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Tourisme mémoriel : la face sombre de la terre ?

Auschwitz 1, un jour de visite ordinaire. 30 septembre 2008.

Reading Genocide Memorial Sites in Rwanda: Eurocentrism, Sensory Secondary Witnessing and Shame

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LIRE LES SITES MÉMORIELS DU GÉNOCIDE AU RWANDA : EUROCENTRISME, TÉMOIGNAGE SENSORIEL SECONDAIRE ET HONTE / L'article porte sur des réactions littéraires ainsi que théoriques aux sites mémoriels consacrés au génocide des Tutsi au Rwanda, et plus spécifiquement sur trois ouvrages : le recueil de documents de Philip Gourevitch *Nous avons le plaisir de vous informer que, demain, nous serons tués avec nos familles* ; le roman de Boubacar Boris Diop Murambi, *Le Livre des ossements*, et le texte théorique de Sarah Guyer, *Les Ossements du Rwanda*. L'idée principale est que les réactions des visiteurs « extérieurs » procèdent souvent d'une scission entre l'intellect et les sens. À la différence de certains critiques, par exemple Susan Gubar, insistant précisément sur la dimension intellectuelle de la réception et interprétant les sites à la lumière de tropes renvoyant à la mémoire de l'Holocauste (l'incompréhensible et l'absence), je soutiens que ces visiteurs extérieurs, depuis les anthropologues judiciaires jusqu'aux représentants du « tourisme noir », peuvent percevoir ces sites dans leur matérialité et être touchés à travers ce que j'appelle un « témoignage secondaire sensoriel ». Cependant, les lectures « auto-réflexives » fondées sur la sensibilité ne parviennent pas à annuler les multiples formes de honte que ces monuments engendrent.
Mots clés: Rwanda, génocide, témoignage, Holocauste, mémorial, matérialisme, eurocentrisme.

LOOKING FOR MEANING IN CORPSES

In the opening chapter of Philip Gourevitch's *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families*, the American journalist describes visiting a church at Nyarubuye in Rwanda in 1995, where around fifty decomposing bodies had been left unburied following a massacre during the previous year's genocide. Gourevitch writes:

> The dead at Nyarubuye were, I'm afraid, beautiful. There was no getting around it. The skeleton is a beautiful thing. The randomness of the fallen forms, the strange tranquillity of their rude exposure, the skulls here, the arm bent in some uninterpretable gesture there — these things were beautiful, and their beauty only added to the affront of the place. I couldn't settle on any meaningful response: revulsion, alarm, sorrow, grief, shame, incomprehension, sure, but nothing truly meaningful. I just looked, and I took photographs, because I wondered whether I could really see what I was seeing while I saw it, and I wanted also an excuse to look a bit more closely (Gourevitch, p. 19).

In attempting to decipher the meaning of the corpses, Gourevitch moves from a position of certainty — making a knowingly provocative point about their beauty — to one of radical doubt. His initial response stems from the Western philosophical tradition and draws on diverse thinkers, from Adorno to Plato (in an earlier passage he refers to the famous story in *The Republic* in which Leontius yields to the "beautiful sight" of an executioner's corpses). Here Gourevitch focuses on questions of aesthetics, observing: "The dead looked like pictures of the dead" (*ibid.*, p. 15). While their gestures are "uninterpretable", he is nonetheless able to reflect critically on this position, decoding the corpses through an established set of critical gestures, central to which is the claim that the disturbing richness of the aesthetic experience only heightens the sense of ethical "affront". But as Gourevitch continues to contemplate the

bodies, a deeper level of uncertainty begins to undermine the coherence of these abstractions. He summarizes his emotions through a fraught series of nouns: "revulsion, alarm, sorrow, grief, shame, incomprehension". Finding himself unable to settle on any single "meaningful" interpretation, Gourevitch instead settles for a kind of stunned looking, questioning his initial perceptions and turning to his camera as he determines to look "a bit more closely".

Gourevitch's implied distinction between meaningful critical thought and sensory experience is the focus of this essay, in which I draw on both non-fictional and fictional texts by Gourevitch, Sarah Guyer and Boubacar Boris Diop in order to ask how non-Rwandan "outsiders" — such as artists, journalists, academics, human rights activists, development workers and so-called "dark tourists" — conceptualize and represent Rwanda's vast network of genocide memorials.[1] As the Gourevitch passage above highlights, non-fictional responses to these sites can be highly literary, while Diop's novel engages with ideas about historical witnessing even as it assumes a fictional form. In drawing together these different genres of writing, my central concern is to show how they are all inevitably inflected by some form of Eurocentrism, be it by way of Gourevitch's use of Plato or the tropes of Holocaust memory that influence Guyer's reading of the sites. Nonetheless, I argue that the materiality of the memorials, and the forms of affect they engender through such things as their display of rotting clothes and human remains, recalibrates the relationship between sensory experience and traditions of critical thought. Gourevitch describes how his encounter with the bodies led him to question the adequacy of the interpretative frameworks he brought with him to Rwanda, recognizing that more thinking needed to be done by way of his senses: in this case, by looking "a bit more closely". But as the privileged beneficiaries of globalization, this essay asks whether outsiders can ever read these sites in the more meaningful ways that Gourevitch imagines. And if there is some more meaningful form of response, then how is this meaningful, and for whom?

THE LIMITS OF EUROCENTRISM

Dark tourism is becoming an increasingly globalized and institutionalized phenomenon, with sites such as Auschwitz-Birkenau — a UNESCO World Heritage Site — serving as a template for the preservation of similar sites in Rwanda and elsewhere. My first visit to genocide memorials in Rwanda took place in March 2016, when some of the more prominent locations were undergoing

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Fig. 1. Ntarama Genocide Memorial Centre, 2016.

construction work to create the kind of physical infrastructure that we associate with professionally-managed tourist destinations. Protective roofs and walkways had recently been completed at Ntarama church, for example, where around 5,000 people were killed in a single day; human remains, clothes and objects had been put in storage while the restoration work took place (fig. 1). However, other sites were characterized by the presence of human remains which had been displayed in the same way for a number of years. These included the church at Nyamata, which is about one hour's drive from the capital Kigali, where skulls and bones of genocide victims are held in a sunken indoor vault and two outdoor crypts; and the high school at Murambi, where bodies have been preserved in lime and laid out on wooden tables in a series of outhouses. The nearest European equivalent is probably Majdanek, a former Nazi extermination camp where visitors are confronted by dusty shoes displayed in old wire cages, human ashes in a concrete mausoleum, and a gas chamber whose inner walls are still stained blue. But visitors do not encounter identifiable body parts at Majdanek. And while skulls and bones are also on display in former Cambodian killing fields such as Choeung Ek, for example, they are held in a formal stupa, creating a physical barrier between the living and the dead; whereas in Rwanda, there is nothing separating visitors from the human remains.

When I returned to England, I reread an essay entitled "Rwanda's Bones" by Sarah Guyer, in which the American academic reflects on her visits to Nyarubuye, Nyamata and Murambi in the early 2000s. Noting that Rwanda has "no tradition of displaying bones or fetishizing corpses", Guyer does not seek to defend or condemn these memorial practices, but rather to "read" them (Guyer, p. 38 & 39). She does so largely by way of theorists, filmmakers and philosophers — most of them white males — whose work has shaped influential poststructuralist approaches to Holocaust memory, broadly arguing that Rwanda's memorial sites "appear to resist comprehension and meaning" (*ibid.*, p. 39). The "account of sublime negative knowledge" that Guyer identifies in Alain Resnais's Holocaust documentary *Night and Fog*, by way of Paul de Man, suggests that what

(1) The memorials mark the 1994 genocide perpetrated by the Hutu-led government and members of Rwanda's Hutu majority, who made up around 85% of the country's population at the time. The vast majority of the victims were Tutsi, who constituted around 14% of the population, but moderate Hutus and Twa were also killed. The United Nations puts the total number of genocide victims at more than one million.

took place at Auschwitz-Birkenau "remains unimaginable" and in its sensory excess, a site such as Nyamata is understood in similar terms, with Guyer describing how it enacts Maurice Blanchot's imperative: "*Keep watch over absent meaning*" (Guyer, p. 38, 37 & 50). Privileging absence and the sublime in this way is a knowingly Romantic position — Guyer's first book was *Romanticism After Auschwitz* — but it is also an ethical standpoint, entailing a commitment to critical and conceptual distance that recalls Claude Lanzmann's famous pronouncement:

> The Holocaust is unique because it created a circle of flame around itself, a boundary not to be crossed, since horror in the absolute degree cannot be communicated. To pretend that one has done so is to commit the gravest of transgressions (Lanzmann, p. 30).

While Lanzmann's film *Shoah* evokes absence and a sense of "outsideness" through present day interviews with perpetrators, victims and bystanders, and meditations on natural landscapes where only traces of violence remain, for Guyer, Rwanda's memorials convey an absence of meaning that is ethically troubling. Above all, she is suspicious of the overload of affect, feeling and sensory experience that is brought about by the presence of undifferentiated bodies which, she argues, numb both the imagination and critical thought. To support this line of argument, Guyer draws on a *New York Times* article by Andrew Blum which begins with the author, the grandchild of Holocaust refugees, recalling a visit to the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin that he made while at college, where he remembers feeling "literally immobilized" (Blum). Hoping to arrive at some kind of insight, he instead found that the Holocaust "made no sense" and its "defiance of understanding was devastating and astounding" (*ibid*). Blum describes how this experience was replicated during a later visit to Nyamata when he descended into the outdoor crypts:

> They were hot and damp, like something alive. Near the entrance were newer coffins, wrapped in purple. Stretching out into the dark were shelves and shelves of skulls and bones.
> We went back up the stairs and Celaphine led us silently to the second crypt, which she insisted that we climb down into. It was the same as the first, and my stomach turned.
> Strangely, I felt relief. The odor exempted us from the need for imagination. It relieved us of the need for understanding (*ibid*).

Remarkably, for Blum, the experience of visiting an immaculately maintained villa in the suburbs of Berlin has exactly the same cognitive effect as the "stomach turning" encounter with bodily remains at Nyamata, with a stunted imagination serving to shut down any more critical or analytical impulse.

Fig. 2. Murambi Genocide Memorial Centre, 2016.

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Guyer is also uncomfortable with the way that the bones serve as "transhistorical markers of death" that "take the place of stories", arguing that this further negates the possibility of nuanced historical understanding (*ibid.*, p. 39). Indeed, she goes so far as to suggest that in their impersonality, the bones induce visitors to adopt a perpetrator perspective:

> By refusing to return names, identities, or individualities to the dead, they either recur to genocide's logic (which also is colonialism's logic); that is, the logic of impersonality whereby persons are recognised only as members of a population, or they commemorate death-in-general, rather than the specific violence of genocide (*ibid*).

In their "intensely non-anthropomorphizing style of commemoration" the memorials diverge from one of the key strategies of Holocaust memory culture, where personal photographs, objects and written narratives are often used to foreground the human lives that lie behind the staggering death tolls (*ibid.*, p. 40). In contrast, Guyer writes of the Rwandan memorials: "At the risk of a certain vulgarity (but what is vulgarity in this context?) a pile of unrelated bones does not commemorate a person" (*ibid.*).

While Guyer very persuasively reads Rwanda's memorials in terms of absence and deindividuation, her dependence on tropes of Holocaust memory arguably makes her essay susceptible to the charges of Eurocentrism that have been levelled at trauma theory over the last few years by Stef Craps and others (Craps, p. 1-8). It is as though, in the West, we have been culturally overwhelmed by Holocaust

memory, and Guyer's essay reflects a wider tendency — one that plays out across a range of educational and commemorative initiatives — to impose concepts, values and schemas deriving from the Holocaust onto the memory of a genocide that is very different, both in terms of its execution and its historical and geopolitical connection to the West. I would argue that the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda therefore demands a different kind of attentiveness to the positionality from which outsiders approach it. For Western tourists, educators, researchers, journalists and NGOs, some form of Eurocentrism is inescapable, and it is a trait that inflects much of this essay. But by involving ourselves in countries such as Rwanda that have suffered from manifold forms of colonial oppression, it remains something that we ought at least to be vigilant about, in this case recognizing that memory paradigms that foreground absence and incomprehension might require some modification if they are adequately to account for the material remains that we encounter at Rwanda's killing sites. Ever since the publication of Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory* in 2009, scholars in memory studies have grown accustomed to celebrating the forms of solidarity that can be achieved through the confluence of transcultural and transnational memories operating through non-competitive frameworks. However, Guyer's essay suggests that multidirectional relationships often involve forms of conceptual and interpretative imbalance that tend to centralize Western experiences, such that they dominate rather than illuminate histories of oppression in countries such as Rwanda. In the remainder of this essay, I will therefore sketch out some suggestions as to how we might move beyond a discourse of absence towards a different — if still, inevitably, Eurocentric — form of self-reflexive reading that emphasizes materiality and testimonial possibility. Responding to Guyer's sense of the inscrutability of these sites, this alternative model of reading is grounded in the conviction that bones and bodies do not simply overwhelm the imagination or relieve us from thought, as they did for Blum. And through this more embodied, emotional and even irrational form of reading, outsiders might come to recognize that while Rwanda's memorials do not commemorate specific individuals, they do very effectively commemorate specific instances of genocidal violence.

RECOVERING THE WITNESS: SENSORY SECONDARY WITNESSING

Undertaking this alternative reading of Rwanda's genocide memorials centrally involves engaging with the witnesses who, Guyer argues, are effaced by the "non-anthropomorphizing" impersonality of these sites. To explore this further, I will turn to one of the most significant literary responses to Rwanda's genocide memorials, Boubacar Boris Diop's novel *Murambi, le livre des ossements* (*Murambi, The Book of Bones*), which is preoccupied by the ways in which the experiences of traumatized witnesses inform the responses, reflections and representations of those who encounter the sites as outsiders.

Diop is a Senegalese writer who visited Rwanda in 1998 with a number of artists who were commissioned to produce creative responses to the genocide through the *Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire* project. The out-

come, for Diop, was *Murambi*, a multi-voiced narrative that implicitly interrogates the author's own position as an outsider through the character of Cornelius Uvimana, a Rwandan-born history teacher who was living and working in Djibouti during the genocide and who returns to Rwanda a decade later intending to write a play. Cornelius's former friends initially treat him with reserve, even outright hostility, as he gets drunk and brags about his literary ambitions. The reader eventually learns that this tension also relates to the fact that Cornelius's father was a notorious Hutu *génocidaire*, Doctor Joseph Karekezi, otherwise known as the Butcher of Murambi, who was responsible for orchestrating the massacre at the former secondary school in which his Tutsi wife and children — which is to say Cornelius's mother and siblings — were also killed (fig. 2).

In the long final section of the novel, Cornelius visits Murambi with a childhood friend, Gérard Nayinzira, who survived the atrocity but was left severely traumatized after hiding among victims whose blood seeped into his eyes and mouth (Diop, p. 152). Cornelius's encounter with the corpses at Murambi forms the structural hinge of the novel's coming-of-age plot, motivating a more earnest reckoning with the past as he abandons his initial literary plans and commits to writing something more engaged with his own implication in events and the experiences of witnesses such as Gérard:

> Cornelius was slightly ashamed of having entertained the idea of a play. But he wasn't giving up his enthusiasm for words, dictated by despair, helplessness before the sheer immensity of evil, and no doubt a nagging conscience. He did not intend to resign himself to the definitive victory of the murderers through silence. […] He would tirelessly recount the horror. With machete words, club words, words studded with nails, naked words and — despite Gérard — words covered with blood and shit. That he could do, because he saw in the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis a great lesson in simplicity. Every chronicler could at least learn — something essential to his art — to call a monster by its name (*ibid.* p. 179).

The trope of representational savagery that is deployed in this evocation of a hypothetical trauma text is common in Holocaust literature, with Cornelius's vision of "Machete words, club words, words studded with nails" recalling Primo Levi's sense of the "new harsh language" that would be needed to accurately describe the experience of camps such as Auschwitz-Birkenau (Levi, p. 129). But while such metafictional passages share certain affinities with Holocaust writing, Diop is also committed to finding some form of literary sensitization to the specificities of the Rwandan experience, evoking particular features of the genocidal violence and, above all, resisting tropes of representational failure in both a figurative and a literal sense. Just as Gourevitch's initial encounter with bodily remains underpins his quest to uncover historical knowledge by way of testimonial accounts in *We Wish to Inform You*, the outcome of this experience for Cornelius — as for Diop — is a book. In this instance, the text Cornelius starts to imagine involves a particular mode of literary representation — something along the lines of "genocidal realism" — that is redolent with the pain of the victims and experiences such as Gérard's as he hid amongst the fallen bodies with "urine and excrement spread all over the ground, old women running naked, the noise of limbs shattering" (Diop, p. 174). Gérard's eyewitness account animates the site for Cornelius as he imagines drawing together the materiality of genocidal killing and the materiality of literary language through "words covered with blood and shit".

While Gérard, the eyewitness, is eventually induced to tell his story, at the heart of Cornelius's epiphany at Murambi lies his own responsibility as what Dora Apel, in the context of Holocaust memory, terms a "secondary witness". For Apel, secondary witnesses are artists of the post-war generations who "relate to the victims of the Holocaust" and find themselves "in the position of unwilling post facto bystanders" (Apel, p. 8 & 4). In *Murambi*, however, secondary witnessing involves the outsider-author in a more specific act of recognition: one that accounts for the angry, resentful presence of a traumatized witness and, if not to the actual incarnation of what Gérard saw, to some form of empathetic engagement with his suffering. Cornelius's grasp of the past continues to lack nuance: the fact that the "great lesson in simplicity" that he draws from Murambi relates to "the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis" perhaps highlights a failure to engage with any of the more ambiguous acts of violence, such as reprisal killings of Hutus, that characterize a highly complex historical site and period. Cornelius is quick to label the killers as "monsters" and he seemingly takes immense pride in imagining a book he is yet to write. But he also learns lessons from Murambi through his attentiveness to Gérard's narrative and his emotional response to the human remains.

Cornelius's epiphany thus suggests an alternative way of reading Rwanda's genocide memorials: one that explores the relationship between materiality, testimony, the imagination and knowledge, finding new forms of meaning through the interplay between these equally important reference points. Rather than privileging abstraction and taking materiality for granted, or at least assuming "that there is little of interest to say about it", such an approach has much in common with what Diana Coole and Samantha Frost term the "new materialisms" that are emerging in the arts and humanities (Coole & Frost, p. 1). Such readings are arguably not all that "new", but they remain pertinent to a field such as memory studies, where much recent scholarship has tended to conceptualize collective memory as a transnational, transcultural and "unbound" phenomenon (see Bond et al.). An instructive early example of a materialist reading of Rwanda's genocide sites can be found

in the work of the forensic anthropologist Clea Koff, for example, who was involved in the exhumation of mass graves immediately after the genocide. Koff describes how, in attempting "to deduce what happened *before* death", she saw herself and her colleagues as "interpreters of the skeleton's language" who could prove "to would-be killers that bones can talk" (*ibid.*, p. 6, 11 & 4). Her memoir *The Bone Woman* describes how forensic anthropologists read this language; for example, the lack of damage to the radius, ulna and hands of corpses buried in a mass grave in Kibuye indicated that "these people hadn't fought back […] they hadn't even raised their arms to protect their heads" (*ibid.*, p. 87).

An attentiveness to materiality need not be the preserve of forensic anthropologists or fictional characters, and indeed I would argue that tourists and other visitors to Murambi cannot avoid the fact that the schoolrooms are still permeated by the nauseating stench of bodily decomposition. If one looks closely, one can start to tentatively decipher the evidence of bodily violence without any specialist training. Broken bones, fractured children's skulls, rictuses of corpses that still seem to be yelling: we read these wounds and gestures with our senses and emotions. What is being evoked is not precise historical knowledge. We may know nothing of the individual identities of the victims — not even whether they were Tutsis or some other victims of contemporaneous acts of violence — but we nonetheless feel ourselves immersed in a genocidal temporality that is discontinuous with chronological time as experienced outside the borders of the memorial site, where we tend to think of the past as always receding from individual and collective memory, because here the moment of killing remains palpable. Certain postures evoke the moment of death, as Cornelius describes: "A skeleton was curled up like a fetus: someone who must have resigned himself to death without daring to look it in the face" (Diop, p. 147). The bodies at Murambi are slowly decomposing — the cadavers are shrinking and losing hair — but the site prolongs the timeframe during which visitors are able to come into bodily contact with the dead, slowing chronological time in order to convey something of the horror of events in a way that is no longer possible at Holocaust sites. And this slowing of time and seizure of the senses has specific cognitive effects. As Koff notes, we intuit points of comparison between our own bodies and those in front of us, drawing us towards a more somatic mode of connection with the victims. And this, I would argue, forms the basis for the way that we read what Laura Major calls the "corporeal historiography" of the memorials (Koff, p. 2, Major, p. 177).

The way that these sites disinter memory — literally raising the dead from the ground and placing them in plain sight — also has an uncanny commensurability with a genocide which was itself never particularly well concealed. While many have argued that the perpetrators of the Holocaust went to great lengths in order to conceal their criminality — pointing to the fact that major extermination camps were established in the rural areas of the *Generalgouvernement*, or to Himmler's notorious reference to the euphemistic "final solution" as "an unwritten and never to be written page of glory in our history" (Browning, p. 391) — the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda cannot be said to have inaugurated a "crisis of witnessing" through the same deliberate, calculated attack on the very possibility of eyewitness accounts (Felman & Laub). The killing took place in urban and rural areas in broad daylight. It took place at churches, sports stadia, schools and roadblocks, the perpetrators roaming the streets with machetes, guns and clubs in what Gourevitch describes as a "carnival romp" (Gourevitch, p. 93). This was a messy, chaotic genocide whose victims often simply "lay where they fell", later to be buried in the shallow graves that for years were said to line every hillside in Rwanda (Koff, p. 101). Rwanda's macabre memorials thus have an apt correlation with the history they wish to keep before our eyes, ears and noses. What we are given to see is just as important as the need to remain attentive to historical blind spots. Because these memorials remind us that this killing was flagrant.

ENTERING AND LEAVING THE CIRCLE OF FIRE

By engaging in sensory secondary witnessing, outsiders who visit Rwanda's genocide memorials intuit that the human remains commemorate something far more specific than the abstract notion of "death-in-general". Rather, the bodies, bones and other evidence of genocidal killing — walls pockmarked with bullet holes, bloodstained clothes — slow time in a unique configuration from within which they testify to the aftermath of what still feels like a physically and imaginatively proximate genocide. How, then, might we conceptualize our outsider relationship to this past in terms of presence rather than absence? Do we simply look rather than think?

We recall that, for Gourevitch, taking photographs of corpses was an excuse for looking more closely and also for deferring interpretation of a spectacle that defied his ability to make sense of it at the time. Cornelius experiences a similar moment in *Murambi*:

> He stopped next to a corpse: a man or a woman whose left foot had been cut off at the ankle. What remained of the leg was stiff like a real crutch. He was surprised not to be thinking of anything in particular. He was satisfied to look, silent, horrified (Diop, p. 146).

Witnessing in and of itself does not demand interpretation. It is enough simply to see and tell. And while Gérard's inner life is in many ways inscrutable to Cornelius — or at least it is approached across a vast experiential divide — a connection is formed between the two men through

Fig. 3. Murambi Genocide Memorial Centre, 2016.

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their co-presence at Murambi and the things that they see together, even if they are seen very differently. Diop's novel, much like *Night and Fog* and *We Wish to Inform You*, is full of references to eyes and vision: "looking death in the eye" is a recurrent motif. Yet ultimately looking is not disconnected from thought or action for secondary witnesses, as they are not traumatized in the same way as the victims. Vision does not lead to complete thought paralysis. Rather, as noted, visiting Murambi motivates Cornelius to write a book, just as visiting Nyarubuye does for Gourevitch. And in both texts, the affective, sensory experience of a genocidal temporality fashions a productive drawing together of what Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub term the "inside" and the "outside" of genocide. While Lanzmann regarded pretending to communicate "horror in the absolute degree" as the "gravest of transgressions", inhabiting the inside of genocide and coming into contact with its material remains and slow temporality, its eyewitness encounters and "corporeal historiography", is central to the way that these outsiders to the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda view their writing. Gourevitch's struggle to find meaning in the corpses at Nyarubuye positions him as one who seemingly writes from *within* a "circle of fire": if not in the "absolute degree", which is to say the white heat of genocide, then certainly from a position where he is still in contact with its embers. Cornelius might also best be understood as an outsider whose visit to Murambi forces him to confront the fact that he is also an insider (his surname is Uvimana — which might be read, in English translation, as "of Imana", which is to say of Rwanda and its mythical creator deity). However, this assumed insider position remains riven with ambivalence and ethical ambiguity, not least because it is a position that the outsider will ultimately leave. Significantly, Cornelius writes "in spite of", not because of, Gérard, with Diop suggesting that the secondary witness can only "recount the horror" through some form of detachment from — even indifference to — the victim. The novel ends with Cornelius reflecting on "his duty to get as close as he could to all suffering" while also contending that the "most ardent desire" of the dead of Murambi — at least as far as he sees it — is "the resurrection of the living" (Diop, p. 181), suggesting an artistically-generated liberation which, Diop suggests, is not granted to the victims.

WARPED PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE SHAME OF THE DARK TOURIST

I also took photographs of genocide memorials in Rwanda; especially at Murambi, where I took around twenty or thirty pictures on my iPhone. In part, I did so out of habit: taking photographs was an instinctive, knee-jerk response to an extraordinary sight. But it also felt like I was doing something illicit. There were no signs indicating that photography was prohibited, yet I only took out my camera when my guide left me on my own to go and talk on his phone, and I worried that he might return and catch me at any moment. Taking these photographs thus added to my growing sense of shame in a place that in many ways seemed deliberately designed to shame those who visited.

Encountering any form of genocide memorial is, for most, likely to engender something like the sense of "species shame" described by Martin Amis in the wake of September 11: a shame that stems from a basic incredulity that human beings can inflict such harm on one another for

the most heinous of reasons, and on such a scale (Amis). At Murambi, I was also dogged by more specific forms of Western shame. Having spent much of my professional life working on Holocaust memory, and being intellectually invested in concepts such as multidirectional memory and transnational memory, I was all too aware of the fact that, historically, Holocaust memory has not served Rwanda well. The international organizations, laws and human rights regimes that were developed in response to the Holocaust, including major global organizations such as the United Nations, proved impotent to prevent the genocide. The cosmopolitan mantra "never again" — which, ironically, adorns a number of Rwanda's genocide memorials, lacing the term with a potent irony — singularly failed to mobilize international support to stop the killing. I thus felt implicated in the shame of an international community that had turned its back on Rwanda in a way that is often ascribed to the racism of the West. And then, more personally, there was the shame of the dark tourist taking photographs as some kind of souvenir, suggesting a morbid appetite for a form of memory (*souvenir*) that was disrespectful or distasteful.

So I took the photographs quickly and immediately put my camera back in my pocket, intuitively aware that I was not fully comfortable with my own actions.

Looking at the photographs now, several months later, it is noticeable that the panoramic setting has warped the tables holding the corpses (fig. 3). Of course, the panoramic setting on an iPhone warps all horizontal forms in this way, and it is tempting to read the photographs as being emblematic of nothing more than the homogenizing effect of the corporate Western lens that produced them. But at the same time, I would argue that the meaning of these photographs is not reducible to the possessive cultural logic of individualism, global tourism and iPhones, however glaringly this logic might frame them. For me, the photographs also convey something of the pressure of a particular past, and of the interplay of sense, thought and emotion that took place during my encounter with the human remains at Murambi, as though the tables had softened and buckled in the thick, viscous genocidal temporality that I have been describing. More prosaically, they represent the memory of a feeling — shame — and the need to take responsibility for that feeling. Much as Gourevitch describes, they originated from a reasonable desire to document my experience and defer interpretation, knowing that I could not really see what I was seeing while I was seeing it. But they also now induce me to remember my own thoughtlessness — a product, equally, of insensitivity and sensory excess — as I consider the meanings of Murambi from a more detached physical and emotional position, such that the sights, smells and textures of those corpse-filled outhouses still cling to my thinking. /

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MEMORIES AT STAKE

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Revue transdisciplinaire de l'association « Mémoires des signes », publiée par les éditions Kimé (Paris)

Mémoires des signes
15, rue des Gobelins, 75013 Paris
Téléphone : 33 (0)6 07 11 62 44 / 33 (0)6 85 05 20 06
www.memoires-en-jeu.com

Contact : memoires.en.jeu@gmail.com

Directeur de publication : Philippe Mesnard

Rédaction en chef : Aurélie Barjonet ; Luba Jurgenson ; Philippe Mesnard ; Stéphane Michonneau

Conception graphique & réalisation : Yann Collin

Impression : Imprimé en UE.

Éditeur : Éditions Kimé, Kimé, 2, impasse des Peintres, 75002 Paris / www.editionskime.fr

Couverture : © Philippe Mesnard.

ISSN : 2497-2711 / ISBN : 978-2-84174-789-4

Achevé d'imprimer en avril 2017..
N° d'impression : 170834. Imprimé en UE.

La publication de *Mémoires en jeu* est soutenue par :

CELIS (UBP Clermont-Ferrand II) · CNL · DRAC Île-de-France · Eur'Orbem (Paris IV-La Sorbonne) · ResMusica · HAR

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