. When the captain is unsuccessful, the general takes matters into his own hands, joining Pierre Intera and Jacques Hamwe as they "torturent, violent et tuent pour retrouver le

[33] This general of Cornelius' story is mirrored by Diop's character Colonel Etienne Perrin. Colonel Perrin is serving in the Opération Turquoise that moved from Southern Rwanda north towards Kigali. This French initiative is notorious for having confused perpetrators and victims and is accused of having aided the perpetrators. The fictitious Perrin is seen in dialogue with the perpetrator Karekezi whom he warns in regards to the next movements and accomplishments of the RPF.

jardinier éthiopien qui a disparu avec le chat du général Perrichon" (78).[34] Meanwhile, Cornelius explains, the two soldiers continually have their machetes in the air, hacking away because they love the sparks they create. These actions on the part of the French-named characters comment on the misguided reasons for which the French were involved in the genocide, highlighting the suspicious role Diop believes the French played in the genocide. In the end, Cornelius quickly summarizes, the general's wife leaves him and the general goes mad, walking across the stage saying "miou…miou…" (79). On the one hand, the departure of the wife could signify the solo action of France in Rwanda, an action that was undertaken by the U.N. officially but which was mostly supported by the French government alone. On the other hand it signifies the abandonment of Rwanda, as the violence drove the general insane, no one was there to help him (whether or not he was worthy of such attention). Roger's reaction is curt and angry, "On se parle demain. C'est sérieux" (79) and it is the first glimpse into Cornelius' transformation form spectator to actor. For Roger, it is not acceptable for a man whose father committed genocide to joke about the role of the French; however, for Cornelius, who is still unaware of his father's action, the satire serves only to highlight the complicated, incomprehensible actions taken during the genocide.

The next important interaction at the Café des Grands Lacs is with Gérard who at the time is an unknowable stranger to Cornelius. Gérard is known as "Le matelot", or sailor, and seems crazed by a desire to speak the truth.[35] Little does Cornelius know that this truth is about

[34] The last names of Pierre and Jacques combine to form "Interahahmwe", the term used to describe the genocidal militia. It is not coincidental that Diop chose characteristically French names for these characters as he sees the French of having been accomplices to the genocide.

[35] This nickname is most certainly a reference to Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" in which a sailor returning from a difficult trip stops a wedding guest on the street to recount his adventures and survival. This outburst of storytelling is imitated by

his own father and the suffering that he inflicted on Gérard. Later, as Cornelius tours Murambi, he will come across Gérard, who explains that he survived the Murambi massacre (committed by Cornelius' father) only by hiding in the piles of corpses, almost choking to death on the blood of the victims. It seems, at Café des Grands Lacs, that the complexity of post-genocide identities are put on stage and continuously repeated. Although Cornelius first appreciates the café as a way to watch the city and specifically the busy street of Nyamirambo, the interactions with Roger, Gérard and Barthélemy shift the gaze onto Cornelius himself. After sitting quietly through most of the evening, the newcomer Barthélemy suddenly states: "Dans la vie, l'essentiel pour chacun de nous est de ne pas passer à côté de sa vérité" (73). While Cornelius is baffled by this announcement from the otherwise silent Barthélemy, the rest of his friends remain silent. This is an important turning point in shifting the attention of this group to Cornelius who they realize does not know his own "vérité", in other words, the truth about his father's actions in the genocide. Here it becomes clear that the Café des Grands Lacs is not just a site from which to be a spectator but also a site at which Cornelius becomes observed himself.

As a returning escapee, Cornelius experiences a new version of transmission apart from the transmission of genocide stories: he now experiences a transmission of guilt. As Jessica remarks: "Il y a eu des dizaines ou des centaines de milliers d'assassins. Beaucoup étaient des pères de famille. Et toi, tu es juste le fils de l'un d'entre eux" (107). Although she is trying to lighten Cornelius' guilt, this remark points to the fact that transmission of knowledge was not the only type of transmission expected after genocide but also the transmission of guilt. When

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Gérard who repeatedly shouts "Mes amis, hurlez votre douleur!...écoutez-moi bien!" (71). Although most of the characters are accustomed to ignoring Gérard, these outbursts strike Cornelius who feels that Gérard is looking and directing his outbursts at him. This reference may also highlight the survivor guilt of Gérard as the idiom "To have an albatross around one's neck" stems from the poem and refers to carrying an unsupportable guilt.

Cornelius finds out that his father organized the massacre at Murambi he reacts by smiling, stupefied.

The question of transmission is a question of identity for genocide survivors, perpetrators and escapees alike. Cornelius' sense of identity is completely demolished with the news of his father's deeds. Through a short anecdote, Cornelius demonstrates how this identity changed. As a child he could not understand why his friends, Tutsis, were asked to leave class while he was allowed to stay. The officials explained this phenomenon by identifying Cornelius with his father, a Hutu, or according to the officials, "Ce trublion de Joseph Karekezi! Un très mauvais Hutu! Ah! Celui-là…il a déjà contaminé son fils" (57). This quote shows that as a child Cornelius was identified by his relationship to his father as most Rwandan children are and at that point in time his father was considered a "bad Hutu", meaning a liberal Hutu who most likely supported Tutsis. Moreover, Dr. Karekezi was married to a Tutsi woman and thus had shown his "true colors". Therefore, it is clear that as a child and until his return to Rwanda, Cornelius would self-identify as the son of a good, liberal Hutu, one who did not buy into ethnic politics. Upon hearing the truth about his father, Cornelius thus also receives news that undermines his entire identity.

As Nicki Hitchcott has discussed, Gatore interacts with the city and country in a very different way than Diop.[36] She demonstrates how by not naming the city or the country, Gatore opens his work towards a universalizing effect. While his streets seem as untouched as those that Cornelius walks, Niko sees the hauntings of his actions everywhere he goes. Therefore while Cornelius hunts for scars, Niko seeks to escape them. These two very different treatments of

[36] Hitchcott, Nicki. "Between Remembering and Forgetting: (In)Visible Rwanda in Gilbert Gatore's *Le passé devant soi*." *Research in African Literatures* 44.2 (2013): 76-90. Print.

place; however, both underline the purgatory-like nature of the setting – a nature which is particularly well captured at the site of the Café des Grands Lacs and in Niko's cave where the gaze is not only cast out but also in.

Descriptions of the cave on *île du nez* begin and end the story of Niko. In Isaro's story, Kizito, the taxi driver and her future boyfriend, explains the development of the île du nez. He explains:

> C'est cette île dont on dit qu'elle est née il y a très longtemps lorsque les voyageurs qui passaient à côté du lac devaient y jeter un caillou...le plus étonnant…c'est que ce cairn géant a pris la forme d'un nez au lieu de ressembler à un tas de pierres normal. Alors, aujourd'hui, les voyageurs ne jettent plus rien pour en augmenter la hauteur. Ils se contentent d'expliquer que l'île n'est rien d'autre que la réplique de leur propre nez. Aussi incroyable que cela puisse sembler, des disputes sanglantes et même des massacres de centaines de milliers de gens en ont résulté (106-107).

Although Gatore never mentions Rwanda or genocide in his book, this passage can be interpreted as an explanation of how the genocide developed. The travelers to which he referred were probably colonizers who developed the distinctions between the Hutu and Tutsi noses, and it was these very distinctions (represented by the shape of the island) among others that led to the ethnic violence of the twentieth century.

The cave is first introduced as a vantage point from which Niko observes three other people escaping life post-genocide: Uwitonze (the old school teacher who asked the Tutsis he was harboring to leave and who were then brutally murdered); Uwera (a widow who lost everything in the genocide and could only express herself in screams); and Shema (a local storyteller to whom no one would listen because of the horror he told). Niko begins to imagine

the cohabitation of these four people as a village that he calls Iwacu, loosely translated to "our place" in English. This is a village that would confound any visitor not understanding why the three visible inhabitants (as Niko hides in the cave) sit in silence and have homes that "ressemblent à des tombes" (15). Although confusing for a visitor, the cave and Iwacu quickly transform into a place to better understand Niko and a place through which the otherwise forgotten young man becomes gazed upon although he also gazes out. Despite going to the cave to avoid the gaze of others, Niko quickly becomes subject to the gaze of the monkeys whose violent existence frightens Niko into silence, stillness and starvation. It is only with the arrival of the three other humans that Niko can again comfortably shift the gaze away from himself.

Niko's cave on the *île du nez* is a cave that before the genocide was used as a site of initiation for young boys. Although all boys from the local village came to this site, it was only Niko that dared enter the cave and his visit haunted him until his return after the genocide. Upon entering the cave for the first time as an initiate Niko saw of flash of something (perhaps an animal or a monster) that caused him to drop his flashlight and run. Because he was obsessed by that image for most of his life, the cave drew Niko back years later as he escaped the shame and guilt of being a *génocidaire*. Yet this departure and return to the cave does more than haunt Niko, it also serves as a reminder of Plato's *Republic* in which the cave, the departure and the return all relate to the acquisition of knowledge. Perhaps for Niko this acquisition of knowledge can be said to have been a terrible knowledge, of the limits of humanity and dehumanization, and it is thus that he returned to the cave hoping to escape what he learned in the real world. Yet, as with those who returned to Plato's cave, the darkness of the cave soon enshrouded Niko.[37] As he stumbles and falls within the cave, Niko is harassed by the monkeys who already reside there

[37] Plato. *The Republic: The Complete and Unabridged Jowett Translation*. Trans. Benjamin Jowett. London: Vintage Classics – Random House, 1991. Print.

and is forced to lie still and silently, slowly starving as they eat around him. One monkey, whom Niko calls his "ange guardien", takes an interest in Niko and is killed standing between Niko and a stray bullet coming from outside the cave. The violence that this bullet represents, trying to pierce the entrance of the cave, is stopped by the monkey whom Niko then hangs in the entranceway as a warning to any one else who may appear and consider entering. Here again we see the cave acting as a shield against the gaze of others, the gaze whose shame transformed Niko into a sympathetic perpetrator.

Isaro's rediscovery of her identity is also shaped by place, and the limits of the taxi and the airplane act as spaces in which Gatore complicates her positionality. When Isaro first arrives in Rwanda her goal is to be an interlocutor, holding herself apart from Rwandans. Yet, shortly after meeting Kizito and failing to perform her interviews, it becomes clear that Isaro has begun a process of reintegration into Rwandan society. She cannot be a neutral interlocutor – the questions she asks and the stories she hears reflect her own daily struggles and thoughts. For Isaro, her arrival is colored by the confines of the taxi that takes her to her hotel. Kizito drives the taxi and exhausts Isaro with his endless questions, including asking if she knows Zidane or where she got such lovely clothes (92). After the interrogation to which she only responded yes or no, Kizito asks if she'd like to hear the story of the Swallow and the Toad. He describes a beautiful, arrogant swallow who lands on something that she takes for a rock; however, the rock turns out to be a toad that the swallow then insults repeatedly. Having had enough of the insults the toad challenges the swallow to a race saying that he will be able to secretly find his way and everywhere he goes and he'll ask the swallow "are you following me?" (94). But for the reader and for Isaro, this is where the fable ends because Isaro falls asleep and awakens in her hotel

room.[38]

From within the taxi Isaro makes no comments about the surrounding environment, instead she is focused on Kizito and on not falling asleep. Obviously experiencing cultural shock and jet lag, Isaro refuses to engage with the new world she has entered. This separation is a continuation of her childhood in which she was distinctly separated from her native country and distanced from her own life experiences. The narrative then harkens to her other travel experiences and particularly the experience of leaving Rwanda with her adoptive parents. Both travel experiences seem to carry Isaro as opposed to be led by her, perhaps explaining why she feels that part of her identity is missing – she has not sought it actively before. Despite this lack of connection, the moments in the taxi are also the moments when Isaro begins to feel something "qui dépassait la gratitude" for Kizito. Later in the novel, when Isaro and Kizito are touring the country collecting stories, Kizito attempts to finish the story of the Swallow and the Toad, but Isaro begs him to stop talking, saying she will do anything to stop him. This is, unsurprisingly, the first night they spend together and Isaro never hears the end of the fable. As explained by Elizabeth Applegate the story represents the power structures and struggles of the Hutu and the Tutsi. Because the story is later retold in Niko's memories, it also serves to undermine the common understandings of the social hierarchies. As Applegate writes: "This version reverses the stereotyped identities of Hutu and Tutsi. The toad, not the swallow, is sneaky and untrustworthy, and the swallow is the victim of the toad's ruse. This version overturns genocidal ideology, which portrayed Tutsi as capable of deceit that could kill the trusting, loyal Hutu" (81). Applegate also suggests that based on appearances, the characters of the fable match Gatore's characters – with Niko as the ugly toad and Isaro as the graceful swallow. I would add that it is

[38] Because the fable does not exist in Rwandan tradition, it is clearly acting as an allegory.

the very resemblance between Isaro and the swallow that prevents Isaro from hearing the end of the fable – she does not want to find out what happens to the swallow that represents herself. It can be construed that Isaro, like the swallow, has landed somewhere that she does not understand and has put forth a certain arrogance in assuming she could understand. Yet for Isaro, unlike the swallow, she seems willing and wanting to overcome her preconceptions about Rwanda and the people there – finding out the end of the swallow/toad fable could undermine this desire within her. In this way, Isaro's character demonstrates the impossibility of objectively analyzing the genocide.

Meanwhile, the character she creates, Niko, lives completely apart from Rwandan society and the only era he spent as a member of society was as a killer in the genocide. This is the only time in his life where he belongs to a group and even acts as a leader. After the genocide, Niko cannot escape the truth of what he did and thus isolates himself, dying alone in the cave. His actions of self-isolation are the opposite of what Isaro hopes for but the reality she ends up facing. This separation between perpetrator or victim from society contrasts sharply with the majority of perpetrators who are reintegrated into society after they confess and seek forgiveness.[39]

[39] Two forms have persecution have been sought in Rwanda since the genocide. The first, more official, body, the ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) wrapped up in 2014 after persecuting the organizers and leaders of the genocide. On the more local level, *gacaca* are used to persecute and seek forgiveness for perpetrators. At these community gatherings, judges can deliver lesser sentences for perpetrators who sought reconciliation, thus many perpetrators were able to rejoin their surrounding communities. For a brief introduction to the ICTR and *gacaca* see: The United Nations Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide. *Background Information on the Justice and Reconciliation Process in Rwanda*. United Nations Outreach Programme on the Rwanda Genocide, 2014. Web. 10 May 2016.

Writing Towards an Understanding of the Other: How Storytelling Transforms Perpetrators

The ethical ramifications of writing fiction after genocide are multiple, as cited by Applegate and others.[40] In fact, Diop, in his postface to *Murambi*, reflects on the initial reactions of Rwandans when he told them about his writing project: "En somme, à la lancinante question de la légitimité d'une mise en fiction du génocide – question que les autorités de Kigali ont été les premières à nous poser, quoique de manière oblique – Koulsy Lamko a donné une réponse bien à lui: "Oui, on peut écrire un roman sur le génocide des Tutsi, à condition de ne pas s'en tenir à cela"" (*Murambi* 255); therefore, explaining that fiction is acceptable as long as it does not disguise itself as more than that. This response makes sense for Diop, already a distinguished novelist, who had previously treated mass African atrocity in *Le Cavalier et son ombre*. However, the question arises as to what extent Gatore, who had never before written fiction, could responsibly wield the weapon of words. On the other hand, it can be said that Gatore would naturally take a more responsible, authentic role in that he knew the Rwandan context well, whereas Diop was removed and has questioned his own ability to call the genocide by its name (*Murambi* 246).

Having embraced fiction as their means of production, I have shown how Gatore and Diop then use fictional spaces to delimit and define the complexities of life after genocide. Yet both also go further in then tackling the perspective of the perpetrator. Here it is important to note Gatore's positionality – as an escapee of the genocide and the son of an alleged perpetrator – because this complicates but also explains his reasons for exploring this unique perspective.

[40] See: Semujanga, Josias. *Le génocide, sujet de ction? Analyse des récits du massacres des Tutsi dans la littérature africaine.* Québec: Éditions Nota bene, 2008. Print.

Even more interesting is the fact that Isaro feels compelled to write about a perpetrator – perhaps echoing the author's desire to explain and understand the evil side of humanity.[41] Again, the question of seeking to understand the perpetrator has come to be extremely quickly in Rwanda where perpetrators must be reintegrated into daily societal life, due to overflowing prisons and resources, and where their past actions cannot define their everyday lives without harming the overall goals of society.[42]

Diop addresses the questions of perpetration in a fairly traditional manner – depicting the men who committed these crimes as monsters and mostly inhumane. The primary perpetrator of Diop's text is Dr. Joseph Karekezi, Cornelius' father. His segment begins with his thought, "quoiqu'il arrive j'aurai fait mon devoir" (129). His obsession with duty continues throughout the chapter and usurps his feelings of loyalty and love towards his family. The simplicity with which he regards his duty is echoed continuously when he thinks ideas such as, "nous sommes en guerre, un point, c'est tout…notre objectif est juste" (131). This thought crosses his mind after watching a dog carry a young child's foot out from under a pile of corpses. The horror of the scene is contrasted with the aloof attitude of the perpetrators who sit on top of the bodies and whose desire to kill is mostly driven by their desire to loot, as Karekezi remarks. Yet, Karekezi can see past this greed and reminds his troops of the need to remain vigilant and not lose strength until the job has been completed – a job that includes the murder of his wife and children of

[41] Applegate summarizes the critiques held against Gatore's work, which included those who said it was unrealistic in that a survivor would never want to understand a perpetrator (76-77).

[42] According to the International Center for Prison Studies, in 1998, 1812 of every 100,000 Rwandans was in prison for genocide related crimes. Because these prisoners are mostly working age men and because half of Rwanda's population today is under the age of 25, it is clear that the capacity for contributions to society have rested on women in middle age. In other words, the intense economic growth of the past several decades has come to be despite losing approximately one-eighth of the population to genocide and many more to imprisonment. See: World Prison Brief. *Prison Population Trend: Rwanda.* World Prison Brief, 2015. Web, 10 May 2016.

which he states, “je n’éprouverai ni tristesse ni remords” (140).

Any hope for a sympathetic or humane character in Karekezi is dashed by his devotion to duty and his apathy towards the murder of his own family. Despite this, Cornelius’s own view of his father must allow for some means of connection for the reader, as Karekezi is, after all, the main character’s father. Even though Cornelius left Rwanda at a young age, he has a distinct memory of his father being sympathetic towards Tutsis despite his Hutu ethnicity. These inclinations are verified when Cornelius is on the phone with his father at the beginning of the genocide and his father states, “Bien sûr, avait-il déclaré avec une sérénité plutôt rassurante, les voyous et les fanatiques vont en profiter pour attaquer des innocents” (90). A man who calls the extremists thugs and fanatics does not seem capable of being the same as a man who orders the murder of 50,000 Tutsi in one night. The stark contrast between these two sides of Karekezi creates a more frightening and unpredictable perpetrator, rather than a sympathetic perpetrator who at one point or another has been victimized.

The other perpetrators created by Diop are equally callous and incomprehensible for the reader. A faint light of connection is cast between the reader and Faustin who must overcome his father’s disappointment as he sets off to do his ‘work’. This father-son relationship is relatable to many readers, yet fails to create much empathy for the murderer. If any compassion is created it is in the farewell scene between Faustin and his family. This humanizing scene sets a strong cold mother next to teary-eyed sisters and next to Faustin, who must stay strong and head out to do his work of murdering Tutsis. By failing to create an innocent, shamed, guilty, or pathetic side to these characters, Diop creates one-sided monsters as opposed to the multi-faceted perpetrator of Gatore.

Gatore’s work stands apart in that he reimagines the crimes of Niko as an experience of

trauma, thus allowing the reader to see Niko as a sympathetic perpetrator. As an author, Gatore takes a risk in portraying a perpetrator as a relatable human who experienced a trauma. For Niko, the experiences of alienation, crime, isolation and shame are transformed into trauma, while his enduring fear and love unveil his humanity. We first come across Niko alone in a cave from which he can see three other hermits, yet not be seen himself. We learn that he was the first to arrive and found himself alone surrounded by monkeys with whom he created an uneasy rapport. These monkeys then become the only witnesses to his lonely death in the cave as he wastes away from starvation and shame. Yet his self-induced solitary confinement and death – moments that may otherwise elicit sympathy or pity – do not reach out to the reader as it seems logical that a man who committed such acts should be punished in isolation.

Instead, it is the scenes of childhood neglect and solitude that allow the audience to envision Niko as a survivor of trauma. Niko's mother dies during childbirth; mute, unable to make himself heard through the violent rainy season storms, the infant Niko is only noticed by the family dog. His father and stepmother only saw him as a nuisance that didn't need attending. As a young child whose ugly smile instilled fear in other villagers, Niko made few connections to other humans, except for his uncle Gaspard. Niko passed most afternoons at the blacksmith shop of his uncle where he grew from observer to apprentice to blacksmith. Gaspard, the narrator indicates, played the role of father that Niko's own father had refused to play (86). When Niko could not be in school or with his uncle, the narrator explains, Niko escaped into the depths of his imagination. As a child he even attempted to befriend a goat that he named Niko, yet the slaughter of the goat creates a realization of mortality for the young Niko. After finding the goat in his uncle's blacksmith shop, Niko decides the goat is the perfect interlocutor for practicing speech. Yet soon the village became wary of this relationship and "l'amitié entre les

deux Niko s'acheva brutalement"(88). This first loss and realization of mortality endure for Niko as the narrator remarks after describing the murder/sacrifice of the goat: "par surprise, le souvenir de cette scène figeait tout son corps en un tremblement qui pouvait aller jusqu'à l'évanouissement. Par prudence, Niko ne se lia plus avec rien ni personne, se contenant d'être là où il fallait quand il le fallait" (88). This self-imposed separation is amplified by the death of Gaspard and the resulting boycott of Niko's newly inherited blacksmith shop. Within the blacksmith shop Niko attempts to express himself through small designs on metallurgy projects but even these small expressions are denied by the community who further alienate him by not frequenting his business. These experiences of mortality, loss and alienation provide the background of a traumatic childhood against which the modern story of Niko as perpetrator can be told.

An overwhelming sense of shame accompanies Niko's story from the very beginning of the text. Needing to suppress his shame in order to keep living, Niko wears a figurative mask that forces him to abandon all human emotions (22). The shame that follows him from the genocide and on is characterized as "ces pensées insoutenables, des tremblements, et des évanouissements qui les accompagnent" (22). The shame, besides being called guilt, is not definitively named throughout the story, however, the fear it induces in Niko – the fear and the horror – clearly delineate the feeling from which he seeks to escape. Yet, the escape is not only interiorized, Niko must also abandon his childhood village and hide away from all human contact on an island in the middle of a large lake. The self-imposed isolation is just one more incarnation of his shame and horror at his acts during the genocide. The narrator states that there are certain thoughts, which Niko must avoid thinking – thoughts that haunt him – yet again these thoughts are not enunciated. In psychology, these hauntings could be seen as PTSD but because

of Niko's delineation as a perpetrator, he is not allowed to consider his actions as a traumatic experience. In the cave, only three emotions are allowed to Niko: hunger, pain and guilt. While shame in one form or another is a universal human emotion, the major problem for Niko is the fear of this shame. This fear is not only of villagers who may hate him but also of the memories that cause him so much guilt and shame. From the beginning of the story there is sense of impending doom as horrific memories slowly creep their way into Niko's conscience and into the conscience of the reader.

While the above sentiments – loneliness, shame and fear – transform Niko into someone who experienced a trauma, the feelings of love, community and curiosity render him human (contrary to the image of perpetrators as inhumane monsters). As a child, Niko was an admired student due to his good behavior and his desire to learn and read. The books he chooses – *Les Mille et Une Nuits, the Bible, L'Etranger* (84) – are close to the heart of any Francophone student and thus form a bridge of humanity between this horrific murderer and his reader. Niko describes reading as the only true escape, in which his mind can be completely occupied. The curiosity and unquenchable imagination that distract Niko at home or at school are quelled by the act of reading, an act his audience knows well. For Niko, it can be assumed, the Bible and *Les Mille et Une Nuits* offer short, fragmented stories with morals and lessons for the young boy. Yet, the discovery and adoration of *L'étranger* underlines a more complicated relationship with literature. This story of an apathetic murderer foretells the violence that will come to define Niko's life. The murder of the Arab man, done in broad daylight with little reflection, mirrors Niko's first act of killing in which he cannot and will not look at his victim but rather remains detached. Yet these stories differ drastically and importantly in their protagonists' reaction to murder. Whereas Meursault remains detached and apathetic even when facing the death

sentence, Niko is haunted by his actions and punishes himself.

As he grows, Niko develops a love for a young woman named Hyacinthe. This love and the love of Gaspard are what move Niko through his most lonely of days. The narrator explains:

> Il n'était pas aussi seul qu'il se le disait. Sans parler de Gaspard qui était toujours dans ses parages, quelques autres personnes lui portaient une certaine attention. Cette attention restait discrète, car il était incontestablement mal vu d'avoir de l'intérêt, et ne parlons pas de l'affection ou de l'admiration, pour Niko-le-singe. La ravissante Hyacinthe par exemple qui, droite sur ses longues jambes, s'arrangeait toujours pour passer près de l'atelier à chacune des courses qu'on l'envoyait faire (100).

Hyacinth's attention to Niko is enough to get him through the loneliest of days and to convince him that he is not completely isolated. His daydreams of Hyacinthe as well as his helplessness in seeking to protect her during the genocide resonate with any reader who has also felt the attention of one important person. A perpetrator who loves and protects is not the kind that is easily associated with evil. In this way, Gatore renders Niko meek, pitiful and relatable for his audience, thus breaking down the traditional, simpler binary of good and evil in perpetrators. Although critically contentious, the decision to incorporate perpetrator voices by both Gatore and Diop allowed a further written exploration of how the genocide came to pass.[43] Moreover, it opened the dialogue to the otherwise "unethical" attempts to understand perpetrator motivations – motivations that may clarify plans for reconciliation.

[43] In the earliest reception of *Le passé devant soi*, Charlotte Lacoste notes the discomfort and controversy regarding the "inversion des rôles de la victime et du bourreau" (254).

Writing: "To know, to kill, to pardon"

In contemporary Rwanda, the value placed on the reintegration of perpetrators into society almost surpasses the process of reintegrating survivors. Questions of forgiveness and reconciliation dominate the month of April each year, while they also play a silent role in daily life. When Isaro arrives in Rwanda she does not consciously seek reconciliation or reintegration nor the understanding or forgiveness of perpetrators. Instead, she is looking to create a space in which Rwandans can rest their burdens and transform their suffering into peace and cohesion (76). However, through her failure to complete this documentary project, and by writing about Niko, she discovers that her drive does not rest in helping the country to move forward but rather in her desire to know, to kill and to pardon the man who killed her family, however unknowable he may be. She thus seeks to reestablish her identity by facing the missing part of her life – the part of her life that was taken by this unknowable man. While this desire is strongly enunciated in her writing, it plays a silent role in her daily life (as it does with most Rwandans) where she questions the past of all men she meets, asking herself, "Et si c'était lui?".

A radio program that references the overflowing prisons of Rwanda reveals the reason for Isaro's whole dissatisfied demeanor while she is still in France – suddenly it becomes clear why Isaro is such a haunted person. That radio program becomes the impetus for applying to the Foundation and hoping to return to Rwanda where she will collect testimonies from victims, survivors and perpetrators alike. Yet, even before applying to the Foundation and returning to Rwanda, writing took its toll on Isaro who experienced it as an assaulting illness. Gatore writes of Isaro's writing process:

> Sans prévenir, les mots se bousculèrent alors dans son bras, réclamant de trouver sans délai le repos dans le petit cahier qu'elle avait devant elle. Elle sent encore dans ses

> veines la trace de leur afflux violent et acide. Pendant des heures, avant de se mettre à écrire, elle avait serré son crayon entre ses doigts comme la poignée d'un immense rangement dans lequel se seraient entassés, en désordre, tant de choses et pendant si longtemps qu'elle ne pourrait l'entrouvrir sans que tout s'écroule et l'écrase. Lasse, elle avait fini par lâcher la poignée. Les feuilles parsemées dans toute la pièce sont le résultat de ce déversement (12).

As with most other descriptions of Isaro, Gatore relies heavily on the use of "elle" as opposed to her name. With this effort a greater distance is accentuated between the reader and Isaro who consistently is described as a shadow or silhouette. This distance stands in contrast to the detailed and close description of the physicality of the writing process for Isaro – a process that lasts for hours and leaves a path of pain lingering in Isaro's body long after the writing is complete.

Initially Isaro's reintegration into Rwandan society goes well: "Le pays, la langue et les manières lui sont revenus naturellement. Elle les a retrouvés plus qu'elle ne les a découverts" (160). The narrator even describes how easily she adjusted to using a machete as everything except a weapon, despite the tool's connotations abroad and in Rwanda. Yet this reintegration is halted by the daunting work of her project. Because Isaro sought to put into words the experiences of all types of Rwandans, the disappointment of the actual experience of writing and the challenges of listening to so much horror grated on her state of being. "A qui l'observait bien, il paraissait évident que cette entreprise était en train de la dévorer. Les souvenirs des autres dont elle devenait la gardienne ne faisaient pas qu'entrer dans ses oreilles et d'évacuer par son bras et son stylo sous forme d'encre" (174). The process of putting suffering into written language becomes exhausting and detrimental to Isaro who slowly disappears into the shadows. She again begins to experience the painful writing process described earlier and, as the writing

leaves her, it leaves violently and results in the fragmented, messy story of Niko. The "feuilles parsemées" (12) clarifies why Niko's story is told in numbered paragraphs as it is something that was created so violently, it has had to be reassembled after the fact.

The timeline of the novel – alternating between Niko and Isaro – is disorienting and, for Niko's story, nonlinear. Niko's development begins where it ends and his life story is filled in by dreams and flashbacks. These nonlinear dreams, flashbacks and memories are then interrupted by a self-conscious narrator who warns the reader about the incomprehensible, and perhaps insufferable, nature of the text. This narrator states, "Cher inconnu, bienvenue dans ce récit. Je dois t'avertir que si, avant de mettre un pied devant l'autre, il te faut distinguer le sentier incertain qui sépare les faits et la fable, le souvenir et la fantaisie; si la logique et le sens te paraissent une seule et même chose; si, enfin, l'anticipation est la condition de ton intérêt, ce voyage te sera peut-être insoutenable" (11). Clearly, Isaro as author/narrator has come to see and accept the incomprehensible nature of Niko's story. The shift between fantasy and memory, fact and fiction becomes a defining factor in Niko's story in which dreams and waking are sometimes indistinguishable. The desire for clarity and logic is thus outweighed for the dreamlike descriptions of Niko's life. And again we see these dreamlike descriptions mirrored in the metanarrative of Isaro "elle" whose own story is told chronologically but lacks distinctive and concrete information on Isaro – all of which must be gleaned by her interactions with others (her parents and Kizito for example) and through her writing.

It is clear from Isaro's reluctance to visit the site of her childhood home that she refuses to accept and acknowledge certain parts of her identity. Despite asking her adoptive parents to tell her the truth and reading this truth in a letter, her refusal to visit the site demonstrates her failure to fully accept the complex reality of a genocide escapee. Even the process of

communicating so openly with her parents has been long and fraught, as evidenced by the chaos of her desk space: "Avec les courriers qu'elle a reçus, elle a laissé sur son bureau les brouillons de toutes ses lettres. Celui-ci est illisible, couvert de ratures. On a le sentiment qu'elle cherche à dire quelque chose qui ne vient pas et que, finalement, tout son propos est à côté de l'essentiel, indicible" (179-180). The earlier writing differentiates from this self-reflexive writing in that it did not seem to come naturally. Although the fictional writing was violent, it seems to have been a natural, albeit painful, process for Isaro. These letters, on the other hand, demonstrate how other forms of writing have been nearly impossible for Isaro whose self-criticism and self-editing stand in the way of writing. Clearly for Isaro fiction has served as a cathartic means of reconciling all sides of her identity while the documentary style and these self-reflexive letters take their toll. Although Kizito is originally a means through which Isaro hopes to reintegrate into Rwanda, when she pushes him away at the end and he asks what has become of his "petite Française", it becomes clear that her reintegration has been unsuccessful and she is unable to live with her complicated identity.

Gatore's own writing path mirrors the path of Isaro. While Isaro tried to compile the thoughts and experiences of other Rwandans, Gatore claims that his book is an attempt to rewrite journals that he lost while escaping the Great Lakes civil wars. An epigraph to his book reads: "Quand la guerre éclate dans son pays… le petit Gilbert Gatore… entame un journal intime dont il doit se séparer au moment de fuir, quelques années plus tard. C'est dans une tentative de reconstituer ce journal perdu qu'il se découvre amoureux des mots" (4). Isaro's writing sought to fill the gap left in her life after the genocide and it seems that Gatore's text was born of a similar initiative. Both texts developed out of a desire to replace something lost or unknown – for Isaro, it was to name the unknown person who killed her family, for Gatore it was to

reconstruct the remnants of his childhood. Moreover, the difficult relationship Isaro has to writing is echoed by Gatore's own experience. Whereas Isaro chose not to publish her book, Gatore also refused to publish the second volume that would supplement *Le passé devant soi*. Subtitled "Figures de la vie impossible, Tome 1", readers expected a second volume to appear.[44]

Returning to Rwanda after years in exile, Diop's main character comes prepared with mountains of books and documents. While settling into Kigali and awaiting his trip to Murambi, Cornelius "commença à trier et à classer ses papiers: des documents et des livres sur l'histoire du Rwanda. Il en avait beaucoup lu au cours des dernières années, moins pour connaître le passé lointain de son pays que pour comprendre le génocide" (59). But facts and the usual comfort of knowledge cannot prepare Cornelius for the truth that his father coordinated one of the most gruesome massacres of the genocide.

Although Cornelius expresses shame at having considered writing a play about the genocide, it is important to remark that he, like Diop, believed fiction to be a powerful vessel to tell the story of the genocide.[45] Yet, unlike Diop, he decides not to carry out that form of writing. The fake play he recounts to Roger illuminates his reservations regarding the fictional genre; the extreme satirical nature of this play shows how poorly fictional narratives can be crafted.

Yet, despite not identifying with a certain genre, Cornelius decides to keep writing and, as he states, "appeler les monstres par leur nom". This phrase points to the importance of humanizing the genocide, putting names to the faces of those lost but also to the faces of the

[44] It has been widely rumored that one of the main reasons Gatore has not sought further publication is the alleged implication of his father in the genocide. Because these rumors cannot be substantiated, I will not address them. Applegate offers a timely and well-summarized description of the turmoil in her article.

[45] It is interesting to note that Diop also considered writing a play about Rwanda as he reflects in his postface of the 2011 edition of *Murambi*.

perpetrators. In Rwanda, these people still live with or haunt the living and Cornelius believes all these stories must be told. The idea of calling a monster by its name speaks directly to the fact that his father was a perpetrator. Moreover, it also speaks to the human side of perpetrators as Cornelius explains, "I am now the perfect Rwandan: both guilty and a victim." Cornelius – as victim and guilt-bearer – understands the importance of humanizing all sides of the genocide. The narrator explains Cornelius's drive to write stating, "Cornelius eut un peu honte d'avoir pensé à une pièce de théâtre. Mais il ne reniât pas son élan vers la parole, dicté par le désespoir, l'impuissance devant l'ampleur du mal et sans doute aussi la mauvaise conscience" (226). Therefore, not only can writing humanize the horror, it can also defend the victims and, as the next phrase shows, work as a weapon. "Il [Cornelius] dirait inlassablement l'horreur. Avec des mots-machettes, des mot-gourdins, des mots hérissés de clous, des mots nus et - n'en déplaise à Gérard - des mots couverts de sang et de merde" (226). The reference to Gérard is a reference to the moment where Gérard lay alive under a body of corpses and their blood soaked into his mouth. The blood of the victims, the narrator attests, should not be used to suffocate the survivors but to give them strength. Cornelius thus seeks to harness this violence and use it resuscitate those lost and to humanize the horror.

The challenges faced by Isaro and Cornelius in completing their writing contrast sharply with the hope encapsulated in *Intersections no2: Ecrire pour le Rwanda.* This compilation was published on the event of the 20th commemoration of the genocide by the Belgian group, CEC (Coopération par l'education et la culture). It includes writings and reflections by the majority of the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* authors, as well as reviews by young Rwandans and reflections by various European scholars and artists. *Intersections* was published in April 2014 to coincide with the 20th commemoration of the genocide. In particular, it coincided with the *Café littéraire*,

a round table discussion with authors that was attended by Rwandans, foreigners and even the First Lady, Madame Jeannette Kagame. The journal is divided into four parts: *Diagnoles* (letters by members of the *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* project), *Lectures Croisées* (reviews of literature), *Carrefours* (letters of intervention by other authors, artists and scholars) and *Tangentes* (an interview with Boubacar Boris Diop).

In part I, *Diagnoles*, Dorcy Rugamba, Nocky Djedanoum, Koulsy Lamko, Abdourahman A. Waberi, Monique Ilboudo, Véronique Tadjo and Jean-Marie Vianney Rurangwa reflect on the experience of writing about the genocide. While each author takes time to reflect on the importance of words, some bring particular arguments to the table. For example, Nocky Djedanoum argues for the importance of Africa coming together to reflect upon the atrocity: "En dépit de la spécificité de cette situation, il n'empêche que le drame rwandais fait désormais partie de la mémoire collective de l'Afrique tout comme l'esclavage appartient à la mémoire collective des Noirs malgré leurs disparités," (14) and explains that the goal of the EDPM authors was "de pousser encore plus fort et plus haut nos cris d'indignation. Des cris qui déchirent le silence et qui redonnent l'espoir" (16). The *Ecrire par devoir de mémoire* project was distinct in that it called only on Africans to reflect on the genocide, but it is interesting to note that it was funded and organized in France as part of the Fest'Africa. This juxtaposition perhaps reflects on the resources available to African artists in Africa in traveling and publishing their work, as we see much more flexibility in those already located in France. Moreover, these roots of the movement mean that only Francophone voices would be heard in this memorial project – a deficit that has become even more clear as the country of Rwanda has moved towards an entirely Anglophone system.

Koulsy Lamko argues for the important role poetry and literature will play in

commemoration and in making the screams, to which Djedanoum referred, heard. While he describes the challenges faced by the authors, such as working around voyeurism, his final point is this: "Ici l'immoralité, n'est pas dans le voyeurisme dénonciateur. Il l'est dans le silence complice" (24). Therefore Lamko underlines that, despite the shortcomings and risks that this project undertook (such as being only Francophone or financed by France), the most important aspect of the project was to get voices heard; being too careful to avoid voyeurism (or in this case, conflicting goals of the French support) would only perpetuate the silence surrounding victims of the atrocity.

The third section, *Carrefours*, brings in thoughts from scholars across the globe and particularly from countries that have been touched by their own tragedies, such as Lebanon or Burundi.[46] These contributions recognize a more dire truth about the processes of reconciliation than did the reflections by the *Ecrire Par Devoir de Memoire* authors. Colette Braeckman, a renowned Belgian scholar of the Rwandan genocide, writes, "Rien n'est plus mensonger que l'oubli, plus dangereux que les pleurs canalisés dans les cérémonies officielles. Rien n'est plus pernicieux que ces portes qui s'ouvrent, durant quelques jours, sur les précipices de l'âme puis se referment sans avoir livré les secrets des profondeurs" (76). Braeckman is clearly criticizing the controlled forms of national mourning that are dictated in Rwanda. Other scholars, such as Nicki Hitchcott, also point to the strictly censored nature of mourning and commemoration in Rwanda. Hitchcott critiques the government's limited calendar for mourning, explaining that the state only allows Rwandans to mourn during the month of April. Moreover, she rightfully points to the failure of the Rwandan state to allow families to grieve in their own ways, by, for example,

[46] The second section, *Lectures Croisées*, offers excerpts and reviews of various productions that were borne out of the genocide, ranging from a play by Groupov 94 to the art pieces of Bruce Clarke, which are less applicable to this chapter.

burying their loved ones outside of memorial sites.

While Hitchcott and Braeckman criticize the process of limiting commemoration, neither offers any alternative. Braeckman ends her piece with the following lines: "Mais on découvre aussi avec effarement, que le savoir n'est qu'une illusion, que les promesses sont fragiles et qu'au fond, on n'a toujours rien compris…Et cette conscience-là vacille au bord d'un vide qui ne sera jamais comblé" (77). It is interesting to note that this hopeless viewpoint comes from a historian's perspective as opposed to the more hopeful viewpoints expressed by the EPDM authors. Perhaps it is fair to say that literature attempts to accomplish a reconciliation that has thus far been proven unattainable by history.

Tania Hadjithomas Mehanna provides a counter viewpoint to Braeckman, offering the following hope for the power of words. She writes:

> Mais alors, les mots? Que peuvent les mots face aux larmes, à la douleur, à la peur? Que peuvent les mots face à la barbarie? Que peuvent les mots face aux maux du monde? Et si on leur accordait des pouvoirs? D'énormes pouvoirs. Si les mots devenaient un véritable rempart contre le mal insidieux et rampant? Si on allait dans les extrêmes du bien avec des mots simples, des mots vivants, des mots d'amour? Extrémistes de la vie, les mots deviendront des cris chantés, des échos assourdissants, des hymnes à l'amour, des célébrations du bonheur, des racines profondes dans une nature à sauver, des gardiens d'une paix éternelle, des garants d'une humanité retrouvée (80).

By underlining the potential power of positive words – those of the living or of love – Mehanna demonstrates that although words can be used as weapons, they can also be accorded a positive power. Yet, she clearly delineates this power as a choice as it would be up to people ("on") to give power to these words. How would words be accorded a certain power, or enormous power?

Despite the government attempts to value words, with programs such as the Café Littéraire or with poetry and testimony at the commemoration ceremonies, book availability and literacy are still challenges for the general Rwandan population.

Overall the compilation is hopeful and positive in its reflections on the role of writing in reconciliation and commemoration. As explained in the introduction, "Conjuguer passé, présent et avenir", Carole Karemera writes that these texts must "élever le niveau de conscience des prochaines générations afin qu'elles soient des citoyens du monde différent". Karemera's choice of title "Conjuguer passé, présent et avenir" reflects the malleability of the past, not just for Rwanda but in general. If we considered history to be a verb, it would become clear that it can be manipulated to suit the time in which it is being considered. Histories of atrocities in particular, must be conjugated or manipulated, to fit the current moment, the past moment and the future moment. For Karemara, this history must be presented in a way in which it inspires the next generations and our current generation to build a different world. She concludes on an even more hopeful note writing, "Chacune de ces œuvres tisse des fils invisibles entre les êtres humains que nous sommes et rappelle ce lien indéfectible, cette responsabilité immutable que nous avons les uns envers les autres et envers ceux qui viendront après nous" (9).

In his review of Ruppert Bazambanza's *Sourire Malgré tout*, Freddy Rugamba is even more specific. He reflects on Bazambanza's strength, writing "Son regard optimiste, tourné vers le futur, est un véritable leçon de vie qui devrait nous inspirer tous, non pas pour obliger les uns et les autres à faire de même, mais plutôt pour nous montrer qu'il est possible de se relever et de continuer à avancer, convaincu qu'un avenir meilleur nous attend." (49). Convinced of a better future, Bazambanza and his reviewer stand in sharp contrast to Isaro who stands on the brink of suicide as the novel ends. Nocky Djedanoum, however, echoes the power that Cornelius and

Isaro saw in the medium of fiction. He explains, in regards to the EPDM project, "Ecrire est en soi une rude bataille contre le néant, contre la mort…La littérature n'est jamais le griot de la haine. La littérature est infini désir d'humanité" (15). Using a characteristically African metaphor, the griot, Djedanoum explains the importance of writing in carrying forward the humanity of mankind. Writing, he explains, is always a battle against negationism and extinction.

This desire to break the silence is echoed by each author who reflects on the act of writing. Yet a few also underline the challenges of writing after genocide. Véronique Tadjo, for example, highlights the relationship between "maux" and "mots" in French. She explains that one of her greatest fears in writing about Rwanda was to perpetuate the divisive language that destroyed the country in the first place. While each author claims the positive power of language, a few also argue that language played an important role in the genocide. A major topic of conversation at the "International Forum: After Genocide, Examining Legacy, Taking Responsibility" was the role of hate speech in leading up to the genocide and the role of negationist speech afterwards. Politically, there is a very strong push against negationism, but also against continued use of divisive terminology. The precision of words and the respect for their power is echoed by Cornelius who talks about using words to violently commemorate the genocide. The idea of violent language is well understood by Tadjo who also writes that this is perhaps a time of listening and that it may be hard to avoid the divisive language at a time when there are still stories to be told. She understands the challenges facing political leaders and authors who must use language not only to remember but to reconcile and move forward. Tadjo seems to be asking: What is to prevent a mot-machette from cutting, slicing and killing? Can words be a dangerous means of memorializing genocide? According to the novels of Gatore and

Diop, although words and the process of writing can cause harm, the genre of fiction is worthy of pursuit in the attempt to reconcile post-tragedy.

CHAPTER TWO

Song and Memory: Rwanda's Melodic Process of Public Commemoration

Bâillonnez les poèmes !

Qu'ils se taisent

Qu'ils se taisent

Qu'ils se taisent

Afin qu'il ne reste qu'un silence de mots

- *Gaël Faye*[47]

Gaël Faye, the Franco-Rwandan rapper, published "Le silence des mots" in March of 2014 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide. This poem ironically calls for the silencing of self-expression, and particularly of expression regarding the horror of the genocide. Yet, Faye has spent the last several years working against such a silencing and this work led his music to be featured at *Kwibuka20*.[48] Having written the main commemoration song that would be performed in front of world leaders such as Ban Ki Moon, Tony Blair and Samantha Power and a large Rwandan audience, Faye actively participates in the expression and representation of the genocide. Yet this poem's use of the imperative tense and repetition hints at the challenges that Faye and other artists have faced in representing the genocide through two main allusions. First, the commanding nature of the poem echoes the governmental control of the genocide narrative, as the government dictates what will be said and what will be silenced. Second, Faye's repetitive poetry can be read as rhythmic, echoing his usual reliance on music,

[47] Faye, Gaël. "Le Silence des mots." *Africultures.* Africultures, 24 March 2014. Web. 4 February 2016.

[48] *Kwibuka20* was the name given to the official commemoration ceremonies in Rwanda to commemorate 20 years since the genocide. In Kinyarwanda, "Kwibuka" means "to remember".

and it can also be read as pleading. The poem, when read on these different levels, portrays an imperative or a directive and also a pleading for the expression of other artists while simultaneously mocking the strict government dictates. Whether he is pleading against the silence or for it, it is clear that the poem reflects the pressures put on artists who seek to participate in the genocide narrative in Rwanda.

In assessing the role of music, several areas of tension come to the surface and complicate my overall analysis of the Rwandan forms of commemoration and memorialization. First are the questions of transmission and circulation. For example, to whom are the official commemoration ceremonies addressed? The songs, which are written in several languages, creates a tension with the local audience who may not understand French or English. The languages of the songs include Kinyarwanda, English and French, which are all languages spoken in Rwanda but two of which are more spoken transnationally. Moving beyond linguistic boundaries, music also functions to reach across generational divides in Rwanda. While artists such as Diana Teta and Gaël Faye appeal to a younger generation through their lyrical rap, others such as Mariya Yohana and Francis Muhire appeal to an aging population, loyal to traditional Rwandan vocals.[49] Another line of questioning develops in the tension between the government-sanctioned narrative of genocide and a subtly subversive narrative that can be gleaned from the metaphoric and vague language of the lyrics in these songs. To complicate these questions I will include theories regarding censorship and privileging of music as it has been studied within the African market. I argue that the study of music elucidates underlying complexities between languages, generations and narratives that are otherwise hidden.

[49] Diana Teta and Gaël Faye are young Rwandan artists both of whom were featured at the official April 7, 2014 ceremonies. Mariya Yohana, associated with more traditional Rwanda music was also featured. Finally, Francis Muhire is a Burundian guitarist who collaborated with Gaël Faye on his album *Pilipili sur un croissant au beurre*.

In order to address the above intricacies, this chapter begins with an historical overview of music's role in Rwanda. Then, introducing musicology, I show how music flows and is controlled on the market and, particularly, how it is disseminated in Africa. Then, moving into a comparison between censorship and "sanctionship", several close readings serve to demonstrate the complexity of this binary.[50] Finally, an analysis of Gaël Faye's music and philanthropic work brings us back to all three themes – history, musicology and censorship – as they are incorporated into this one artist's work and life. Faye thus serves as an exemplar of existence at the crossroads of transmission, generational divides and the formation of a counter narrative.

The History of Song in Rwanda

Music constitutes a different approach to commemoration as it falls outside the scope of literature and testimony. While it is generally not studied, music's relevancy to Rwanda is undisputable. Music and spoken poetry have played an essential role in Rwandan society since pre-colonial royal times. Beginning in the mid-1500s, kings (including the last monarch, Mutara Rudahigwa) asked their *abiiru* (or advisors who also acted as court musicians) to write poems that either explained the royal dynasty or paid homage to it. At this point, Rwanda was unique in the region for being united under a single monarchy, thus this monarchy's publicity was exceptionally formative in how we recognize Rwanda today. One of the few remaining royal court performers describes the role of these musicians and poets: "Historically, Rwandan musicians were expected to demonstrate their support for the rulers and military through both

[50] "Sanctionship" is a term coined by Martin Cloonan and Michael Drewitt and refers to the ability of government to censor some music by privileging other music and thus taking market share away from the "censored" music. Cloonan, Martin and Michael Drewett. *Popular Music Censorship in Africa*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2006. Print.

praise songs and songs that denounced or belittled their enemies. Musicians in the royal court composed songs that honored the king and his family and kept a record of his deeds and those of his forebears" (McCoy170).[51] *Abiiru* played an essential role in dynastic Rwanda, not only as a team of advisors for the king but also as those responsible for spreading the decisions from the king to the public and on to the next generations, acting as ambulatory archives. Royal poems, as memorized by the *abiiru*, were passed down as songs from one generation of the *abiiru* to the next. In fact, the memorization of these poems was so important to a king's renown that *abiiru* could be put to death for singing one incorrectly (Vansina, *L'évolution,* 23). The songs remember the deeds and the values of the king while also making these clear to the people who were expected to then understand these values and act upon them.

In his 1960's study of pre-colonial Rwanda, Jan Vansina, a historian and anthropologist specializing in the study of Central Africa, argues that it is not in fact the poem that is the most important part of this tradition but actually the commentary that goes with it. Commentaries could fluctuate more than the poems and in this way acted to interpret history as opposed to recite it. Therefore, these commentary were used politically to re-imagine historical events of earlier dynasties or to re-shape public opinion. It is important to note that a member of the *ubiwiiru* (council of *abiiru*), who thus had their kings' intentions in mind, presented narratives of history and current events to the public, meaning that even as far back at the 1500's, Rwandan news narratives have been directed through a government filter.

An interesting syntactical aspect of these songs is that the word for their genre in Kinyarwanda, *igisigo* or *ibisgo* means, poem or poetry as well as "to leave behind". If we can glean from "poetry", as a connotation, that the author is making an interpretation, it becomes

[51] McCoy, Jason. 'Mbwirabumva ('I speak to Those Who Understand'): Three Songs by Simon Bikindi and the War and Genocide in Rwanda'. Diss. Florida State University, 2013. Print.

obvious that *igisigo* representing governmental narratives were molded to reflect a certain interpretation. On the other hand, if we accept the definition of "to leave behind", then we can see how the governmental or monarchial narrative was selective of its retelling of history. I argue instead that the poetry of the dynasties was in fact designed to do both, interpret and leave out, depending on the needs of the current monarch. Perhaps interpretation of the past inherently entails that something will be left behind. If this can be read as a linguistic interpretation of the Rwandan appreciation of history, it is clear that the language itself has built in a mechanism for leaving the past behind. However, this thematic stands in stark contrast to Rwanda's current motto of "Never forget, Never again". In the case of remembering the Rwandan genocide, this distinctive etymology forms an interesting question, asking if by representing history we are thus leaving it behind or if we are incorporating and interpreting it.

Both Vansina and Andrea Greider (a sociologist and ethnographer specializing in Rwandan reconciliation) comment on the formulaic nature of the *igisigo*. In particular, Greider remarks that these strict formulas help distance the performer from the action they are describing. In the case of post-genocide Rwanda, he argues that having such formulas can help distance but also threatens to distance too much, not allowing the performer or the audience to truly connect with the meaning of the song. Despite being incredibly formulaic, Vansina also remarks on the obscurity that penetrates each song (*L'évolution*, 33). As I explained above, the songs were not meant to be understood as sung but rather to be interpreted according to the ruling party and their *abiiru*. Rwandan music, as well as the Kinyarwanda language itself, are considered to be obscure and vague because of the continued and prolific use of metaphors and the means by which Rwandans speak around subjects, meaning that they rarely address a topic head on but discuss it in metaphorical and deliberately elusive language.

Metaphors, proverbs and idiomatic expressions dominate the Kinyarwanda language and all of these characteristics were developed and explored in Jason McCoy's analysis of Simon Bikindi (a popular but censored Rwandan artist). McCoy cites four main ways in which Rwandans tend to use Kinyarwanda to blur meaning. First, Rwandans use it as a means to protect their privacy. For example, a neighbor may ask another where they are off to and the respondent may simply say nowhere although it is clear to both parties that the respondent does have somewhere to go. In a similar vein Rwandans use this language to hide meaning and most meaning is actually expressed in the tone of their language. McCoy cites an example of a general who may ask a friend or an enemy "Do we still take tea together?"; however in each case this question has a different meaning. With a friend, this may in fact be an invitation to tea, yet with an enemy this is a reminder that they no longer would participate in such friendly affairs. The third enactment of this metaphorical language is as demonstration of intellectual ability, as McCoy writes, "Obfuscation is prized in Kinyarwanda". Similarly and lastly, this language can be used to demonstrate knowledge through the recitation of ancient phrases, proverbs or references.[52]

Other variations of songs praised warriors, or even cows, which were and are still used to demonstrate a family's wealth and well being in Rwanda. Attentive to existing delineations of Tutsi, Hutu and Twa (despite the government's choice to not officially distinguish between the three), it is important to note the correspondence of royal music with a particularly Tutsi

[52] McCoy, Jason. 'Mbwirabumva ("I speak to Those Who Understand"): Three Songs by Simon Bikindi and the War and Genocide in Rwanda'. Diss. Florida State University, 2013. Print. 166.

culture.[53] Throughout the pre-colonial and colonial period, the Tutsi social stratification was associated with the king, with warriors and with wealth. It was therefore Tutsi that most often served as monarchs and interacted with the Belgian and German colonizers. Thus, many of the songs that were sung and have been passed down are associated with Tutsi families. In fact, the stratification continues in that Hutu and, particularly Twa, were asked to perform and sing these songs and dances in front of the Tutsi royals before the independence movement. Moreover, today the most well-known traditional Rwandan dance (*Intore*) is a dance performed by men and women portraying a warrior ceremony of the Tutsi people.[54] Each social stratification has its corresponding songs and dances but it is not surprising that due to their association with the monarchy and the colonizers the most well-known are in fact of Tutsi heritage.

Rwandan music, even in dynastic times, was based mostly on drums and the human voice. While the harp (*inanga*) and other stringed instruments were later introduced, the voice and drums remain the most important aspect of Rwandan music. For example, rap music, which carries on the tradition of a vocally-based, heavily rhythmic music, has become overwhelmingly popular in Rwanda. In fact, it is so popular that NPR recently featured Rwandan R&B and hip-hop artists Kamichi, and Bac-T, who spoke of their genre's rapid growth since the early 2000s.[55]

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[53] Bahutu, Batutsi and Batwa were all members of the Rwandan kingdom sharing a common religion and language.

[54] Adekunle, Julius. *Culture and Customs of Rwanda*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group (2007). Print. 134.

[55] In this interview, Kamichi and Bac-T attest to the importance of their genres (R&B and rap) while also addressing the challenges of content in Rwanda. While Bac-T is inspired by the social conscious rapper KRS-one, Kamichi explains the challenges in taking up serious subjects. He explains: "My most popular song is about love. My second most popular song is about love. When I sing about serious stuff, people go away." Kamichi explains how Rwandan artists often go through a process of self-censorship: "I survived it. I was here. I saw everything. But songs I write about genocide, I just don't want to release them 'cause if people listen to them they'll go

Rap can be seen as a type of poetry, carrying on the legacy of earlier poetic history in Rwanda. Yet we can also see how, with artists such as Mariya Yohana, the voice as instrument continues to be an important aspect of Rwandan music. Yohana is a traditional Rwandan vocalist whose songs focus on the hardships of life in Rwanda beginning with the massacres of 1959. Her lyrics and voice have become iconic and are consistently sampled by younger artists who are generally more influenced by rap and hip-hop.

In the first sections of "Duhagaze Twemye" (a song of the 2014 commemoration ceremony) for example, Yohana uses a brief spoken word strophe to highlight the range of her voice and the background singing that she performs throughout the event is evident of the range of the voice in Rwandan music. I return to Yohana and this song later in the chapter but I use it here to highlight one of two modern pillars of Rwandan music: the voice. The second pillar is a question of form with the heavy reliance on metaphors, a technique that added to the obscurity of dynastic poems, and still renders modern songs difficult to understand even for a native Kinyarwanda speaker. As dynastic songs were strictly formulaic, we find a similar structure in modern Rwandan music. I therefore argue that the reliance on voice, metaphor and form are the main aspects of Rwandan music that have carried through the centuries and continue to influence modern music.

Music continued to be a driving force of Rwandan society throughout colonialism and independence, yet its most notable use since dynastic times is to be found in the days and years leading up to the genocide in 1994. Radio Télévision libre des Milles Collines (RTLM) was notorious for playing propagandist commentary as well as music. As an example, I later turn to

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crazy again. We remember. People remember, but the society is still fragile". Dreisinger, Baz. "Two Decades Out of Ghastly Violence, Rwanda Sings of Love." *NPR*. 15 December 2013. Web. 20 May 2015.

the popular music of Simon Bikindi that was harnessed by RTLM in order to emphasize his anti-Tutsi lyrics. In his article questioning the role of radio in the genocide, Darryl Li, a lawyer and anthropologist, argues that one of the only ways to explain such diffuse killing that existed in a rhythmic daily routine was through the use of radio and propaganda. Since the beginning of his tenure as president in 1973, music had been used by Habyarimana's regime to foster support and promote anti-Tutsi popular opinion. For example, *animasiyo* was a "state-sponsored ritual...(in which farmers were obliged to sing songs in praise of the state, the MRND, or the president, often after participating in *umuganda*)" (23).[56] The use of song to promote the state – a particularly anti-Tutsi regime – therefore had its roots in the Tutsi-led dynastic poetry of the early 1500s, traces of which continue to be found today.

Musicology and the Study of African Music

Musicology's characterization of African music helps situate the role of this art form in post-genocide Rwanda. Musicologists of the past few decades have been pushing for an interdisciplinary approach to their field – a field that integrates cultural studies, musicology, sociology and history. When looking at African music in particular, contemporary scholars Toyin Falola and Tyler Fleming point to the necessity of distancing their work from early musicologists who simply sought to categorize music (for example, they cite Barber who broke music into three categories: elite, popular and traditional forms (12-13)) or to distinguish the

[56] *Umuganda* is the state required day of volunteering that all able-bodied Rwandans must participate in once a month and can include service such as street cleaning or brush clearing. The MRND party or Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement was Habyarimana's party and was the only national party until 1991 when the country was forced into a multiparty system. This party was mostly associated with Hutus and their political magazine *Kangura* featured some of the most explicit anti-Tutsi rhetoric.

lineage of different sounds and songs. Bringing their work in musicology into dialogue with literature and art distinguishes musicology of the 21st century from its predecessors.

Moving away from those distinctions, scholars seek to analyze "world music" and other forms that cross cultural boundaries, such as rap.[57] Not only do they study the one directional movement of music as commodity from the more prosperous northern hemisphere to the Global South along vertical lines, they also study music's comings and goings. For example, rap is seen as a genre mainly formed by African Americans in the 1980s, but its lineage can be traced to oral story-telling and song of African slaves in North America. Today, rap functions transnationally and is consistently being reworked and reformulated in different cultures. For example, this renegotiation of rap styles famously takes place in France where immigrants (and many others) have seized upon the genre and continued its original use as a means by which to express social distaste and political dissent. One such artist is the Ivorian *zoblazo* artist Meiway, whose songs "challenge the homogenizing discourse about late twentieth and early twenty-first century immigration in France" (Knox 93)[58].

Although rap music is moving across cultural boundaries, it is interesting to note that rap produced outside of the U.S. rarely gains any airtime or popularity in the U.S., whereas American rap music is popular worldwide. As Timothy Taylor explains in *Global Pop: World Music, World Markets*: "Aesthetics – and I do mean "high" cultural aesthetics – and the economic underpinnings such as copyright make possible the incorporation of all sounds under the name of a single creator"(50). In other words, there is a clear territorializing in the market

[57] See Timothy Taylor and Tony Mitchell.

[58] Instead, as evidenced by the popularity of Meiway's albums, the French music scene has become more heterogeneous, allowing for the reception of foreign genres of music such as *zoblazo* from the Ivory Coast.

share that influences popular rap, because as American and European producers can buy rights to almost any music and because their brands hold the most sway in the market, only a certain set of artists are introduced to the global market. These economic obstacles force artists from the Global South to either be incorporated into the Western aesthetic or be blocked from market access. Rarely can artists keep authentic roots for their music and gain popularity. Instead, their "authenticity" is compromised to become a sound that may only be "authentic" according to distant, Western norms. On the level of aesthetics and market influences, Tony Mitchell explains that during this process of renegotiating rap, artists often return to their more local roots (32), yet it is important to note that this return is not without costs in market share and popularity.[59]

Mitchell and Taylor, alongside specialists in Ghanaian and Kenyan music (George Gathigi and Samuel Gyasi Obeng[60]), point to the specific capacities of rap as a form of expression in our globalized world. While Mitchell begins by underlining its ability to bridge the global and the local, he elaborates on this argument by suggesting that rap has a universalizing aspect. According to Mitchell, sampling from across genres, languages and cultures, rap's mixing leads to atemporality and universality. He writes, "rap artistry leads rappers to destroy the dichotomy between original creation and borrowing through the creative recombination of bits and pieces sampled from various and diverse sources" (39). In other words, rap finds its originality in its use and re-use of other sources of music, as well as its distinctive poetic or spoken word qualities. African artists, Mitchell explains, are under a very distinctive pressure

[59] "The different hip-hop scenes surveyed here have considerable affinities as well as differences, not least in the way they all tend to seek out local roots, and they generate tensions and debates in relation to notions of authenticity, commercialism, politics, ethnicity, and language. All involve an initial negotiation with U.S. rap, followed by a return to the local" (32)

[60] In Fleming and Falola's edited volume.

when it comes to originality. He argues that African artists face an expectation from the West to remain "premodern" (126) and "authentic" and that these demands are unequally placed on them, meaning that Western artists are not asked to be authentic to their distinctive cultures, they are instead asked to expand, syncretize and hybridize. While this uneven pressure for authenticity is viewed negatively by Mitchell, others such as Simha Arom and Denis-Constant Martin argue in their article "Combiner les sons pour réinventer le monde", that the mixing and meeting of cultures through music acts to unite different cultures and foster fraternity (162). For them, the distribution of music and expectations of artists are not hierarchical and oppressive but humanist and universalizing.

In the case of Rwandan music, we do see the easy transmission from the more economically prosperous North to the Global South and the lack of musical flow from South to North. Gaël Faye is one of the few artists who promotes the movement of Rwandan music outside of Rwanda particularly through his use of sampling and his artistry in music videos. Rap has moved swiftly and popularly into Rwanda, manifesting itself in the work of many of the up-and-coming artists such as Jay Polly and Diana Teta. In the next section I will describe the constraints against which these young performers must work in Rwanda, where free speech and expression are oppressed.

Censorship and Music Production

The government has long played a role in the distribution and marketing of music in Rwanda. Whether by commissioning dynastic songs of the 1500's or arresting artists under post-independence regimes or privileging artists of *Kwibuka20*, the government's role has been evident for centuries. The work of Martin Cloonan forms the base of my analysis of censorship

of pop music in Africa. Cloonan, professor of Popular Music Politics at Glasgow University currently serves as editor for of *Popular Music* and *Popular Music and Society.* In his 2009-edited volume, *Policing Pop*, Cloonan explains the distinct complexities in delineating a clear definition of censorship. Asking "What is Censorship?", he explains that the concept is not limited to the outright ban of music or artists. Instead, he writes:

> This definition aims to be broad enough to include processes ranging from market-based decisions within the music industry to the actions of official or state censorship agencies. It includes restrictions as well as outright bans. It is *not* predicated upon a belief that censorship has to involve a deliberate attempt to suppress, but there has to be an effort to significantly alter (15).

The very field of popular music complicates any examples of censorship that were not *intended* to restrict. Popular music is created, according to Cloonan, to feed the tastes of a certain audience and by accommodating this audience it is already censored.

Moreover, censorship takes different forms and is treated differently in countries that have different definitions of free speech and freedom of expression; therefore, the definition is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to parse out. Turning to the African context in *Popular Music Censorship in Africa*, Cloonan worked with Michael Drewett to outline three forms of censorship and propose various case studies of these enactments of censorship. The first form, which is the most condemned, is the outright banning of books, music, artists, etc. This variation was immensely popular across Africa during the post-independence period in which African governments were attempting to establish a purely national identity by blocking access to Western music and art.[61] The second form of censorship is intentional limiting of access to

[61] See Cloonan and Drewett's interpretation of the attack on Nigerian musician Fela Kuti. (12)

certain artists and songs. This is incredibly prominent in Rwanda where books are expensive and only local music is accessible on the radio or in the record stores. The third genre of censorship is actually what the authors call "sanctionship", meaning the government suppresses some music by more heavily promoting other artists. It is important to note that by "sanctionship" these authors, and I, mean the privileging of certain music and not the banning of said music. This is clearly what was occurring under the Habyarimana regime with RTLM, as will be discussed, and is now happening under President Kagame as demonstrated by the national commemoration events and the performers chosen to partake.

There are two examples of state censorship that exemplify the role of this governmental mechanism in Rwanda pre and post genocide. First is the case of Simon Bikindi who was popular in the 1990's and stood trial for his action and songs during the genocide. Today, after Bikindi's trial, his music is not banned but is muted by unofficial censorship caused by Rwandans choosing not to listen to him because of his negative reputation. Because of his public trial, his music is hard to find and is shunned by many in Rwanda. Bikindi's music has been interpreted as anti-Tutsi and pro-violence, and he stood trial for inciting genocide as well as participating in the killing. One such song is entitled, "Intabaza" ("The Alert") and addresses violence that is occurring "due to the spirit that attacks from abroad" (McCoy 206). This "spirit" could be construed to be the RPF entering from Uganda and causing havoc in the North. Yet, we again see the vague nature of Kinyarwanda in that the spirit is never so clearly defined in the song. Instead, the spirit was defined by the Radio Télévision libre des Milles Collines, whose DJ's highlighted the anti-Tutsi language in these songs. In 2008 Bikindi was found guilty of "Direct and Public Incitement to Commit Genocide" based on his involvement with the *Interahamwe* and his actions and announcements proclaimed from a military vehicle in Kivumu

and Kayove.[62, 63] It is therefore his nonmusical acts of hate and his involvement with local militia that led to his condemnation.

Bikindi was acquitted of several charges including: genocide, complicity in genocide, conspiracy, murder, and persecution in crimes against humanity. The three songs considered by the court, including "Intabaza", were deemed too metaphorical and allusive to have led directly to genocidal violence. It was therefore only his action in the vehicle that led him to be jailed for 15 years, while the court found that his music and the use of his music were not punishable by law. McCoy points out that the works produced by Bikindi in the early 1990s were not then illegal and, while they may have been privileged and thus controlled by the government, they were certainly not censored. By demonstrating the popularity of his Bikindi's work, McCoy thus underlines the power wielded by both censorship and "sanctionship". The capacity to find Bikindi's work has fluctuated drastically under the varying regimes of the past three decades. In the 1980s and 1990s Bikindi's work was readily available and manipulated (according to McCoy and others) by the radio hosts that played his music. This music was manipulated in that the audience understood the songs as anti-Tutsi, but not manipulated enough so that Bikindi could himself be to blame for the violence that may have occurred in light of his songs. Meanwhile, today in Rwanda, it is challenging, if not impossible to find Bikindi's music even though McCoy's work suggests that without the manipulation of RTLM, Rwandans today would not necessarily associate Bikindi with anti-Tutsi sentiment or genocide.

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[62] The *Interahamwe* were the local militia groups mostly composed of young men who perpetrated most of the massacres in 1994.

[63] Kivumu and Kayove are in the Western provinces of Rwanda. The information on Bikindi comes from a UNHCR report at: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/refworld/rwmain/opendocpdf.pdf?reldoc=y&docid=4935248c2

The second example of state censorship is Kizito Mihigo, who was arrested in April 2014. While this artist's music was not anti-Tutsi as Bikindi's may have been construed, Mihigo's music did stray from the genocide narrative of the Rwandan government. Today Kizito Mihigo is in jail for collaborating with anti-government groups in South Africa and the Congo including the Rwanda National Congress (RNC) and the *Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération de Rwanda* (FDLR), although many think it was his music that got him arrested. The RNC and the FDLR are known for their anti-Kagame and anti-RPF stance, although only the FDLR is verified as a Hutu-led group. Both groups have hubs of power in South Africa. Mihigo is a renowned gospel singer and composer whose studies at the Conservatory of Paris were funded by the Rwandan government. He was orphaned during the genocide and previously had close ties to the RPF government, thus his association with such groups as the RNC is shocking. In any case, just before the twentieth anniversary commemoration ceremonies in April 2014, Mihigo's name was suddenly taken off the program and he was not located for over a week. When he was finally found, he was in government custody, accused of the aforementioned crimes.

Aljazeera America, echoing the doubts of many Rwandans, questioned in December 2014 if this arrest may actually have been based on a song Mihigo had released in March of the same year. That song, entitled "The Meaning of Death" took a somewhat different stance than the government's official genocide narrative. In contemporary Rwandan governmental rhetoric, the RPF saved Tutsis from elimination, but in reality, the RPF also played a diabolic role as it took systematic vengeance on Hutus, including many innocent people. The immediate aftermath of the genocide was incredibly complex, with the French approaching from the south and offering refuge to perpetrators and the RPF entering from Uganda (to the North) and slaughtering

Hutus. Mihigo's song acknowledges that there were deaths outside of those considered victims by the current government, those who may have lost their lives, not as Tutsi victims of genocide but as other innocents, such as those murdered by the RPF who may have had no involvement in the genocide:

> No such thing as a 'good death'
>
> Be it by genocide or war
>
> Slaughtered in revenge
>
> Vanished in an accident or by illness
>
> Even though the Genocide orphaned me
>
> But let it not make me lose empathy for others
>
> Their lives too were brutally taken
>
> But not qualified as Genocide
>
> Those brothers and sisters
>
> They too are humans I pray for them
>
> Those brothers and sisters
>
> They too are humans I comfort them
>
> Those brothers and sisters
>
> They too are humans I remember them

Throughout the song, the lyrics are allusive yet also strangely straightforward. The action verbs in the past tense – slaughtered, vanished, orphaned, taken, qualified – all speak very directly about the subject of genocide; however, the unclear nature of the subjects and objects complicates the implications of these verbs. In fact, most of the lines do not have a direct subject or object. The lines, "Slaughtered in revenge/vanished in an accident or by illness" immediately

forces the listener to ask who is slaughtered and who vanished. It is in fact this very line of questioning that potentially led Mihigo to jail. Because the victim is not clearly identified, it is possible that the artist is identifying as victims people who are not considered innocent according to the government's strict delineation of victiom and perpetrator.

Mihigo continually emphasizes the importance of humanity and of Rwandan nationalism and unity. While the Rwandan government no longer officially recognizes ethnic divisions, Mihigo argues in this song that they must go further by stepping past nationalistic tendencies and divisions. After these verses in which he expresses feelings of empathy for all those who lost their lives, he implores that "Let NdiUmunyaranda (I am Rwandan) be preceded by "I am a human"".[64] In other words, Mihigo could be seen as challenging the government's traditional definition of Rwandan, as a purely nationalistic definition. It is worth asking who, in the traditional government rhetoric, is allowed to be Rwandan – are perpetrators, victims, refugees and exiles all included in this definition? Mihigo's song certainly contests the simple definitions laid forth by the government without giving any clear indication of who else must be included.

According to dynastic poems and the music of the 1990s, inclusionary music or music that allows for multiple perspectives has never been popularly supported in Rwanda, despite the metaphoric nature of Kinyarwanda, multiple interpretations are often discouraged. Instead, music generally serves to pay homage to a certain person or to a regime. However, one common denominator – a factor that complicates issues of censorship and "sanctionship" – is the question of obscure and metaphorical language. As demonstrated by Mihigo's song, most of the differential language is based on a certain interpretation of his words, rather than on his direct statements. The others of which he speaks, those "brutally taken", are not specified as Hutu or as

[64] "Music Video by Kizito Mihigo performing Igisobanuro Cy'urupfu/The Meaning of Death." *TheRwandan.com*. n.p. 18 April 2014. Web. 4 February 2016.

victims of the RPF; instead, they are "others", other humans towards whom Mihigo wishes to express empathy. This obscure language could be what protects Mihigo from arrest due to his music, but is also what Aljazeera America calls "playing with fire".[65]

Moreover, the video further argues for the innocence of Mihigo and in fact it does seem to say that Mihigo's language is based in faith as opposed to politics. The video, now posted on a political blog "The Rwandan", is introduced with the following English subtitles: "This is the song that made Kizito Kagame's public enemy". The first images in the video are of Mihigo holding and rubbing rosary beads, alternating with images of him playing the keyboard. He is immediately portrayed as a devout Christian, as his first lines in Kinyarwanda are sung in front of a church. The video producers offer English subtitles throughout the song. The images lack any other people and in this way call to mind the emptiness left behind after the genocide and perhaps bring to mind the fact that Mihigo is alone in this battle of more widely defining victimhood.

Although it is clear that Mihigo's genocide narrative differs from the national rhetoric, he has not actually been brought to trial for this song (what is said and unsaid) but rather for political, international conspiracy. The question is whether or not this trial is a façade for musical and creative censorship in Rwanda, and whether the same question is applicable to Simon Bikindi. While the government has not banned either artists' music, both have seen a change in reception due to government action, and thus the judicial process may be seen as an act of censorship in a highly policed state.

[65] Rosen, Jonathan W. "Dissident 'choirboy': Rwandan Gospel Star on Trial." *Aljazeera America.* Aljazeera America, 11 December 2011. Web. 4 February 2014.

"Sanctionship" and Music of the Commemoration

In contrast to the songs above that have recently been censored in one way or another, the close-readings that follow examine those songs sanctioned by the Rwandan government. These "sanctioned" songs are those privileged and presented in official capacities. The first song I focus on, "We are Standing Tall", was performed on April 7, 2014 as part of the daylong program of commemoration.[66] The music chosen is a blend of genres – using Rwandan traditional instruments such as percussion and the *inanga* (or harp) while also including rap and guitars. The song was performed as collaboration between seven artists before a crowd of 30,000 at *Amahoro* Stadium. "We are Standing Tall" was written by Gaël Faye and translated by a team of Rwandans. Faye explains:

> C'est la présidence qui m'a appelé…pour un Rwandais quand la présidence t'appelle, en général tu ne peux pas refuser. Mais aussi pour moi je n'ai pas voulu être trop politisé, c'est à dire que je ne parle jamais de l'actualité et vraiment du Rwanda à part mes textes parce que déjà je pense que c'est difficile pour un artiste de se positionner sur l'actualité parce qu'elle change et que des fois on a nos opinions mais qui ne sont pas de la matière artistique. Voilà. C'est pour ça que c'était étrange pour moi que la présidence m'appelle après il m'a demandé quelque chose qui m'intéressait c'est à dire qu'il m'a demandé à écrire des paroles qui allaient être traduites dans les trois langues du pays en kinyarwanda, en anglais et en français.[67]

In other words, what was truly appealing for Faye in this project was to be able to communicate across all three Rwandan languages – a feat which he is usually unable to attain. For Faye,

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[66] Faye, Gaël. "Duhagaze twemye - we are standing tall". Kwibuka20 Commemoration. Trans. Christelle Kamaliza. Kigali, Rwanda. 7 April 2014. Live. (available on YouTube.com)

[67] Faye, Gaël. Personal Interview. 7 August 2015.

communicating with a wide range of audiences has always been important and this allowed him a large-scale opportunity to do so. When asked what type of direction the President's office had asked for Faye explained:

> Déjà ils m'ont demandé que ça soit assez facile d'accès parce que comme ils voulaient que la chanson passe à la radio que ça puisse être entendue par les gens c'est ce qu'ils disaient comme par les gens à la campagne et ils m'ont dit qu'il [ne] faut pas que ça soit trop compliqué même si je pense que la langue rwandaise est une langue éminemment politique et que les gens déjà même à la campagne, c'est déjà à un très haut niveau quoi de leur langage donc en fait je pense qu'il n'avait pas besoin de cette précaution là. Et puis…aussi ils m'ont demandé d'apporter une approche entre guillemets « positive ». En plus de parler de la vie que de parler de la mort.[68]

Unsurprisingly, the government, in sanctioning a commemoration song, was looking for a song that was somewhat undisputable. In other words, a song that was easily understood at the surface level and that valued the positive reconciliation aspects of Rwanda over the more negative truths of the genocide. Although Faye clearly believed that such a song did not need to be simplified for the general Rwandan public, he continued to stick with simpler metaphors in the writing of the song. Yet I will argue that these « simple » lyrics, as Faye pointed out, could be understood at a much different level because of the complexity of the Kinyarwanda language.

Maria Yohana, the aforementioned traditional Rwandan artist, is the first performer in Faye's song and she begins with a spoken word strophe:

> Here is the day that defined our history, that month that will live on forever
> And that irreplaceable year of 1994

[68] Faye, Gaël. Personal Interview. 7 August 2015.

> But let our smiles replace our scars; we must live our lives
> Always remembering that the April's storm gave way to the July's sun (Faye, "We are Standing Tall")

The theme of rebirth and remembering plays an important role throughout the song, as indeed it does throughout the month of commemoration. In this verse, Yohana explains that the genocide is the defining event of more than just the surviving generation of Rwandans but also an important aspect of Rwandan identity in general. While underlining the significance and persistence of the genocide, Yohana also points to the future and reminds her audience that even the most inhumane of experiences will always end. Referencing the beginning of the genocide in April and comparing it to a storm, she also refers to the end of the genocide in July as a break in the clouds. This natural metaphor brings into question the inevitability of the genocide, for as a storm cannot be stopped, she may also be suggesting that the genocide could not be prevented. Such a stance would be in contrast to the government's position that the international community could have put an earlier end to the genocide. Moreover, it would complicate the government's position as the savior or as the cause, depending on who is writing the narrative. If the genocide was inevitable, like a storm, then the RPF's move from Uganda only controlled the effects of the violence instead of (as opponents have claimed) causing the violence through their attacks against northern Rwanda. If the genocide moved like a storm, then the RPF can be seen as doing what it could to prevent further carnage and their offensives could also be seen as an inevitable reaction. These multiple interpretations stand in stark contrast to the simple narrative of the RPF acting as savior and the opposition's narrative of the RPF having caused the genocide through their attacks. Putting the genocide within a natural cycle, like a storm cycle, raises questions about the general narratives put forth regarding the genocide's progression.

In any case, valuing life after genocide, as evidenced by the "smiles replacing the scars", is an image that echoes the party line of "Remember. Renew. Unite". These themes are repeated throughout the song but also give way to an acknowledgment of the struggles of survival. For example, later in the song, Gaël Faye raps:

> I've only had 20 years to heal the wounds, 20 years to build the sculptures
> I've only had 20 years to overcome the insomnia, 20 years to rebuild my life
> I've only had 20 years to get out of the fog, only 20 years to celebrate the moon
> So I've got only 20 years and a whole life ahead of me
> So be patient and open your arms to me. (Faye, "We are Standing Tall")

Faye argues that 20 years is not enough for wounds to heal and for Rwandans to truly speak their suffering. The repetition of 'only' suggests that these goals – of healing, of rebuilding, or of writing, and of celebrating – are still a work in progress and that 20 years is not in fact a very long period of time. By commenting on the building of sculptures, Faye calls into dialogue the work that official bodies have done in commemorating the genocide. While insomnia, rebuilding and healing can be seen as quite personal, building is a very public task, particularly when it comes to building memorials. Can healing wounds and building sculptures really be considered as equals as they are laid out in the phrase? I would suggest that interrupting this list of personal steps with a public one, Gaye contrasts the two aspects and may even be questioning the efficacy of building sculptures. Compared to healing wounds and overcoming insomnia, how helpful is the building of sculptures? Another private act that is shared by many in Rwanda is what Faye refers to as the celebration of the moon. During the genocide, the night hours were often used as the hours of killing while the perpetrators rested during the day. In this way, the night came to symbolize the violent period of the genocide and a time of fear and despair. By

celebrating the moon, Faye acknowledges that even basic aspects of nature such as the moon or the river had to be re-framed after the genocide when both aspects came to be associated only with violence and death.[69] Yet again, hope is there in the last lines, with a whole life ahead and patience and human connection as key. In Faye's lyrics, words like "heal", "build", "overcome" and "celebrate" indicate a forward movement and his last phrase underlines the perceived necessity of unity.[70] It is interesting to note that this section and the spoken word section of Yohana have a similar style in that they are both, in a way, rapped. In this way we can see the song coming full circle as it moves from traditional Rwandan spoken poetry to the more youthful and globally inspired rap.

The chorus reiterates the above beliefs but I argue that it also oversimplifies the task of memorializing the genocide. It reads:

> We are standing tall, remembering our loved ones, overcoming tragedy that was once
> We are standing all, proof that we live on; we are the light that shines on (Faye, "We are Standing Tall")

The change in the first half of each line from "standing tall" to "standing all" again reflects the desire for community action as referred to earlier when Faye asked to be accepted by open arms. Moreover, the use of the present participle as with Faye's verse indicates a continuing process. Yet the word "overcome" seems to contradict this continuing action and the first verse in which Yohana explained how the genocide has defined Rwandans. Can one 'overcome' and still

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[69] While the moon would symbolize the killing time of day the river's imagery was transformed because that is where many bodies were dumped and it came to symbolize the Bahutu effort of returning the Batutsi to whence they came, the Nile, as sons of Ham.

[70] Originally sung in French, these verbs take the form of "pour" and infinitive. Using the infinitive allows Faye to use these verbs not only as instruction (as in the imperative) but also portray the actions as malleable and yet to be conjugated, like the actions themselves.

internalize such an atrocity? Or does the act of overcoming necessitate a separation between one's identity and the event? Through such questions it is clear that the commemorative music poses quandaries and reaches towards a dialogue rather than offering simplistic answers.

As with the broader scale of commemoration, the international community has also left a mark on the music of the ceremonies. It is clear from a simple analysis of the performers' individual histories that sanctioned music in Rwanda is heavily invested in representing a range of languages and cultures. This aspect of the song first becomes clear in the artists themselves. The song performed at *Amahoro* Stadium begins with Mariya Yohana, a foundational pillar of Rwandan traditional and popular music – she was born in 1943 and thus has witnessed over 50 years of oppression and violence in Rwanda. Her music is traditional in that it features the voice as the main instrument and she now frequently collaborates with younger Rwandan artists and continues to demonstrate the power of the voice as she mixes her style with a more popular genre. Man Martin, Teta Diana, and Lisa Kamikazi are the next singers featured in the song, and are representative of a lively and talented group of young Rwandans who sing about the future of the country and represent a generation of Rwandans who, while young during the genocide, have been shaped by their country's efforts towards commemoration and reconciliation. Next Patrick Nyamitari, a Rwandan whose English lyrics and gospel roots demonstrate the role of the church and particularly, Protestant, Anglophone churches in the revival of Rwanda after the genocide, sings about dreaming of those lost and of building monuments to them.[71,72] Jay Polly is then

[71] It is important to note that Nyamitiri has his roots in an Anglophone, Protestant realm because this demonstrates the shift of Rwanda from Catholicism before 1994 to Protestantism today. This shift is connected to the loss of faith in the Catholic church many Rwandans experienced due to the priests conspicuous role in the genocide. Many priests are suspected of having gathered innocent Rwandans in their churches, trapping them inside and then inviting the local militia to murder the gathered Tutsis.

featured and his rap, popularity and awards highlight the move of Rwandan youth towards this popular genre of music. Finally, the introduction of Gaël Faye, a Franco-Rwandan rapper of the group Milk, Coffee & Sugar, on the Rwandan stage reinvigorates the francophone aspect of memorialization. While most of the song is performed in Kinyarwanda, two verses are performed in foreign languages – French for Gaël Faye and English for Patrick Nyamitari.

The above song, entitled *Duhagaze twemye* ("We are Standing Tall") was performed at the April 7th commemoration ceremony. Meanwhile, another song *Urumuri Rutazima* ("Never-Ending Light") was performed throughout the month leading up to April 7th as part of the countrywide walk to remember.[73] This walk featured the flame of remembrance that was carried from memorial to memorial across Rwanda, making over 30 stops. At each memorial, a ceremony of commemoration was held and a young choir performed the song.[74] Youth also played an important role in the physical carrying of the flame, as those who participated were 20 years old, representing how the country has changed and moved forward since the genocide. The title of the song means "never-ending light" in English and the chorus indicates that it is this light – this never-ending flame of remembrance – that will keep Rwanda moving forward. The genocide is only mentioned once in the song, while the forward movement of the country is mentioned over and over. This content choice was repeated at each ceremony in Kigali, thus

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[72] Following up on Faye who says there has not been enough time to build monuments, Nyamitari says that it is now time to build the monuments in order "to remember". Nyamitari offers the present as the time to build these monuments perhaps completing the sculptures that Faye lamented had "only" been built.

[73] *20th Commemoration of the Genocide against the Tutsi*. Kigali, Rwanda: Kwibuka20.org, 2014. Print. Song available at: http://www.kwibuka.rw/events/events-listing/urumuri-rutazima-kwibuka-flame

[74] The 2015 month of mourning consists only of such local ceremonies as the government has decided that a national ceremony will only occur every 5 years at the Amahoro Peace Stadium.

demonstrating that for the ceremonies of 2014, "sanctionship" played a greater role than outright censorship.

While parts of the song are sung in English, the majority is performed in Kinyarwanda and in more remote sites, local practice transforms the song completely into Kinyarwanda. The song begins with the use of Rwandan instruments such as the *ngoma* (drums) and rattles (or shakers). The voices enter and in turn feature a chorus and a female solo performer. At times this performer was the aforementioned Yohana, whose voice and range is distinctive to Rwandan vocal music. At other moments, the song featured local youth choruses such as those featured at the Ecole Technique international ceremony. While this song falls directly into the category of officially sanctioned music, it also reinforces the value placed upon music in commemorating the Rwandan genocide. As demonstrated by these two songs, Rwandan tradition and language were critical to *Kwibuka20*. Yet it is important to reflect upon how other cultures and particularly francophone culture were integrated. This shift in focus acknowledges the complex relationship between Belgium (the colonizer), Rwanda, and France – a country who has long taken an interest in promoting francophone cultures and the French language.

The Case of Gaël Faye

Therefore, I now turn our attention to a francophone rapper whose work was highlighted as part of *Kwibuka20* and whose work continues to bridge the cultures of France and Rwanda. Reinforcing the role of rap in the commemoration, Faye also represents the transnational aspects of these ceremonies. Of the featured artists, Faye has reached the highest international acclaim and is the only one who did not live in Rwanda. Faye was born in Burundi but has lived in France since 1995 after his family escaped the civil war in the Great Lakes region. Faye's career

has been marked by this bicultural experience and is reflected in his debut solo album's title, "Pili Pili sur un croissant au beurre". This title provides a gastronomic image of Faye's mixed up-bringing with the croissant representing France and the *pili pili* (a hot sauce) representing the Great Lakes Region. Faye has spoken himself on the important role of rap in his formation as a bicultural artist saying, "Quand je suis arrivé en France complètement perdu, c'est le rap français qui m'a expliqué ce qu'est la société française" (Badou).[75] French rap fit Faye who found himself not at home in Burundi nor in France but able to use French to communicate in either location. In one of his concerts, featured in his documentary *Quand deux fleuves se croisent*, he reflects, "j'habite dans cet espace que j'ai créé dans ma tête qui s'appelle A-France", combining France and Africa in one word representing home. Faye's work, particularly his solo work, has treated this subject of duality and also the specific violence of Burundi and Rwanda, which is why he was featured at the 20th commemoration.

Gaël Faye is an important figure in commemorating the Rwandan genocide first and foremost because he has proved to be the most accessible linguistically and his music is featured on popular radio in both Rwanda and Europe. Secondly, as an EU citizen, he is able to speak more freely about the genocide than most Rwandan artists who fall under the censorship of the government. Thirdly, his unique style, blending Rwandan music and Kinyarwanda with rap and French, serves to highlight the importance of adapting a multidisciplinary and multilingual approach in order to address contemporary forms of memorialization. Moreover, this unique blend also means that he reaches out to a younger audience who makes up the majority of the

[75] Badou, Ekia. "Gaël Faye: L'homme qui pimente le rap français." *Slate Aftique.* 17 May 2012. Online. http://www.slateafrique.com/89271/Gael-faye-l-homme-qui-pimente-le-rap-francais

Rwandan population today.[76] Although he was relatively unknown before participating in last year's ceremony, he is becoming more and more popular in Rwanda.

Faye commented on his popularity in both countries and noted the ability of music to speak across cultures and languages, but he also noted the disappointment he has faced in trying to reach a Rwandan audience. First, Faye noted that he had to fund his own tour in Africa because his French tour manager said it would not be a profitable endeavor for him. Second, the success of this tour, as measured by audience reaction, confounded Faye. For example, he explains that in Kigali and Paris one can expect the same reaction from an audience – applauding after a song and calling for an encore at the end of the performance. However, in the outskirts of Rwanda (notably in Butare), Faye had a much different experience with the audience that culturally was not accustomed to applause and therefore did not clap during the performance. Faye explains that there is something to be taken from concerts like that, as he said: "Alors pour moi comme un musicien selon des français on se dit ah c'était un horrible concert mais moi j'ai beaucoup aimé parce qu'en fait je me suis dit mais là je suis vraiment j'ai fait un concert vraiment au Rwanda et pas un concert à la capitale".[77] As a bicultural artist, Faye appreciates the connection he makes with an audience even when they may not understand that of which he sings and speaks. He explained: "je parle de choses, il faut beaucoup de références, des références historiques au Rwanda… je parle de quoi…même si un petit Français il comprend rien il y a plein qui me disaient que j'adore cette chanson-là parce que c'est la mélodie, l'ambiance, ils me disent ça un petit peu donc voilà. J'aime bien aussi toucher les gens comme

[76] According to the CIA Factbook, people under 25 make up 61% of the Rwandan population.

[77] Faye, Gaël. Personal Interview. 7 August 2015.

ça par touche comme un poème, je trouve ça plus intéressant".[78] While Faye's reception has been different in Rwanda and in Europe it is clear that his appreciation of these audiences and his desire to cross cultural boundaries remains an important force in his work.

In this section I present a close reading of this Franco-Rwandan singer in order to examine the use of song in memorializing the Rwandan genocide. The main reason I chose Gael Faye is his widely accessible rap and his appeal to a large, young demographic from both the Great Lakes Region and Europe. Through an analysis of the music, lyrics and video from his song "Petit Pays" I demonstrate how he uses a blend of cultures and languages to speak to a younger generation about the genocide and the process of remembering it.[79] His music, as exemplified by his philanthropic works with underprivileged youth in Paris and Kigali, is addressed to a young transnational population.

Written for his first solo album, *Pili pili sur un croissant au beurre,* and recorded in Bujumbura this song uses traditional music, rap, lyrics in both French and Kinyarwanda, and images of the Great Lakes region to perform a mournful ode to his country of origin and the violence that occurred there. Most remarkable is how the song alternates between rap in French and the melodic refrain in Kinyarwanda. A blending of musical styles is noticed across world music today, yet I hesitate to attribute one style to the West and one to Africa. African music has influenced Western music in ways that today are unrecognizable and Western music has played a similar role in Africa. I therefore resist the urge to categorize the rap as Western and the refrain as traditional Rwandan – the major indicator of that delineation is not the musical style but the language of the lyrics. If it weren't for the language of the rap it would be possible to link rap to

[78] Faye, Gaël. Personal Interview. 7 August 2015.

[79] Faye, Gaël. 'Petit pays'. *Pili pili sur un croissant au beurre*. Mercury Records, 2013. CD.

the oral storytelling and courtly poetry of early Rwandan times and thus draw into question the association of the West and rap.

The French lyrics outline Faye's positionality and a bit of his biography. Mentions of Gisenyi and Bujumbura put his roots in Rwanda and Burundi while mentions of Saint Denis and his "errance européenne" elucidate his contemporary role as member of the diaspora.[80] In French, he points to his own suffering, his nightmares and his insomnia that stem from the war. For example he mentions "un soir d'amertume, entre le suicide et le meurtre" "mes délires d'insomniaque" and his exile. Yet, we see this pessimism and depression counteracted in Kinyarwanda in which he writes:

> Petit pays
>
> Grand pays
>
> Tu as été froissé mais tu n'es pas mort
>
> Tu as souffert mais la souffrance ne t'a pas abattu.[81]

These lines, addressing Rwanda in its native tongue, highlight both the suffering and the perseverance of Rwanda. This is a theme that is repeated throughout the song even in the French lyrics such as "Mais tu veux vivre malgré les cauchemars qui te hantent". Faye in his own way has suffered and persevered and in this way we see a mirror action between Faye and Rwanda.

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[80] Rwanda and Burundi share a language and very similar histories. In fact, when President Habyarimana's plane was shot down in 1994, the president of Burundi was accompanying him. Moreover, it is the status quo that both countries house large populations of refugees for one another. One such refugee was Faye's mother – a Rwandan Tutsi living in Bujumbura.

[81] Faye's co-authors did the Kinyarwanda-French translation. The Kinyarwanda is as follows:
> *Gahugu gatoyi*
> *Gahugu kaniniya*
> *Warapfunywe ntiwapfuye*
> *Waragowe ntiwagoka*

As Faye writes, he hopes to contribute to the rebirth of Rwanda: "Petit pays, te faire sourire sera ma rédemption." As he explains, redemption is sought for having been one of the millions to scorn the RPF government after the genocide. As refugees fled to Zaire many observers scolded the new Rwandan government; however, what they did not understand was that many of those fleeing and being protected by the French were perpetrators of genocide, fleeing punishment. Now understanding his misunderstanding, Faye is ready to make amends and hopefully do more than that by inspiring his home country with his music.

The video for "Petit Pays" emphasizes the beauty and hope of the Great Lakes Region.[82] The first image of the video is a sleepless Faye climbing out bed to write and revisit his upbringing in Burundi through photographs. These pictures quickly transport Faye back to the Great Lakes region and the music cuts in. Featuring the Burundian artist, Francis Muhire, the first several scenes are images of the Rwandan or Burundian countryside with either Faye wandering through, Muhire singing and playing the guitar, or locals going about their daily work. Next Faye is shown in a local, empty school building where he raps the first few verses. When he mentions his desire to "faire sourire [mon petit pays]", an image of a young smiling boy is shown. The music video makes it clear that youth are the prime audience for "Petit Pays" – young Rwandans are shown in practically every scene whether at school or playing in the fields. Moreover, it also seems to argue that the youth symbolize to a certain extent, Rwanda and Burundi. Faye supported this statement when he said, "c'est juste que partout où on va il y a toujours des enfants et contrairement aux adultes eux ils veulent être photographiés, filmés, alors que les adultes veulent jamais c'est pour ça qu'il y a plein de clips en Afrique où on se retrouvent toujours avec des enfants", thus indicating that children are putting themselves into the position

[82] *Petit Pays*. Dir. Nicolas Bozino. Perf. Gaël Faye and Francis Muhire. 6D Productions, 2012. Youtube.com.

of symbol, while adults allow this perception to be continued.[83] Far from incidental, Faye's value placed on children is mirrored by his philanthropic work, such as a school he supports in Burundi. Students from this school are the focus of the last few seconds of the video, which ends with a poignant image of Faye and a young boy sitting together in matching pensive positions (Figure 5). Both people seem to be looking slightly backward, remarking something that

Figure 5. *Petit Pays*. Dir. Nicolas Bozino. Perf. Gaël Faye and Francis Muhire. 6D Productions, 2012.

has caught both of their attentions. I would attribute this backward motion to the fact that the history of Rwanda and Burundi is something that continually inserts itself into the present moment. Even as these two sit in a small school, built with Faye's support, a glance to the past is necessary to move forward.

If we can extend the "Faye as Rwanda" metaphor, then writing and self-expression seem to be valuable to the process of commemoration. Faye repeats several times his reliance on writing to get him through the most difficult of periods. He writes:

> Une feuille et un stylo apaisent mes délires d'insomniaque…
>
> L'écriture m'a soigné quand je partais en vrille…

[83] Faye, Gaël. Personal Interview. 7 August 2015.

Un soir d'amertume, entre le suicide et le meurtre/j'ai gribouillé ces quelques phrases de la pointe neutre de mon feutre

J'ai gribouillé des textes pour m'expliquer mes peines

Faye demonstrates how writing has helped him to heal. He also avoids banal metaphors for writing such as the writing "flowed" or "poured out"; instead, writing is a struggle and a part of the struggle of survival and reconciliation. He reminds Rwandans to cry and to forgive but he never mentions forgetting. It becomes clear that even though Faye wishes for Rwanda to heal he understands how difficult this healing will be and thus reminds them that expression (whether in writing or tears) will be indispensable. This stance mirrors the official stand of the government, which asks for all actors of the genocide to take part in the process of reconciliation; however, this expression is much more limited practically than pragmatically. In other words, while the government asks for perpetrators to express themselves, these "testimonies of peace" resemble one another in claiming temporary insanity and in their repenting nature.[84] Faye's work then stands in contrast to the government's form of self-expression that is inherently limited by censor. Faye thus provides a compelling counterpoint to the dominant and constrictive government narrative.

Mixing clips from his popular concerts in Paris and Kigali with the musical workshops he runs for children in each country, Gaël Faye's documentary *Quand deux fleuves se rencontrent* enacts his support of self-expression for the underprivileged. The movie, directed by Nicolas Bozino, a Parisian freelance director, begins in an abandoned Burundian building where Gaël Faye's voix-off describes his relationship with the Great Lakes region. It is unclear whether the building is partially destroyed or if it was half-built and it is interesting to consider this question

[84] Such examples can be seen and listened to through the *Kwibuka20* YouTube channel.

as it could also be applied to the social situations in Rwanda and Burundi and particularly the present political turmoil in Burundi. Was the peace only partially built or is it being partially destroyed? We can ask the same of Rwanda in the early 1990s leading up to the genocide. From within the edifice, Faye states, "j'ai parcouru tous les chemins du monde et j'ai perdu le mien…je me sens de ce lieu" (Bozino), reiterating a sentiment already present in his music – that of having a bicultural identity and feeling lost between the two.

Through a split screen, the spectator is then presented with this image of Faye in Africa next to an image of Faye on stage in Paris. The major distinguishing factor between the two is the other people in the scene, who in Africa are young men wandering around the building, ignoring Faye, and in Paris, are young white people rapping along with Faye. This again brings into question the idea of audience when it comes to Faye's music. Through the opening shots, it seems evident to whom he wants to direct his music and the film; however, the actual identity of his audience becomes clear in the split screen movement to Paris where suddenly the mainly white audience is paying attention to him and joining him in rap. We see how his interaction with this European audience becomes meaningful to his work when he descends from the metro to the *Lycée d'enseignement adapté* in Sannois where he works with challenged students to develop their self-expression skills through music. Through these *ateliers de l'écriture* these students write and perform their own raps and Faye notes how much he has seen their confidence grow throughout their work together. In an interview, Faye described his goals of these workshops, "Moi, personnellement il y avait des gens qui étaient révélateurs dans ma vie à des petits instants qui m'ont dit "tu peux faire ça" et donc je l'ai fait et souvent parce qu'on a peur on se met à soi-même des barrières, on fait pas alors. Voilà des fois j'ai juste envie de faire des ateliers pour ça,

pour cette idée-là".[85] Faye continued by adding that these workshops were important to him in Paris and in Rwanda and that he is still in touch with some of the students who continued to study music and to write after their experience in the workshops.

The film features such a workshop in Kigali where he reflects in a voix-off "je suis revenu avec des textes en bandoulière et des amis poètes que j'ai rencontrés sur l'autre rive". These words reflect the value Faye places on words, texts and poetry and the movement of these expressions across cultures, thus enacting on a small scale many of the goals of the 2014 commemoration. In fact, Faye seems to state, by comparing texts to ammunition, that a war can be raged with texts and words. Indeed, it is arguable that the genocide itself grew out of hateful words. Despite his efforts to use words to wage a war with poetry, Faye crosses paths of resistance, such as when he attempts to get permission to perform in Kigali. In this scene, Faye and his manager meet with several Rwandan officials to discuss the possibility of getting the correct permits but as far as the film's audience knows, this performance does not come to fruition. Faye does, however, have the opportunity to perform at Kigali's Rwanda Revenue Administration, which serves as one of the most elegant venues in Rwanda. Before this performance, the emotion overwhelms Faye as he reflects on performing before Rwandans with whom he identifies.

The film features Faye's visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial as well as his voyage to Bujumbura where he meets up with childhood friends and visits his childhood home. During these visits Faye quotes the newest member of the *Académie Française*, Dany Laferrière, who wrote "[Ecrit-on hors de son pays pour se consoler?]/je doute de toute vocation d'écrivain en exil". This quote questions an artist's capacity to create outside of his native land, yet arises

[85] Faye, Gaël. Personal Interview. 7 August 2015.

from a novel in which Laferrière also states, "Le dictateur m'avait jeté à la porte de mon pays. Pour y retourner, je suis passé par la fenêtre du roman" (156). These words resonate with the work of Faye who we see has been able to return to his homeland through music and performance. One such performance is the feature of the second to last scene in which Faye performs at the *Centre Jeune de Bujumbura* before a huge crowd of youth. Wrapping up the film is a scene of a performance in Paris and the transition from one concert to the other is a clear expression of Faye's transnational vision for his music and his acts of commemoration and self-expression.

Returning to the need for expression after the genocide, I now turn our attention to a poem that Faye published on March 23, 2014 in *Africultures*. This poem, entitled *Le silence des mots*, addresses that which has long been deemed "unspeakable" – "les pieux enfoncés dans les femmes", "les fagots de fémurs", "les tendons sectionnés à la machette" and worse (Faye, "Le silence des mots"). Beginning each stanza with "Bâillonner les poèmes/On n'écrit pas", Faye then continues the list of horrific sites and experiences that together made up the genocide.[86] While descriptive, the poem offers no cause or explanation for the genocide. Instead, Faye cites God's "ricanements" and "le monde sans raison" – thus placing more value on the horrors of the genocide than on its cause. Yet these horrors are also unwritten according to the poem, as the poetry regarding them has been gagged, leaving neither description nor explanation.

[86] An inevitable allusion is made here to Adorno's grappling with the role of poetry and cultural criticism after the Holocaust. Samuel Weber's translation of Adorno states: "Cultural criticism finds itself today faced with the final state of the dialectic of culture and barbarism. To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today. Absolute reification, which presupposed intellectual progress as one of its elements, is now preparing to absorb the mind entirely. Critical intelligence cannot be equal to this challenge as long as it confines itself to self-satisfied contemplation." These challenges are something with which and against which Faye struggles in this poem.

After three stanzas of description, all beginning with "Bâillonner les poèmes/On n'écrit pas", the fourth begins the same way except refers to the writers "qui se regardent écrire". For these writers, the poetry is not about the victims or the horror; it is, according to Faye, about themselves and their art. The stanza reads:

> Bâillonner les poèmes
>
> Ceux qui se regardent écrire
>
> Avec leurs effets de manche
>
> Leurs figures de style
>
> Leurs rimes plates
>
> Leurs césures
>
> Leur lyrisme
>
> Et leurs pieds à compter au bout des doigts.

These authors, explains Faye, resemble lawyers with their gesticulation and their argumentative posturing who enjoy a show more than a result. Focusing on their craft and their elevated style, these authors miss what Faye sees as the main point of creative production – a point or goal he describes in introducing the text in *Africultures*. He states:

> Alors il s'agira toujours d'écrire et dire, contre l'oubli, écrire encore et toujours. Et dire aussi. En souvenir du futur. Écrire pour entretenir la flamme de nos âmes, accorder son chant à l'espoir qui se rêvait déjà au-dessus des champs de canne et de coton. L'espoir qui s'élevait, au-dessus des camps de béton. L'espoir qui se rêve et s'élève encore. Et toujours. Là-haut, près *du soleil. Des indépendances*. Ibuka. [Remember].[87]

[87] Emphasis my own. By making reference to Ahmadou Kourouma's *Les Soleils des indépendances,* Faye and his co-artists highlight the power that literature can hold in this struggle "to tell" and to keep hope alive.

Via this introduction, Faye and his poetic partners (Säb, Nëggus, Apkass and Edgar Seklova) explain that writing and speaking are about a battle against silence and a battle against forgetting. This battle represents a hope that not only relates to the genocide but also to the slavery of those in the cotton or sugar cane fields or the disenchantment of those surrounded by the concrete of Europe. Referencing the unity of Africans based in a history of shared struggle, Faye highlights the possibilities for hope, such as when hope led to independence. *Ibuka*, meaning, "remember" in Kinyarwanda is also the name of one of the largest survivor funds and networks in the world. For a reader familiar with Rwanda, *Ibuka* immediately harkens to the genocide, yet in general, it is clear the Faye uses it to ask his readership to remember the hope that led Africans out of struggle before.

The final stanza of the poem suddenly turns to the imperative tense, beginning with "Bâillonez les poèmes !" – standing in contrast to the indicative of earlier stanzas. While in spoken French, the indicative has come to replace the imperative tense, Faye clearly meant to differentiate this stanza, which continues with "Qu'ils se taisent/Qu'ils se taisent/Qu'ils se taisent". Although it is not clearly indicated, it is important to consider to whom the "ils" is referring. Each party involved in the genocide obviously searches for only certain voices to be heard – the government heralds Tutsi victim voices, the West values the voices of "heros" and the "opponents", such as Mihigo, look to hear from more varied voices including those victims who were not Tutsi. Who, then, is Faye asking to silence – the poets? If this is the case, it is of course an ironic indication for he, himself, is a poet and writer whose expression takes the form of poetry. In the poem, the silencing of poetry leads to one thing as the last line states, "Afin qu'il ne reste qu'un silence de mots". The "silence of words" becomes an ironic end. Are words silent even when they are written? Or must all expression be gagged? This last line leaves

readers wondering of whom Faye speaks, who is demanding that poetry be silenced? Is this demand a simple reality against which poets like himself and his rap partner Seklova must fight? Through Faye's actions – his involvement in *Kwibuka20,* his musical workshops and his ongoing artistic production – he clearly counteracts this movement towards silence and the majority of his work underlines the hope he so clearly seeks in introducing the poem "Un silence des mots".

In certain ways, this longing for expression was imitated throughout the 2014 commemoration. Most notably, victims and perpetrators alike were asked to express their suffering and their guilt. This was exemplified at the memorial ceremony for the *Ecole Technique* outside of Kigali. At this site in 1994, Belgian troops abandoned thousands of Rwandans who were then killed by the *Interahamwe* that had gathered outside of the school. For the 20th commemoration of this event, hundreds gathered at the school's soccer field for a series of presentations. While the event included survivor testimony, music, and a testimony from a leading African general, it also included a "testimony of peace" — in other words, a testimony from a perpetrator's perspective. The man attested to going mad and being swept up in the group's momentum, then he asked for forgiveness and pardon. While the reaction from the crowd was quite mixed, the continuation of such testimony at the main commemoration event at *Amahoro* Stadium makes it clear that the state also values self-expression to a certain degree.

CHAPTER THREE

Rwanda 94 and *Shadows of Memory :* Theater and the Mise-en-abyme of Spectatorship

"Des cris perturbent ce calme. Au début c'est lointain, comme étouffé. Tout le monde cherche à voir d'où cela provient. Puis les cris se rapprochent, descendent les escaliers extérieurs du stade. Trois hommes en gilet jaune de secouriste transportent une femme hurlant et se débattant comme si le feu la brûlait. Ne me tuez pas! Ne me tuez pas!"

– Gaël Faye[88]

The April 7, 2014 commemoration ceremony at *Amahoro* (Peace) Stadium in Kigali was meant to bring together the international community and Rwandans in an effort to remember and reconcile the atrocity that occurred in that very space 20 years before. However the goal of unification was undermined by the physical separation of foreigners and Rwandans in the stadium and by the Western media's spectacularization of Rwandan pain. NPR's Gregory Warner wrote: "After a minute of silence at noon, Monday's remembrance of the 20th anniversary of the Rwandan genocide began with testimony from a survivor. The screaming started soon after."[89] After fewer than 25 words, the voyeurism of the other's pain began. As Warner points out, the screaming began very quickly into the first testimony and it was at that moment that Western media turned their cameras and their microphones away from the testimony and the theatrical production and onto the Rwandan spectators. This theme was

[88] Faye, Gaël. "Je n'ai eu que vingt ans pour guérir des blessures: Commémorations des 20 ans du genocide des Tutsi à Kigali." *Africultures.* Africultures.com, 5 June 2014. Web 10 February 2016.

[89] Warner, Gregory. "Rwanda Honors Dead, Celebrates Progress, 20 Years After Genocide." *NPR*. NPR, 7 April 2014. Web 10 February 2016.

repeated in stories from NBCNews and the Vancouver Sun among others.[90] While the French media was mostly concerned with Kagame's vehement words against France, other national papers featured images of the "wailing women" as the main representation of the commemoration ceremonies.

Figure 6. Somodevilla, Chip. Getty Images. Headline image from NPR Gregory Warner's April 7, 2014 article.

As a spectator at these same ceremonies, I admit that the most affective moment of the entire day was the reaction of the crowd and the phenomenon of the wailing women. Already separated physically from Rwandans because of my nationality, I found myself separated even further by incomprehension. The wailing began during the first testimonies and my colleagues

[90] See: "Emotions Run High as Rwanda Remembers Horrors of Genocide." *NBCNews.com.* NBC Universal, 7 April 2014. Web. 15 February 2016. and "Photos: Rwandan Genocide's 20th Anniversary Commemorated." *Vancouversun.com*. Postmedia Network, 7 April 2014. Web. 15 February 2016.

and I could only assume it was the sound of children screaming or dogs baying. In fact, hearing the screeching, so suddenly, evoked fear in the already tense stadium. Yet, as misunderstanding led to clarity, we could see the trained specialists in neon vests coming to the aid of women throughout the stadium who found themselves trapped within traumatic flashbacks. These women were escorted to a meeting area below the stadium where Gaël Faye and other artists stood preparing for their performance. In a piece Faye wrote reflecting on the commemoration for *Africultures*, he wrote: "On m'a souvent raconté comment les cris et les pleurs emplissent le stade lors des cérémonies et que cet écho se fait entendre dans toute la ville. On me l'a souvent raconté. Mais le vivre fut une autre chose."[91]

The screams were striking but also noteworthy was the light that Western media cast upon them. These events create a mise-en-abyme of spectatorship that will be pivotal to this chapter as it addresses acts of performance in Rwandan commemoration practices. Although the planned spectacle consisted of testimonies and performances, the unexpected spectacle of the "wailing women" stole the attention of Western media. The Western media and attendees thus became spectators watching other (Rwandan) spectators who were watching a planned event. Even more complex, as I will argue in this chapter, are two theatrical productions that are marked by the representation of a spectator within the play, an audience of spectators and the journalist or scholar who then watches the audience. This continuing and cyclical process of spectatorship and performance forms the base of my analysis in the chapter that follows. In order to examine this pattern of spectatorship, this chapter analyzes three plays: *Rwanda 94* by Groupov, *Shadows of Memory* by Hope Azeda and *Maria Kizito* by Erik Ehn. I will begin by

[91] Faye, Gaël. "Je n'ai eu que vingt ans pour guérir des blessures: Commémorations des 20 ans du genocide des Tutsi à Kigali." *Africultures.* Africultures.com, 5 June 2014. Web 10 February 2016.

introducing the premise of each play, then I will highlight documentary and haunting aspects of *Rwanda* and *Shadows,* finally using *Maria Kizito* as an alternative to these two plays – an alternative that returns us to the questions of literacy, audience and writing.

***Rwanda 94*: An Introduction**

Rwanda 94 debuted at the Festival d'Avignon in 1999, presented by the Belgian theater troupe, Groupov. Groupov was founded in 1980 by Jacques Delcuvellerie and was envisioned as a collective of artists that would create politically-charged original productions. In the 1990's Delcuvellerie moved the group towards "la question de la vérité" thus engaging more actively with contemporary political questions. This involvement can be said to have culminated in the 1999 production of *Rwanda 94* that questions concepts of truth in the telling and re-telling of the genocide of the Tutsis. As Delcuvellerie explains, the play stemmed from an intuition that the whole truth was not being told or heard:

> Nous nous sommes sentis "assignés à faire quelque chose" face à cette situation. D'abord il y a eu le choc de l'événement en tant que tel, mais aussi, consubstantiellement, l'intuition que ce que l'on nous en racontait n'était pas vrai, l'intuition que les informations dont nous disposions provenaient d'un discours faux. Cela s'est confirmé et plus nous travaillions, plus il nous apparaissait comme une évidence que le génocide constituait le point paroxystique d'une situation plus générale… La décision d'une enquête très précise sur ce qui s'est passé au Rwanda fournit selon nous le point extrême à partir duquel on peut regarder le reste du monde (Bernard-Gresh).

Based on the work that has followed *Rwanda 94*, it is clear that Groupov continues to be driven by a quest for truth and an interrogation of mass violence as their most current projects include

an analysis of mass killing in the New Testament (*Anathème*) and the staging of the end of humanity in *Un Uomo Di Meno*.[92] These works continue to question how and why mass killings happen and bring to the fore voices that may otherwise not be heard.

Rwanda 94 is structured as a 5-hour, 4 act play that intermingles testimony, song, music, television and dance to unveil the "truth" of the genocide. One reason for the variety of media is what Delcuvellerie calls the "non-évènement" status of the genocide, "Quand on a recherché des images du génocide, on a constaté qu'il y en avait très peu de vraies. C'était une sorte de non-événement"; therefore, Delcuvellerie chose to jury-rig images together to symbolize this missing event. His chosen images include contemporary newsreel, survivor testimony, Rwandan actors and an 8-minute film including recordings from RTLM. Not only does the combination of these images provide a narrative for the genocide but they also allow for reconfiguration of the play itself.

Delcuvellerie combines these images and actors over the course of the following four acts. The first act is entitled, *Itsembabwoko (Génocide),* and features the testimony of Yolande Mukagasana who also helped write and produce the play. Mukagasana is the author of two testimonial works, *La mort ne veut pas de moi* (1997) and *N'aie pas peur de savoir* (1999). She continues to work as an archivist of memory and produced the exhibit and book *Les blessures de silence* (2001) with photographer Alain Kazinierakis. This act focuses only on Yolande who sits in the middle of the stage and tells the story of her survival and the murders of her husband and children. The second act, *Mwaramutse (salutation matinale, littéralement "as-tu passé la nuit?")*, introduces the audience to the Rwandan actors who play "the Choir of the Dead" whose haunting cries remind the viewer of their responsibility to the victims. We are also introduced to

[92] For more information, see the troupe's website at www.groupov.be

Madame Bee Bee Bee, a Belgian TV journalist who begins a personal and professional quest to uncover the "truth" of the genocide. The third act, *Ubwoko (qui signifie plus ou moins "ethnie")*, provides a univocal explanation of the genocide. Finally, the final act, *La Cantate de Bisesero,* features images of the genocide – dances, songs and processions that continue the questioning of how such an atrocity can be represented.

***Shadows of Memory*: An Introduction**

The second play discussed in this chapter is *Shadows of Memory,* which was performed at *Kwibuka20* in Kigali on April 7, 2014. This performance took place after several speeches from the presidents of Uganda and the African Union before a crowd made up mostly of Rwandans but also some international dignitaries who sat near the heads of state. The play takes place over the course of 20 minutes and attempts to explain the genocide and its aftermath in that time. Hundreds of Rwandan actors came together under the supervision of Hope Azeda, a leading director and choreographer in Rwanda and on the international stage. She begins the play with a demonstration of unity among the hundreds of actors dressed in coordinating pagnes and bowing to the flame of remembrance. Then the play traces the arrival of the colonizers, the favoring of the Tutsis, the genocide and the saving grace of the arriving RPF from Uganda. Interspersed with voices of young and old Rwandans in Kinyarwanda, French and English, the play reached out to the diversity of the audience.

***Maria Kizito:* An Introduction**

Erik Ehn's *Maria Kizito* was first performed in 2004 and has since been staged by a variety of troupes including the version directed by Emily Mendelsohn and recorded by

HowlRound. This version is the only available recording of the play although Robert Skloot has published the script in his compilation, *The Theater of Genocide*. The play follows an American nun to Belgium where she goes to bear witness to the trial of two Rwandan nuns, Maria Kizito and Gertrude Mukangangwa. The American, Theresa, serves as the spectator's lens into the trial. In reality and in the play, Sisters Kizito and Mukangangwa were brought to trial and convicted of aiding the massacre of 7,000 people at their convent in April of 1994. The play is organized around the Liturgy of the Hours that organizes the daily lives and prayers of nuns and, in the play, is often narrated by nuns reading from the "Bible of Genocide" – a fictive book that recounts the actions of Maria Kizito and her sisters in the genocide. While the scenes alternate between contemporary moments of the trial to past moments of genocide, they often overlap with loud percussive music, samples from RTLM and recited prayer. As Ehn writes in his introduction, "*Maria Kizito* doesn't seek to explain the source of the genocide or to fix blame. It attempts to enter into the inner life of a perpetrator" (Skloot 178). Differentiating itself through its ideology of understanding a perpetrator, *Maria Kizito*, stands in contrast to the other two documentary style plays I examine in this chapter, which both seek to understand a specific narrative of "truth".

Discomfort in Documentary Theater

To highlight the cyclical process of spectatorship in these plays, I focus on two theoretical concepts: documentary theater and the "aesthetics of discomfort". I argue that by combining these techniques the two plays that form this chapter's main corpus (*Rwanda 94* and *Shadows of Memory*) demand a reaction from the audience – a reaction that unveils more than the plays do themselves regarding Rwanda's process of commemoration. The reactions of the

wailing women or the model of spectatorship that we see in *Rwanda 94*'s main character demonstrate the challenges that Rwanda continues to face such as dealing with PTSD and fighting negationism. By unveiling the hidden crises of Rwandan women or the unacknowledged role of Western powers in the genocide, these plays uncover obstacles that otherwise remain unseen on the international scale. This chapter elucidates how theater, in imitating the documentary form and in creating discomfort through images and ghosts, involves the spectator in the process of commemoration thereby exhibiting further realities about the genocide and Rwanda today.

The question of uncovering the reality of the genocide and its enduring effects on Rwandan life and conveying these realities to an audience of Westerners, or others who did not experience the genocide, is a central question in Claude Schumacher's edited volume, *Staging the Holocaust.* In his introduction, Schumacher asks: "Can theatre provide the artifact that will help the spectator towards a better 'grasp' of the Holocaust? Is such a theatrical 'recreation' justified? And if it is, how can an actor hope to portray either the perpetrator or the victim, without glamorizing or demonizing the former and belittling or sanctifying the latter?" (3). Although Schumacher is asking the question in regards to the Holocaust, the same framework of interrogation can be applied to the specificity of the Rwandan genocide, which remains "unspeakable" and "unknowable" in its own right. In response to these types of questions the creators of *Rwanda 94* and *Shadows of Memory* relied on a documentary style rooted in conveying "truth" to their audience.

Yet the ideas of documentary and the presentation of facts are more fraught than they seem. In *Writing and Rewriting the Holocaust,* James E. Young questions the ideology of documentary theater by basing his argument on Peter Weiss's *The Investigation* and the

commentary Weiss produced regarding what he called "documentary theater". Weiss argues: "As a theatre of reportage…documentary theatre refrains from all invention; it takes authentic material and puts it on the stage, unaltered in content, edited in form" (qtd. in Young 68). In other words, documentary theater attempts to take primary sources and organize them in a way that produces a theatrical production. Yet, Young argues that precisely because this type of theater aims at being free of ideology, it actually develops its own ideology. He writes, "By presenting itself as *non*ideological, documentary literature enforces its facticity: that is, through its rhetoric of fact, the documentary mode works to obscure its ideological premises precisely in order to be ideological" (67). Young leaves us here with useful terminology stating, "we might henceforth refer to the writers of documentary narrative as '*figurative* documentarists'," who write – and then ask us to accept – their work *as if* it were documentary" (80).

Both *Rwanda 94* and *Shadows of Memory* insist consistently on facts and *Rwanda 94* in particular attempts to present content that appears unedited and thus "documentary". While *Rwanda 94* recounts an incomprehensibly long list of facts that led to the genocide, *Shadows of Memory* relies on a shorter list of facts that also draw straight lines between colonialism and genocide, Western neglect and the murder of thousands – both assuming that there exists a monolithic narrative that explains this unspeakable event. As Freddie Rokem reflects: "One of the aims of these performances [theater that employs fantasy] is to show that what may seem too fantastic to be true has in fact taken place. This indirectly also shows that, paradoxically, some kind of anesthetization of the narrative is necessary in order to tell what ahs really happened" (43). This move to "anesthetize" and unify the narrative of genocide is a move that is also undertaken by the Rwandan government that seeks to promote their own self-realizing narrative of the genocide. Neither play nor the governmental narrative allows for the interpretation that is

encouraged in *Maria Kizito.* By relying on the documentary style, these two plays ask their spectators to accept the "truth" of what they present, whereas *Maria Kizito,* through a more complex form and no claim to "truth", asks for a different kind of openness from its spectators – openness to hearing the story of a perpetrator.

While the documentary nature of *Rwanda94* and the *Kwibuka20* performance is integral to this chapter, the "aesthetics of discomfort" that Laura Edmondson describes is also essential. When describing the "aesthetics of discomfort" she uses Erik Ehn's *Maria Kizito* as an example. She explains: "I call it an "aesthetics of discomfort," a phrase that helps to capture the way that the sublimity of the play's language and imagery intertwine with the graphic realities of atrocity" (82). The sublimity to which she refers is the subject matter of the play that interrogates the perspective of a perpetrator and forces the spectator to confront the grey zone of genocide perpetration.[93] Sublimity, referring to a divine, extreme or unparalleled state of being, is similar to the unspeakability that many use to describe the genocide. Using this definition, it becomes clear that describing or representing an "un-understandable" event leaves spectators left with a feeling of discomfort. The effect of an "aesthetic of discomfort" is also supported by Schumacher who writes: "I shall venture to argue that the successful Shoah drama or performance is one that disturbs, offers no comfort, advances no solution; it is a play that leaves the reader or spectator perplexed, wanting to know more although convinced that no knowledge can ever cure him of his perplexity. It must be a play that generates stunned silence" (8). Throughout this chapter I will analyze how this aesthetics of discomfort is performed within *Rwanda94* and *Kwibuka20*, which, despite their prescriptive, documentary nature, cause immense discomfort in the audience – a discomfort that becomes a performance of its own.

[93] For a complete description of the "grey zone" see Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved.*

Madame Bee Bee Bee: Catharsis or Guidance?

Framing *Rwanda 94* within Primo Levi's radio-theatre adaptation of *Survival in Auschwitz*, Christian Biet explores questions of distance, knowledge and knowability within *Rwanda94*. He argues that for the writers of *Rwanda94*, "their essential move is not to radically transgress the usual models of representation, to shock the audience, or to deny representation; rather, they seek various ways to address the spectators and to help them to understand-or to try to understand-the un-understandable and the unbelievable" (4). In other words, by using media with which the audience is familiar, such as news outlets, television and a string ensemble, the writers of the play reach out to their Western audience. Touching the audience through familiar media, the play's writers hoped to make the unfamiliar accessible. However, Biet points out, these familiar media were undermined when the play was performed in Kigali and Bugesera. While the play had served a cathartic role in Belgium where it was originally performed, it also played a documentary role, informing the West of the "facts" of the genocide. Yet, in Rwanda, where the facts are known, the play took on a purely cathartic role and ran the risk of becoming what Biet calls "theatre of reconciliation". Biet writes, "The film [*Rwanda 94: A travers nous, l'humanité*] questions theater's ability to tell the truth in front of people who had lived it. The story as told on the stage has to resonate with the people who watch the performance, resulting in a cathartic, active, and collective interaction between the stage and the audience" (9). While Biet does not reflect more than this on the performance in Rwanda, I would extend the conversation to ask what importance the production's nationality and foreignness plays in the reception of it in the country of the tragedy. These are questions to which I return in my analysis of Marie Collard's film, *Rwanda 94:A travers nous l'humanité.*

In fact, many scholars, including Hank Greenspan, argue that testimony itself has become

a familiar media in that it has developed scaffolding since the Holocaust and viewers expect a certain format when presented with a survivor's account. Greenspan explains: "In order to listen to survivors but still not hear anything, I think we do something quite interesting: we ritualize the very act, even the very idea, of survivors' testimony. That is, we surround survivors' speech with so much hype, so much ceremonial and rhetorical feeling, that we are almost able to seal it off completely"(29). Testimony of unspeakable horrors, when given within these pre-existing frameworks, may not touch the audience in the intended way thus complicating the intended goals of *Rwanda 94.* While explaining why Biet argues that even testimony within *Rwanda 94* may not shock the audience, this quote also asks what mechanism can be used to attract the spectators' attention.

Nancy Delhalle points to the importance of images in this play – a play that represents a tragedy that for the most part was image-less (101). She argues that by incorporating television into the play the writers de-naturalized images that modern Westerners take for granted. Through the scene in Act 2 where news clips from around the world are interrupted by genocide "ghosts", Delhalle points out that the usurping of the news clips puts into question the very nature of news images – highlighting that even though they act as documentary, they are in fact created and narrativized (102-103). She writes: "la présence d'images filmées ne reçoit aucune autonomie dans le spectacle qu'elle ne suspend pas: il ne s'agit ni d'une illustration, ni d'une manière de déléguer une fonction que ne pourrait assumer le théâtre" (105). This intertwining, interdependence and undermining of the theater and the television also creates two layers of spectators – those within the play who watch the clips and the traditional theater spectators. Moreover, it becomes clear that a certain guidance of spectatorship is put forth through the play and those who "see" within it. For example, Madame Bee Bee Bee, whose quest of truth the

spectator follows, serves as a model or representative for/of the theater spectator as to how they should respond to what she (and they) are watching on stage.[94]

At the end of the second act, inspired by the interrupting ghosts who have touched her humanity, Madame Bee Bee Bee decides to hunt down the truth. Her decision is preceded by a newsreel from around the world that is interrupted by Rwandan faces crying out for help of some sort. For example, a young child is featured asking for their mother. The news staff who watch these interruptions seek the expertise of a Kinyarwanda speaker and a historian to find out what these ghosts are demanding and the conclusion is that they are ghosts of the Rwandan genocide demanding to be heard. After Madame Bee Bee Bee's journalistic partner argues that in order to fight for the cause of "Plus jamais ça" they must answer the question "pourquoi", Madame Bee Bee Bee states: "je mettrais au service de la vérité tout l'âme et puissance dont je me dispose…nous chercherons les causes de la catastrophe" (Groupov 47). These phrases combine several important elements. First, the hunt for truth is not just a scientific endeavor based on facts alone, it is guided by the empathy she felt for the ghosts and involves her soul, not just her mind. In fact, she does not even mention her mind thus showing the audience how this quest is highly emotional. Second, as the subject changes from "je" to "nous", it becomes clear that Madame Bee Bee Bee is asking something from her audience – asking them to stand with her in this quest for truth.

Immediately after this proclamation the journalists walk off stage and the theater goes dark. An upbeat drumming commences reminding the Western audience of an African ritual and as the drumming continues several Rwandans walk onto the stage. They guide Madame Bee Bee

[94] Freddie Rokem explains that many Holocaust performances rely on a representative of the spectator, a model the spectator can follow. Using Todorov's model, Rokem suggests that these models allow an entry point for the spectator into the "fantastic" realm of the play. (44)

Bee to a seat in front of their eight podiums and the stage goes black showing the title of the next sequence: “La litanie des questions”. A Rwandan woman begins with a warning to her interlocutors (presumably not only to Madame BBB before her but also to the audience they all face). She warns: “Ecoutez, soyez sur vos gardes, regardez-les, mais méfiez-vous. Ces appareils qui propagent l'information, ce sont eux qui affectent les cœurs et souillent les esprits. Une hyène rusée se met à beugler à la manière d'une vache. Nous sommes dans leurs tanières. S'il vous plaît, soyez vigilant(s)” (51). Comparing herself to cows living their last dangerous days out in a tannery, she evokes one of the most powerful symbols of Rwanda – the cow – which symbolizes wealth and power for the people of Rwanda and has come to be associated with the Batutsi as they explain later in the segment. This warning asks the spectators to be wary of the “truth” propagated by their everyday media. While it does not explicitly say to listen to their litany, it is clear that the ghosts hope these facts will complicate the narrative of the genocide with which Westerners are familiar.

After staging their warning the Rwandan actors begin by asking “Qui oubliera RTLM?” (51) and then listing many wrongdoings of the radio station: never addressing one another, but always facing the spectator. While this litany of questions is introduced through interrogative phrases (such as Que diront-ils?), it acts much more like a list of facts that are being uncovered by the ghosts. It is worth questioning if this is done to lessen the feeling of ignorance on the audience’s part. By asking questions instead of listing facts the ghosts remind the audience of the malleability of facts and events, demonstrating how choices in representation are made, choices that determine which truths are known. The ghosts explicitly point out two main points. The first main point is that RTLM regularly called for the extermination of the Batutsi and motivated the killers on a daily basis. The second main point, and the first of many that implicates Westerners,

is that RTLM was allowed to transmit their hate messages even from the Humanitarian Zone of the French "Zone Turquoise". By facing the audience and implicating the French-organized humanitarian effort, the Rwandan actors highlight what will be the main theme of the litany – asking the audience, as Westerners, to come to terms with the reality of their own governments' responsibility in the violence in Rwanda.[95]

Next, the actors begin each phrase with "Diront-ils" (54) and list many of the background facts that predicated the genocide and that could have served as a warning of the impending violence. The "ils" for the ghosts represents the Western media that have traditionally told the story of genocide to the Western audience – it is an "ils" that they wish to undermine through the "Litany of Questions". While listing historical and journalistic endeavors such as the Tutsi-hate-magazine *Kangura* or the *10 Commandments des Bahutu* (53), they also implicate certain actors such as Colonel Bagasora (who established *Interahamwe* militia bands) and President François Mitterrand who refused to take action. They explain that after leaving the Arusha Accords agreeing to peace in the region, Colonel Bagasora returned to Rwanda having famously stated, "Je retourne à Kigali pour preparer l'apocalypse" (53). Despite hearing this warning of his impending actions, all players from the Arusha Accords ignored these comments.[96] Mitterrand was implicated as a friend of the Hutu on the cover of *Kangura* and the French bank *Crédit Lyonnais* (56) was charged with having financed the guns shipped to the pre-genocidal government. These facts are somewhat less-known than some of the others that the Rwandan actors introduce with "Diront-ils", such as the April 9 evacuation of the late president's family

[95] This interrogation is of course complicated when the play is performed in Rwanda before an audience of survivors who do not have a model on stage to follow and imitate as the Western audience can with Madame Bee Bee Bee.

[96] The Arusha Accords were peace talks in 1993 that called for a ceasefire between the invading RPF and the Habyarimana-led government.

(59) or the invitation of the genocidal government to the UN on May 18 (57). Most famously they cite the January 11, 1994 fax sent by commanding UN officer Romeo Dallaire that explained the clues emerging towards genocide and asked for the ability to protect his informant, Jean-Pierre. Jean-Pierre disappeared shortly after the fax was sent and the UN told Dallaire to not intervene (54-55). Although these pieces of information now form a foundational role in the government's genocide narrative, they remain little known to the Western audience towards whom the piece is directed.

Listing other facts, the Rwandan actors ask and state: "Permettez-moi que je vous rappelle" and "Qu'ils n'oublient pas de dire" (70). As the litany progresses, the questions transform into these suggestive clauses that more forthrightly express facts that have been overlooked by the Western media. By beginning with questions, the ghosts have lessened the blow of these suggestions and acclimated their audience to a different understanding of the genocide. The facts then delve deeper into the origins of the ethnic divide in Rwanda, which, according to the actors, had not created any tension prior to colonization, as they state in unison: "Nous parlions la même langue, nous célébrions le même Dieu, nous partagions la même culture". In fact, one man argues, there is no word for ethnicity in Kinyarwanda and the word for clan was adopted to stand in for ethnicity on the identification cards used by the Belgians beginning in 1931 (64). The actors argue that the emphasis placed on ethnicity and divide was a war that the Belgians replicated from their own society where Flemish stand against French. Yet they remind the audience that it was not Belgian loved ones who were murdered or whose blood ran or whose children died. In other words, they argue that the Rwandans paid the price for Belgian divisions (65).

Finally, the actors turn their attention to the complicity and participation of the Catholic

Church and its priests in Rwanda before and during the genocide. They explain that, under threat of excommunication, all Rwandans had to send their students to a Catholic school and it was at these schools that ethnic lines were reiterated through quotas and by asking students to self-identify as either Hutu or Tutsi (68). The scene ends after the Rwandans all state separately "nous ne sommes pas en paix" (73), facing the audience as a prosecutor would face a jury, asking for a justice that has not yet been served. This statement reminds the audience that the actors are not survivors but ghosts who have come back to search out the truth and that they have come back vigilantly because they cannot rest peacefully in their afterlives.

Throughout this segment Madame Bee Bee Bee sits in front of the eight Rwandan actors who stand behind music stands. Madame Bee Bee Bee, as far as we can tell from the filmed version of the play, never turns around to look at the Rwandans but instead looks out at the audience as if the Rwandans are her army and she is leading a charge. Madame Bee Bee Bee is visually distraught with tears running down her face, often looking down at the floor and then up again at the audience with a pleading expression. Again it is important to recall her statement of "*nous* chercherons les causes de la catastrophe" (my emphasis), leading to the unification between her and the audience with whom she pleads throughout the *Litanie des questions*. Although it is problematic that the quest for truth is being led by a Western woman, far removed from the genocide, she also serves as a mirror to the Western audience through whom they can connect to the quest.

The music of the *Litanie* is as important as the remarks made in general by the Rwandan actors. After the ritualistic drumming and the placement of Madame Bee Bee Bee in front of the actors, the small ensemble again begins to play music that features strings and wailing female voices. These voices hover between the space of strings and vocal, uniting the two instruments,

but also calling attention to the hidden nature of the cries themselves. In other words, by surrounding the human voices with the music of instruments, the group demonstrates how easily voices from the genocide can be lost amongst other sounds.

A more clearly defined male voice singing in Kinyarwanda then begins to sing. This language is left untranslated to the audience and as the man wears traditional clothing, he and the music serve to represent the traditional culture of Rwanda – a culture that is interrupted by the speaking voices of the ghosts as they pose their questions and recount the history. His voice quiets down as the ghosts begin their litany and it is replaced by a chanting or quiet wailing of voices and strings. As the testimonies continue, the strings pick up their pace, a keyboard interrupts and the wailing voices echo the keyboard. After certain moments – the refusal to interfere by the UN or the rise of Hutu Power – the music returns to its first mixture of singing in Kinyarwanda, strings and female voices and the warning "Ecoutez…soyez vigilants" is repeated welcoming in a new set of questions and histories. When the last of the "questions" are posed and the actors all attest to their lack of peace, the lights fade and the audience pauses for several long seconds before realizing it was the end of the act and applauding. As the applause begins a few lights still shine down on the "ghosts" and forces the audience to face those seeking to be remembered. The final words before the applause are: "Qui cherche la vérité, dis les ombres, qui réclame justice, n'accepte aucun pardon" (73), thus reminding the audience of their role (and of Madame Bee Bee Bee's role) in seeking justice and no longer allowing for excuses and misunderstanding.

The next act features two new characters: a Holocaust survivor and a historian of Rwanda. Both characters are used as pillars of authority that substantiate the facts laid out to the spectators, thus providing a more documentary-style presentation of history. Before introducing

the characters the play features an actual news interview that aired in 1993 – an interview that pointed to the impending crisis in Rwanda and asked France to intervene. After watching the clip together, Madame Bee Bee Bee asks the Holocaust survivor to join her on her quest for truth because he already has a deeper understanding of these atrocities than most. She then sits aside with the survivor as a historian sits down at an empty table in the middle of the stage and addresses the audience, describing the history of Rwanda, colonialism and independence and how these contributed to the genocide. Bee Bee Bee does not call this man a historian but rather states: "Un homme va parler, il sait des choses que d'autres lui ont apprises, il sait qu'on pense toujours dans la tête d'un autre" (85). With this introduction Bee Bee Bee acknowledges her need to reach out to others for a better understanding, yet the limited information we have on this man requires the audience to blindly trust his authority. In this way the play reaches for a documentary style but without an indication of who this man is and how he gained this knowledge, it demands of leap of faith from Bee Bee Bee and the audience. The introduction of the Holocaust survivor and the historian creates a juxtaposition of knowledge – that which is acquired through experience and that which is learned through news, books, etc. It is clear that both forms are valued by Madame Bee Bee Bee and *Rwanda 94.*

The most provocative and disturbing moments of the play occur within an eight-minute, mostly silent segment in which images of the genocide are streamed on stage as Madame Bee Bee Bee, her co-anchor (Dos Santos) and the president of the UER (European Broadcasting Union) sit by. Staging the selection of material for representation on air, Madame Bee Bee Bee has decided that these images need to be shown during the primetime news, without introduction and without sound, so as to make the general public aware of the "truth". This scene serves as her introduction of the idea to her co-anchor and the president of the UER. While her co-anchor

is skeptical, the president demands to see the footage so that he knows what his own stations will be airing. Thus, the co-anchor signals for the footage to be shown, the president turns to the screen and Madame Bee Bee Bee turns away. The footage begins with an image that has been shown in several documentaries – it is an image that was filmed from atop a building and looks down on a road where *Interahamwe* visibly kill a woman and her child. The next images are shot from a car moving along a road with bodies along the edges and the next show a band of *Interahamwe* celebrating and smiling for the camera. The next gruesome scene is of a woman lying on the ground suffering and visibly dying, while the next shows people casually strolling by a body on the road. The only spoken words occur while bodies along a road are being shown. These words are in Kinyarwanda but are subtitled in French and later in English. Although the speech is not credited they presumably belong to a DJ from RTLM diffusing hate speech. He says:

> En vérité, tous les Tutsis périront. Ils disparaitront de ce pays. Ils croient qu'ils ressusciteront mais ils disparaissent progressivement, grâce aux armes qui les frappent. Mais aussi parce qu'on les tue comme des rats. Mais au fait, les maquisards (les Tutsis) qui me téléphonaient où sont-ils maintenant? Hé! C'est sûr qu'ils ont été massacrés! Ils ont été massacrés! Venez chanter: [begins singing] Venez chers amis, félicitons nous! Ils ont été exterminés! Venez chers amis, félicitons nous! Ils ont été exterminés! Dieu est juste!

These words are followed by several more silent minutes that show swollen bodies floating down a river and collecting along the edge of the water, in the rapids at the base of a water fall. Next a crow is shown eating among a pile of corpses followed by a close-up of a swollen infant corpse a few feet away from a pile of child-size corpses that goes on for at least 30 meters. Images of churches filled with bodies are juxtaposed with photos on the walls of white priests shaking

hands with Rwandans or of significant members of the Catholic Church. The final images focus on skeletons and skulls in and around Ntarama Church and the voice of the RTLM DJ singing echoes, this time without translation. Finally the cameras closes in on a worn book lying in the brush that reads:

> Pour parler, il [le Renard] desserra ses dents. Chantecler profita et avec un grand bruit d'ailes, il s'envola sur la branche d'un arbre. En riant, il dit à Renard:
>
> Qu'en penses-tu? Tu es malin, mais pas assez encore!
>
> Maudit soit ton cousinage, répondit le Renard. Maudite soit la bouche qui s'ouvre quand elle doit rester fermée!
>
> Maudits soient les yeux qui se ferment quand ils doivent rester ouverts! répliqua Chantecler du haut de l'arbre.

This passage comes from *Le roman de Renart*, an anonymous collection of stories from the Middle Ages and was reprised by La Rouchefoucault in the 17th century as a fable. In this story, the fox attempts to hunt a rooster but in a moment of hubris he opens his mouth to brag of his catch and releases the flustered rooster. The moral, as stated above, reminds the reader to be careful with their words and keep their eyes open. For Madame Bee Bee Bee these words have a particular resonance, for she is forcing people to look at something from which they would normally avert their eyes. Meanwhile the fox scolds himself for opening his mouth and speaking when he should have stayed silent and this is the opposite of what Madame Bee Bee Bee feels she should do. Madame Bee Bee Bee regrets the West's silence during the genocide and thus seeks to speak the truth now; however, she has chosen to speak this truth with silent images. As a television journalist, she values images but it contrasts with the first part of the fable's moral about staying silent, a silence against which the entire play is fighting. Having asked her

audience to open their eyes to the atrocity, Madame Bee Bee Bee seems to then ask her audience to open their mouths and talk about the genocide.

In the context of the video, the novel is suspiciously well placed. After showing images of piled bones and skulls, this image suggests that the novel was also found amongst the bodies, yet the happenstance that it would be open to such an appropriate page is suspicious. Further undermining this image is that is of a Western folklore as opposed to something more local to Rwandans – again evidencing the stance from which the film was produced. However, books in Rwanda are usually in French or English so it is not impossible that such a text would exist. While the text clarifies what Madame Bee Bee Bee is asking of her audience, it also reminds the spectator of the Belgian influence on modern Rwandan society. We can question how likely it would be to find something that relates so closely to colonialism lying around after the genocide – did the filmmakers use this to reflect on the enduring colonial role of the French language or did they use it to better connect with their Western audience? This image reflects the motivating ideology of this documentary style theatrical production, again raising questions of how much the representation of the truth can be manipulated before it is no longer true.

As the video screen closes, the president replies with disgust saying it is "épouvantable..toute cette haine" (128) and asks Madame Bee Bee Bee if she plans to open the emission with those images. When she agrees he argues that it would be like hitting their viewer in the gut and that those images would haunt them. Dos Santos argues again for an introduction but Bee Bee Bee responds, "C'est ça l'introduction, on tue, c'est le pile des cadavres puis des os, puis plus rien, l'herbe repousse déjà" (128). Bee Bee Bee clearly wishes to bring attention to Rwanda as soon as possible because as evidenced by the images, decomposition of the bodies and of the memories has already begun. Yet the president wants to protect his viewers instead of

leaving them "brutalisés, culpabilisés, démoralisés" and "agressés" (129). He states that what she is producing is no longer journalism, but an aesthetic, an effect of horror. I argue that those exact sentiments can be applied to the play itself, which despite trying to inform the Western audience, also serves to affect them through an aesthetics of discomfort. Like Madame Bee Bee Bee, the play demonstrates that shock can be productive in asking an audience to think and reflect about an uncomfortable subject that they would normally avoid.

This segment, "Façon de fabriquer", ends with the choir of the death again repeating "je suis mort, je ne suis pas en paix" (132) because as Jacob explains, these images never made it to the European televisions. The title of this section asks a question regarding truth and representation by focusing on how to present these images to the European spectator - with silence? With an introduction? With music? Moreover, we can ask what is being fabricated, is the "truth" or the narrative of the genocide being fabricated? The discussion of representation reminds the viewer that these truths to which Bee Bee Bee strongly clings are manipulated and "fabricated" – no matter how they are displayed, their display was a decision impacted by an ideology – just like the play at large. In watching and judging the video images, the UER president already shocks the theater audience present at the performance, thus demonstrating that the creators of *Rwanda 94* believe in this form of representation and the power of the silent image interspersed with the hate speech of RTLM.

Rwanda 94 **Facing Rwandans**

Marie-France Collard's *Rwanda: A travers nous l'humanité* follows the performances of *Rwanda 94* by Groupov in Rwanda during the 10th-anniversary commemoration ceremonies of the genocide of 1994. Produced and supported by Groupov and directed by a member of the

Groupov team, this documentary film lays out a clear argument – that the performance of their play in Rwanda provides a cathartic movement towards the ever-distanced goals of reconciliation and healing. Featuring interviews with Rwandans as well as snippets of the performance of *Rwanda 94* in Rwanda, the film seeks to analyze the impact of the play when performed in Rwanda. However, as with Peter Weiss and James Young's interpretations of documentary theater, it becomes clear that this documentary film – a film that seeks to show a reality – frames this reality within an ideology that demonstrates the significance of *Rwanda 94.*

The film begins with a powerful scene of disinterment without any introduction for the audience as to what is happening in the scene. Onscreen we see bodies uncovered from a mass grave as Rwandans stand by watching and covering their mouths and noses. Some offer advice - "take off the clothes", "it's a child", "add it to the pile"- while most stand in silence, a silence that is echoed by the lack of sound added in editing production (no music, no narration). This opening scene mirrors Madame Bee Bee Bee's proposed clip in which horrible things would be shown without introduction or narration, thus reinforcing the importance of the image to the creators of *Rwanda 94* and *A travers nous.* The second scene moves the audience to what appears to be a vigil, where Rwandans are carrying candles and taking their seats; however, they are not at a vigil, they are preparing to watch *Rwanda94* and the mise-en-abyme of spectatorship is once again emphasized.

A few aspects of this performance are important to note: first, the audience is mostly Rwandan, and second, the play is performed in its original language, French. While French would normally reach out to only a certain part of the population, it appears that other Rwandans are wearing headphones through which someone is presumably translating the play into Kinyarwanda. As with most Rwandan audiences, their reactions are tempered and the most

reaction we see during most of Yolande Mukagasonga's testimony includes some tears or women holding their heads in their hands.[97] Yet, when Yolande begins to speak of her children's deaths, the audience becomes audibly moved – there is more chatter, heavier breathing and more crying. Most noticeably, a woman in the second or third row begins to experience a post-traumatic crisis similar to those of the "wailing women" at *Kwibuka20*. During this interruption, Yolande pauses her testimony and we see the shadow of a man arrive to presumably care for the woman in crisis. When Yolande recommences her testimony the camera flashes to images of the Belgian musicians crying, all the while with the sounds of the woman in crisis continuing off screen. This is the first glimpse in the film of how reactions to the play unveil a different reality about the struggles of recovery than the play itself reveals.

In the next several scenes, sounds and voices from *Rwanda94* are overlapped with images of the Rwandan countryside or images of Rwandans. After this brief interlude, we return to the play where the actors are covering their eyes and saying "je ne suis pas en paix". Contrasted with the beautiful, serene images of Rwanda and the peaceful Rwandans in front of the countryside, this scene serves to remind the viewer that despite the representation of a peaceful nation, the ghosts of the genocide are not resting peacefully. To highlight this point the scene changes to a woman crying near a pit outside of a Rwandan countryside home. While a man arrives to assist her the scene transitions to her voice recounting her story of survival in that very hole where she was forced to stay during the genocide. She recounts her experience of being saved by a man who was later killed and when asked who the killer was she makes it clear that she cannot answer for fear of being killed in the night. This narrative of continuing fear

[97] Gaël Faye has commented on the tempered response of Rwandan audiences explaining that the applause is limited and interaction with the performer is rare (in the form of asking for an encore) (Mueller).

clearly underlines what the ghosts were saying in *Rwanda94* - "nous ne sommes pas en paix."

After a few more silent scenes of people carrying wood or the image of a room filled with human remains, the video is interrupted by a ghost just as Madame BBB's program was interrupted at the beginning of *Rwanda94*. In fact, this ghost is the same ghost from *Rwanda 94,* and thus not only mirrors that aspect of the play, but also transitions the film from the scenes of Rwanda to the play itself which is now being performed in front of a different, whiter audience. At this point in the play a historian is explaining the causes of the genocide and gets a good laugh from the audience when he describes the quintessential stereotypes of Batutsi, Bahutu and Batwa. Later in the film, the young woman who testified to her time in the hole, states her surprise at learning the causes of the genocide and explains that these white people seem to know more about Rwanda than Rwandans themselves. Yet I argue that these "facts" that are presented by the white historian, while presented in a documentary style, must still be regarded within their ideological realm of promoting reconciliation and laying blame in the West. Moreover, the Rwandan woman's reaction must be viewed in light of the fact that she was asked to represent Rwandans by the filmmaker who also played an important role in producing the play.

After the explanation of the causes of the genocide, the film shifts to Nyamata Church, a memorial site where at least 10,000 people where killed. In this scene, we follow mostly white visitors including the actress who plays Madame Bee Bee Bee. They visited the church while the memorial itself was still being developed – before the clothes were laid out on the pews but after the bones had been collected and put on display.[98] While the image is of Nyamata, the off-screen

[98] Today the Nyamata Church houses the blood-stained clothing of the victims. The piles of clothes line the pews and in the back-middle section of the church there is a crypt with bones on display. Outside, in back of the church, is a covered area of mass graves, which are occasionally open to the public, so that visitors can descend and see bones and coffins depending on the condition of the remains.

voices are of the ghosts performing the "Litany of questions", asking if "they" knew what happened in Rwanda. Contrasting the visible scars with the audible "facts", this scene enacts the goals of many memorials, which are to inform and affect emotionally the visitor. These same tactics and off-screen voices are applied to the visit of Murambi where 50,000 Rwandans were killed at the technical school and where their preserved bodies are still on display. While the camera does close-ups and pans the rooms of bodies, the "Litany of questions" continues off screen. By following Western visitors and playing the "litany of questions", the film creates a double layer of responsibility and guilt for the Western viewer who now not only can hear the facts but also can be emotionally affected by the visual remains of the genocide.

The film is then interrupted by a more local form of commemoration – the gathering at the *Ecole Technique* just outside of Kigali. At this site in early April 2014 Belgian troops abandoned the Rwandans they were protecting and a few days after the Belgian departure several thousand Rwandans were massacred.[99] This scene begins with the singing of "*Ibuka*" or "remember" around a fire pit where a large group of Rwandans stands embracing one another. An off-screen testimony begins as the camera pans the group and then focuses on the young female testifier. As the testimony continues, some depart the circle, while somewhere in the crowd can be heard a wailing woman. Remarkably absent from this scene are Westerners except of course for those who are presumably behind the camera, casting the Western gaze onto the Rwandans. In my experience this type of vigil is much more representative of the Rwandan way of commemoration than the extravagance of *Kwibuka 20*, yet it is only featured for a few minutes. The short nature of this scene highlights the fact that this aspect of commemoration

[99] For first-hand account see: Abramowitz, Michael. " "We were Lying in Pools of Blood": On the 15th Anniversary of the Rwandan Genocide, Survivors Recall How the World Abandoned Them in their Hour of Need." *The Atlantic.* TheAtlantic.com, April 2009. Web, 10 February 2016.

remains inaccessible to Westerners, mostly because of language but also because Western media (such as the producers of this film) are not seeking these ceremonies out.

This scene is wrapped up by a second testifier recognizing the daily presence of perpetrators all around. In order to point to this presence, the film moves to another disinterment scene where a female leader explains that many of the men exhuming bodies were killers and rapists throughout the genocide. Although she explains that many men were forced to go to jail or pay a fine, she can identify those who are notorious for their horrific actions during the genocide and still play a part in the community. As she explains, the problem today in Rwanda is "living with those who killed my family". Her description of her son, born of rape during the genocide, and of the men involved in exhuming bodies gives concrete detail to the observation of the last testifier at the *Ecole Technique* who remarked on the ever-present perpetrators. By having this young woman remark on the presence of perpetrators while showing these same men work to exhume the bodies of victims, the film succeeds at clarifying one aspect of the complicated post-genocide Rwandan society.

In an attempt to present a less one-sided and more open dialogue, the film then presents three women and one man on the side of a river who discuss the futility of the justice system. It seems that either because of their role in the genocide or their present fear of repercussions all three women shield their faces. Interspersing the images of these women by the river are close-ups of the water flowing in the river and images of a man hacking brush with a machete. These images complicate the attempt to include "other" voices in the film because they clearly harken to genocidal actions and the viewer has no choice but to connect these people to use of the machete and to the river into which Tutsi victims were thrown in 1994 and earlier. Their voices and discussion are hidden by this connection between violence and these people.

One of the most remarkable moments of this film is the interview with a woman who was raped during the genocide and who speaks after watching *Rwanda94*. Images of her during the performance show her completely composed and after she remarks: "I wonder why we are being shown this whereas they [the perpetrators] don't come to see it", thus highlighting one of the main shortcomings of the play, the film and Rwandan commemoration in general – the inability to reach a wide audience that includes the entire Rwandan population. While no one knows the perpetrator/victim identities of those who attend these ceremonies and performances, geography and accessibility clearly are obstacles despite all Rwandans being encouraged to attend. The survivor acknowledges, as discussed earlier, how informative the play is but also remarks that it would be important for the perpetrators to see that the white people who put on the play do not stand with the *génocidaires*, as many believe. Furthermore she notes that before she saw the play she was angry about being filmed and interviewed (without explaining why) but that having seen the play she sees the importance of bearing witness. While this is the linchpin for the film and the play's goals, it fails to examine the complicated nature of representing the genocide through theater and the role of the spectator. Tying up the film neatly with this young woman's remark hides the other important remarks she made about perpetrators and we never learn why she was angry. Because the film does not respond to the young woman and acknowledge the crises that many of the audience members experience, instead pushing its own ideology, the film falls short of providing a well-rounded glimpse into the role of the Rwandan spectator.

Shadows of Memory: **Interpretable Representation?**

Shadows of Memory takes a different approach to documentary theater than does *Rwanda*

94 in that it uses only the media of theater and dance to represent the genocide. In *Rwanda 94* we see the interspersing of other media, such as newsreels and testimonies that support the veracity of what the play represents. In contrast, *Shadows of Memory* presents a more interpreted representation in that it strays from such media that the public may associate with truth (newsreels, recorded video, historian intervention). It portrays the genocide through spoken words, through dance, through song and through art, as opposed to through the more direct representation of facts. Even the title suggests a difference with *Rwanda 94* because it refers to the genocide as a memory rather than the more straightforward reference made by *Rwanda 94* (which on its own assumes that the audience knows what happened in 1994).

Despite its different approach to documenting the genocide, *Shadows of Memory* is far from a non-ideological representation of the genocide, as it plays into the main themes of *Kwibuka20* that relied heavily on the images of a flame, the sun, clouds and shadows. These images evoke counteracting forces that may try to uncover and veil the memory of the genocide simultaneously. Thus the title reflects these forces and acknowledges the challenges faced through resuscitating these memories. Despite these differences, I argue that *Shadows of Memory* follows the same goals as the Groupov play in that it wishes to convey a "truth" to the audience and in its representation of the genocidal narrative, we see a clear ideological motive developed and performed. This motive is multifaceted: it points to the West for not having intervened, it demands attention for victims, and it insists upon Rwanda's capacity for reconciliation and progress. As I present the documentary nature of the play I also will highlight the ways in which these "truths" support the ideology of the play's creators and of the Rwandan government.

Shadows of Memory begins with traditional Rwandan vocal music and a long stream of people begins to enter in a circular pattern – they are all wearing traditional pagne in silver or

white, which were the theme colors for the year. A few people break off and walk on to the stage and speak to one another. One woman sings and then an older man begins to speak in English and he states: "We will remember them…Twenty years ago now and here we are at last. After every dark night, there shines a sun". Echoing the terminology and metaphor employed in Gaël Faye's commemorative song, the goal of the play as a demonstration of Rwanda's progress is already laid out. Next, the people on stage kneel and present their roses to the large flame structure in the middle of the stage. The flame is not a real fire but is rather a wood and metal representation of flames spiraling upward – a direction towards which the kneelers present their roses. The elder then states, "As long as we keep your memory alive, when we gather, memories of the times past come to life" and the music picks up with more voices added to the choir at an accelerated pace. The use of the second person opens this phrase to interpretation – the memory that must be kept alive is unspecified yet the next scenes indicate that this memory is the memory of how the genocide came to be. Who, then, is "your"? It is presumably the victims but it could also be read as the "true" history of the genocide with "your" referring to "Rwanda's".

The escalation of music draws in the attention of the spectators, focusing their gaze on a Range Rover pulling onto the field filled with white people in white colonial outfits. As the music rises in tempo and voices crescendo these "colonizers" storm onto the stage causing chaos amongst the Rwandans who bend over, subserviently, and scatter. For those Rwandans left on stage, presumably Tutsi, they are each crowned. Then the colonizers put on blue hats and strut away leaving people frozen in positions of suffering. This scene, performed without English words, imitates the perceived silence of indigenous Africans during colonization. As the Western powers took over Africa and instituted their own means of organization, counteracting voices were left unheard and the words of the indigenous populations were left untranslated, just as they

are in this scene. The performance quickly imitates the accelerating music and the actors begin to fall to the ground as corpses. After several interjections in English that explain the process of dehumanization and highlight the death of one young boy, David, the RPF army rushes in and begins to pick up the dead who then gather together in a beautiful formation spiraling towards the central flame. As the song of remembrance is performed, a line of young adults walks onto the stage with torches and "lights" their torches from the central flame.

While everyone, including the flame carriers, walks off stage and off the field, the two young children who told David's story, along with the elder, state: "We the young generation are the present and the future, determined to keep the flame glowing. The Rwandan spirit has never died – it has never died – and today this very spirit will guide us to a brighter future and we will always remember from within and outside who could not allow us to perish completely and these very friends we still have them today." This concluding remark reminds the audience of their role in watching this performance while it also admonishes those not present, namely the French. The spectator is asked to watch this play, ignoring the crises surrounding them in the audience, and accept that Rwanda has moved into a period of reconciliation driven by remembrance and friendship. The friends of whom the performers speak are most likely referring to those represented amongst the international dignitaries – African, British and American representatives. The absence of the French diplomats is therefore significant in that they cannot be considered to be part of this "friendship" since without being present they cannot know of this acknowledgement.

Relying on large scale choreography, the play also uses documentary style rhetoric to explain the genocide. Returning to the moment of colonization, after the silent period of crowning the Tutsi, the elderly man with the staff states: "Dehumanization started and humans

became objects. Bad governments ruled with injustice. Some had the right to leave; others didn't have the right to leave. Denying human dignity. Life or death became the order of the day." First and foremost, the actor who makes these statements clearly represents an elder and thus a respected member of society. His staff and pagne reflect traditional Rwandan society and in this way he comes from a position of authority perhaps even harkening to the *abiiru* of pre-colonial Rwanda.[100] Second, dehumanization is often regarded as a main cause of genocide – how could a man kill his neighbor if he considered his neighbor a human being? The answer is that the perpetrator was instructed not to see his neighbor as a human but rather, in the case of Rwanda, as a cockroach that was infesting the country. In this play the dehumanization is simply stated and concrete examples (such as the vocabulary of cockroaches) are not provided. Because the next moments represent the genocide, the play draws a straight, causal line from dehumanization to genocide without allowing for interpretation or other representations.

When the genocidal chaos erupts, the man states: "And then, planned and systematic killings started. Death became a routine. Hate speech, discrimination played on the radio and over 1 million just in 100 days". The statistics stated by the old man are quickly and forcefully interrupted by a younger man who states: "It wasn't just a million people who were murdered in Rwanda. It started with one, then another, then another - 10,000 each day, 400 each hour, 7 each minute. 24 hours a day non-stop." The use of numbers, statistics and short clauses supports the idea that these statements are all facts being listed off from memory despite the questioning that has long occurred over the number of people killed in the genocide. We again see the desire to present the genocide as having a clear development and conclusion that can be represented within a 20-minute play.

[100] The *abiiru* were the counsel of advisors to the king who also served as griots, singing and spreading the word and legacy of the monarchy.

The final factual presentation is that which calls upon the West for not having done enough. While all the bodies are lying on the ground a young woman states, "The genocide that happened in Rwanda was preventable. It happened in the face of the world. Certains ont même dit dans ces pays-là un genocide, ce n'est pas trop important". This quick and unique change to French points to the fact that the people who dismissed the genocide were French-speaking and given the political and physical absence of the French at the ceremony, it is clear that these "certains" are French. Thus, the young woman is stating that the French thought a genocide in Africa was not significant. When she says that it was preventable, we again lack any explanation or evidence, as we did when the play jumped from dehumanization to genocide. Both of these moments demand that the audience believe this history based only on the authority of the actors involved.

Running onto the field in military formation and picking up the victims, seemingly returning them to life, the arrival of the RPF troops points to a one-sided view of how the genocide ended despite the fact that it faced a complicated end and can be argued to have continued in Hutu refugee camps. It is clear how such a linear progression from RPF as intruders, to saviors, to the main party of the contemporary government supports the modern government's motivations. As soon as the victims are picked up off the ground by the RPF troops the victims gather together, dancing with pagnes and singing the anthem of *Kwibuka 20*, a song that describes the light that will guide Rwanda to a peaceful future. Again we see a clear, linear link between two aspects of the play. The RPF and the end of the genocide are linked just as simply as dehumanization and genocide or preventability and French guilt.

In opposition to the testimonies used throughout the day of April 7th, the play relies much less on personal recounting of the genocide. In fact the only individual highlighted is David who

"was a 10 year old boy, [who] enjoyed playing football and loved to make people laugh. When David was young he wanted to become a doctor. His last words were that the UN will come and save us. But David was tortured to death." Again, we see the underlying motive of highlighting the failure of the West to stop the genocide, as even the young fictional (or nonfictional) character of David was able to note. David is then used to inspire the audience and the actors to move forward and reconcile, as the young children say "Rwanda from now on I am determined that children like David will be able to achieve their dreams." The example of David harkens to the Children's Room at the Gisozi Memorial site in Kigali where portraits of children are displayed next to facts about their lives and how they were killed. Poignant, these images and the image of David, contribute to the aesthetics of discomfort that Laura Edmondson discusses in her work. By confronting the audience with such uncomfortable images, particularly of children dying, the facts involved in the documentary theater are supplemented by an affective drawing in of the audience, allowing spectators not only to be rationally but also emotionally involved in remembering and representing the genocide.

A second affective moment in the play is the image of the actors splayed across the entire field, lying dead as victims of the genocide. This moment was particularly powerful in that it existed within a few moments of chaotic sound – music and song hastened and added to the intensity of the moment. Then as the music slowed, so did the people, and the audience was left looking at the field while listening to the narration of a young woman who said: "ashes filled the air and darkness fell. The dead are silent and the living struggle on. Genocide hurts badly. Genocide is choice. Homes. Families. Hopes. Dreams. Innocence. Beauty. Dignity. Humanity. And its legacy continues. Genocide hurts badly." The use of English during this segment

demonstrates the director's desire to reach out to the international participants and to strike them with the powerful image of hundreds of bodies on the ground.

It is interesting to note that no crises within the audience began during this scene but rather during the testimonies, thus asking if such visible interpretations are less powerful for Rwandans who have already seen such horror. The play's director, Hope Azeda, argues that this is not the case. In an interview with *AllAfrica* she remarked of the scene, "When the actors laid down (in rehearsal) we all said, "This is it. This is us." And that's when it hit me, you just have to say the truth, no matter what effect it will have. A fact is a fact." Harkening to Bee Bee Bee's desire for blatant representation, Azeda seems in agreement with Groupov, that an aesthetic of discomfort should not dismantle an effort for truth but should support it. In any case, the silence of the entire stadium mirrored the impact felt by the international dignitaries who were visibly touched by the representation at that moment.

Shadows of Memory, through its reliance on a simple, linear chronology of the genocide as well as on the authority of its actors, rarely evokes profound reactions from the Rwandan audience but elicited strong reactions from the international dignitaries. Returning to the "wailing women" who were mentioned in many newspapers, it is important to note that these same articles reflected very little on Western reception of the play. Instead, the media refocused attention on the Rwandan audience creating a mise-en-abyme of spectatorship similar to that which we see in Marie Collard's documentary film. At *Kwibuka20*, the Rwandan audience was being watched by the Western audience and media just as much as the Rwandan audience was watching the plays and testimonies performed by actors and survivors. Through this layering of spectatorship we see how both audiences are forced to reflect on the power of what they are seeing. For many Rwandans, the representation of the genocide (through testimony and

speeches) led to episodes of traumatic experience, while for the Western audience, the enactment of such profound PTSD shifted the gaze from the actual production to these moments of crisis.

Despite *Shadow of Memory's* choice not to provide a model such as Madame Bee Bee Bee, the Western audience understood the reaction it was supposed to have – guilt and disgust with the way their governments ignored the crisis in Rwanda. However, without such an explicit guide as Madame BBB and due to the fact that the international viewers were surrounded by Rwandans, their reactions focused more on the involvement of the other spectators than on the play itself. This shifting of the gaze from responsibility to the re-experiencing of a trauma (through the "wailing women") unveils a different reality about commemoration showing how much farther the Rwandans and their government have to come in working through the trauma of genocide. Moreover, it demonstrates the shifting attention of the Western community that transforms the act of global commemoration into an act of voyeurism.

***Maria Kizito*: Theater on Trial**

In contrast to the two plays analyzed above, Erik Ehn's 2004 play *Maria Kizito*, confronts the genocide not through facts and a documentary style but through an avant-garde approach to theater and the stage. While the play encourages the mirrored spectatorship that we saw in the character of Madame Bee Bee Bee it also pushes this further by rendering abstract the facts so clearly laid out in Groupov's play. In other words, Ehn's play completely escapes the identity as documentary theater, instead relying on disorientation and an aesthetics of discomfort to complicate the nature of spectatorship. By focusing the play on the actions of a perpetrator the spectators are forced to see the genocide through a very different light than in the other two plays and thus pushes the audience to question their place and the factual nature of the play.

Maria Kizito focuses on the trial of two Rwandan nuns accused of having aided the murder of 7,000 Tutsis within their convent. While these two nuns, Maria and Gertrude, play central roles in the piece, the other important role is given to an American nun, Theresa. Theresa, fascinated by the trial of these women, strips herself of her habit and travels to Belgium to watch the trial. From the beginning, it is clear that Theresa fills a similar role as Madame Bee Bee Bee, leading the audience on their discovery. Theresa and Madame Bee Bee Bee act on the secrets revealed by the dead in their respective plays. Flashbacks in *Maria Kizito* and the presence of the "Choir of the Dead" in *Rwanda 94* act as catalysts for each woman to act in an attempt to understand the atrocity. Alice Rayner argues that ghosts exist in a realm between secrecy and return, in other words they bring into light (or return) the unsaid (or the secrets) of the past, present or future. For Rayner, ghosts bring focus to something hidden in the past as does the ghost in Hamlet who alerts Hamlet to the criminality and suspicious nature of his father's death. These secrets, for the case of this chapter, include the truths that Madame BBB seeks in putting words and faces to the violence and the truth of perpetration that Theresa looks for.

However, unlike Madame Bee Bee Bee, Theresa strips herself of her prior identity. The stripping of this identity represents an act that is expected of the spectators – asking audience members to dispel their prior knowledge and identities in order to be open to hearing the untold story of a genocide perpetrator. In explaining her departure to Belgium, Theresa distinguishes herself from Madame Bee Bee Bee in another way, by not seeking facts but by seeking an understanding. She asks: "May I watch and discover what our sister was thinking? There are enough dead finally to make one wonder. She is enough an individual to expose something in myself, or, well, someone nearly like me" (Skloot 181). Theresa is clearly seeking, not to understand how the genocide happened as Madame Bee Bee Bee does, but to understand how

someone who she can see as a reflection of herself (another nun) could be capable of such horror and she is asking the audience to follow her lead.[101]

In contrast to *Rwanda94* and *Kwibuka20*, Erik Ehn's *Maria Kizito* provides a different narrativization of the genocide through what has been called an "anti-realism". This play, Ehn suggests, "is meant not as an explanation – not even as a condemnation. . . . It's meant to provide a space of time in which we can be with Maria. I try not to judge her guilt. I try to let us be with her in her guilt, because her kind of guilt is a key to understanding who we are in the world today" (70). Ehn's (and Theresa's) empathetic approach contrasts sharply with Groupov and Hope Azeda's attempts to clearly delineate right and wrong and judge the genocide and those who contributed to it. Instead, he presents an apathetic and open lens in the form of Theresa through which and with which the audience is asked to observe the actions and guilt of the accused nun. The layer of discomfort, produced by loud interruptions by RTLM, drumming and readings from the "Bible of Genocide", also comes from watching a play about a genocide perpetrator and being left, as a spectator, to judge her ourselves.

Interestingly, Ehn's play is no longer in production and was only periodically performed between 2004 and 2012. In fact, recordings of it are equally challenging to find. What does this mean in contrast to the other two plays that were performed, in one case widely and in the other in front of a large audience, and are still available in their entirety on YouTube? The questions that this chapter asks in regards to the mise-en-abyme of spectatorship are challenged when the spectator is again absent (or only imagined), as they are in literature. In literature, the reader is

[101] The role of the audience as jury has long played a specific role in Holocaust theater, as in *The False Witness,* which, as Skloot states, asks the audience to "react with utmost seriousness to an enterprise that is in constant danger of losing its theatrical and historical balance" (24). Although Skloot argues that this technique places too much responsibility on the audience, it is clearly a methodology that is still supported by Ehn among others.

not physically witnessing the action, as would a theater spectator. What role, then, does the spectator play as a reader of a play instead of as a viewer and listener? In *Rwanda 94*, Madame Bee Bee Bee forms the first layer of spectatorship and the audience forms the second – the third is the person who views this spectacle online in video form or through Collard's film. In *Shadows of Memory,* Rwandan spectators became the spectacle themselves as Western viewers turned their attention from the play to the audience. Yet, in *Maria Kizito*, this layering ends with the audience present at the performance and thus cannot be analyzed in the same way as the other plays. Is the question of spectatorship then obsolete for a play no longer in production? Does a play that is no longer performed simply become literature? I argue that this type of play is still differentiated from literature in that there was at one point an audience and the reader, despite not being involved directly in spectatorship, is aware of that audience's once-presence. This difference again highlights the importance of using and analyzing different media when commemorating the genocide. Although plays can be read as text in the same way as literature, their distinguishing feature, as performances, brings into question issues of spectatorship that complicate their role in remembering.

CONCLUSION

Concluding and Moving Forward

On April 7, 2014, in his keynote speech to a stadium full of Rwandans and international dignitaries, President Paul Kagame repeated and reflected the dominant narrative of Rwanda's recovery since the genocide in April 1994. He thanked and honored the "unbreakable Rwandan spirit to which we owe the survival and renewal of our country", while also demanding additional information to explain the "history and root causes [that] go beyond this beautiful country". Throughout the speech Kagame highlighted the progress Rwandans had made, their "incredible journey of rebuilding", while also demanding truth and stating, "historical clarity is a duty of memory".

While the economic and social progress made in Rwanda over the past 22 years is undeniable, this dissertation seeks to destabilize, to place under pressure, the narrative proposed by Kagame at this event, throughout the 20th commemoration, and throughout the past two decades. By introducing a wide range of media – including literature, song, and theater – I argue that a more complete vision of the genocide and of its commemoration can be developed – a vision that includes Rwandans whose spirits are still broken and for whom a "truth" of genocide follows a very different path and whose roots and causes are widespread and still unclear.

One way to reimagine this vision is through the use of space, not as sites of memory, but rather as sites of historical layering – where genocide occurred, where its occurrence remains hidden or where its remembrance is now the given site's most prominent goal. In examining Gilbert Gatoré's novel *Le passé devant soi*, the Café des Grands Lacs becomes such a site. From his seat in Café de Grands Lacs several years after the genocide, the central protagonist Cornelius tries to imagine the horror that occurred right on the street in front of this café, yet in

this imagining he also becomes the subject of Gérard's gaze – a victim who relives the trauma publicly, thus reenacting genocidal moments in the safety of the café. This is also where Cornelius' imagining of the genocide is undermined by the suspicions of the survivors around him – the history he thinks he knows is put in question when his proposed theatrical script is poorly received and when he finds himself the target Gérard's traumatic outbursts.

Space is also important in the final two chapters, in which the songs and plays that were performed in *Amahoro* Stadium are examined, performances that took place at the very site where, in 1994, the UN had protected Tutsis from the genocidal regime. Today this space is used for soccer games as well as commemorative events like 2014's *Kwibuka20* or the yearly Walk to Remember Candlelight Vigil. In the case of the soccer games, the history of the genocide is glazed over by the fanaticism of the sport, while in the case of *Kwibuka20*, the stadium's enduring legacy is pulled to the fore. In particular, through Kagame's speech highlighted above, in which he thanked those members of the international community who helped Rwandans during the genocide, the site becomes a heavy symbol of the limited aid that was in actuality brought to Rwanda in 1994, as it was one of very few sites used by the UN to protect the victims. The performances of 2014 therefore complicated Kagame's narrative. For example, in "We are Standing Tall", the Franco-Rwandan singer Faye applauds and questions the amount of progress and healing that can be accomplished in twenty years. Then, in *Shadows of Memory* and throughout the testimonies, PTSD crises of the spectators demonstrated how the healing process is far from complete and that the Rwandan spirit is not completely "unbreakable".

In fact, through an exploration of these spaces and their layered narratives, it becomes evident that "historical clarity" as a "duty of memory" may actually have more to do with a greying of the dominant historical narrative of the genocide. Instead of putting forth one

cohesive and dominant narrative, this analysis unveils multiple truths: Gatore's perpetrator protagonist Niko, unveils a "grey zone" of perpetration; Diop's Cornelius demonstrates the uneasy process of remembering and inheriting guilt; the gospel singer Kizito Mihigo's re-categorizes victims; and Sister Theresa of *Maria Kizito* attempts to connect with the horrific character of Maria Kizito. These narratives, which complicate traditional binaries of perpetration and victimhood, discontinue the black and white narrative of genocide and replace it with a schema more closely related to Levi's "grey zone".

Finally, by introducing a variety of media into the analysis and process of commemorating the genocide, a framework in which space operates as a thematic tool, the process of commemoration itself comes into question. In his speech, President Kagame laid out the expectations of national commemoration: "Time and again these past twenty years Rwandans have given of themselves – you have stood before the community to bear witness and to listen to others do the same; you have taken responsibility and you have forgiven. Your sacrifices are a gift to the nation; they are the seed from which the new Rwanda grows. Thank you for allowing your humanity and your patriotism to prevail over your grief and loss." For Kagame, the path to commemoration is achieved through testimony, remorse and forgiveness. However, the media examined in this dissertation question the efficacy of such a process. For example, Isaro's attempt to write the genocide by collecting testimonies from all sides of the conflict is undermined by her inability to pardon "the man who did this" to her family – the perpetrator of genocide who took her family and her childhood. Then, at *Kwibuka20*, where testimonies were featured throughout the day, including perpetrator testimonies (known as "Testimonies of Unity"), PTSD crises amongst the spectators were widespread – instead of prevailing over grief and loss, these spectators were overcome.

Addressing space as a site of layered histories and narratives would be incomplete without an analysis of the actual sites of memory in Rwanda, which are visited by Rwandans and foreigners alike in an attempt to commemorate the genocide. My goals beyond the restricted confines of this dissertation project are to ask analogous questions: what narratives are unveiled by looking at a variety of media? How do other media destabilize the overarching, dominant narrative of the government? How does including a variety of actors (survivors, perpetrators, musicians, foreigners, choreographers) change the dynamic of what is remembered and how? My intention is to bring these questions to bear on the sites of memory that originally inspired my multimedia approach.

The Kigali Memorial Center is located a short distance from downtown on a steep hill overlooking youth soccer fields and taxi stations. To enter, one must cross past armed guards and a tall gate, in order to reach the main courtyard and museum building. The museum is a two-story building that also houses a café and gift shop, with the newly opened Genocide Archives in the building next door. When I first entered the museum, going down the stairs into the dimly lit first room, I was struck by the fact that the first images I saw were works of art that abstractly represented the genocide. The first is a grainy image of a person's face, presumably Rwandan, which has been reworked to appear ghostly. The next is a large, circular art installation that features multiple statues and benches. Facing inward, these benches prevent visitors from seeing the entire installation at once, always with one statue behind them. Yet outside of the benches, the entire installation can be taken in.

Figure 7. Artist Unnamed. Gisozi Memorial Site, Kigali, Rwanda.

The museum is organized around this installation with the outer circle serving as an in-depth historical description of the genocide, supplemented by documents, testimonies and images. Then several circular rooms fill out the remaining space. These rooms hold clothes, bones and photos of victims; and visitors are invited to sit on the benches in the center taking in the installation as well as these three rooms all at once. The materiality of these displays, in contrast to the historiographical representation of the genocide in the outer circle, was the first instance in which I was struck by the multimedia approach to remembrance.

Watching other visitors engage with the site was even more informative in delineating how commemoration is performed. Most Rwandan visitors were school children and engaged most actively with the videos and photos. Some older visitors stopped along with me, reading every caption, but most visitors, as at most museums, casually selected certain displays with

which to engage. In this way, the material exhibits of the photos, clothes and bones drew the most attention.

One feature of the museum was almost completely ignored by most visitors. The outdoor segment of the site consists of mass graves and a collection of gardens. Rwandan visitors brought wreaths to place on top of the graves whereas foreigners could buy roses on-site. Meanwhile, the gardens remained unvisited. According to the audio guide, the gardens were designed as sites of meditation and reflection, symbolizing different moments of the Rwandan historical narrative. Yet, very few visitors passed through these gardens and even fewer sat to meditate or reflect. The lack of engagement with the gardens was the second moment that led me to question how different media can encourage or discourage the process of commemoration and how the process itself stands to be transformed by these media. The sites themselves inspired the fundamental questions examined in this dissertation; as with any project of this magnitude, I have endeavored to advance conversations on a broad range of complex issues, in many cases introducing new challenges and questions that will ultimately shape future research.

Figure 8. Gardens at Kigali Memorial Center. April 2014.

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