

“GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSIS”: RWANDA’S MEMORIALS AS POSTCOLONIAL TEXTS

OLIVIA TRABYSH

Rwanda’s genocide memorials are cumulative, post-colonial texts that function as a lens through which we might interrogate testimonials of the marginalized. The arrangements of human artifacts present at these memorials speak as texts and inform the way Rwandan culture develops. A majority of the memorials in Rwanda are tokens of a complex knot of politics, now marginalizing the Hutus and Twas instead of classifying all ethnicities of Rwandans as survivors of the genocide. These memorials perpetuate a one-sided story and threaten the potential for lasting national stability.

The genocide memorials intertwine the interests of three primary groups, aside from their obvious colonial predecessors, those groups are the Tutsis, Hutus, and Westerners. The oversimplified stories told by these memorials enable the underhanded political motives of the present Tutsi-dominated Rwandan government, essentially leaving the Hutus powerless, yet giving them their dramatic narrative to defend their actions and further fuel their present hatred. A key facet of my critique of the memorials, as they currently appear, is that they cater to the West’s cursory understanding of the complex domestic politics in Rwanda. Such catering invigorates the West, more specifically the United States’ role as a neo-colonial force. The result is a web of pointed narratives that suppress one another while generating a larger false narrative in the act of such suppression.

As context, I’ll begin with a quote by New York Times journalist, Philip Gourevitch, a correspondent in Rwanda directly after the genocide:

Decimation means the killing of every tenth person in a population, and in the spring and early summer of 1994, a program of massacres decimated the Republic of Rwanda. Although the killing was low-tech – performed largely by machete – it was carried out at dazzling speed: of an original population of about seven and a half million, at

least 800,000 people were killed in just 100 days. The dead of Rwanda accumulated at nearly three times the rate of the Jewish dead during the Holocaust. It was the most efficient mass killing since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. (4)

The Rwandans killed during the genocide didn't perish in an isolated gas chamber, but by millions of hands – by the wielding of their neighbors' machetes. Some neighbors killed out of destitution, others out of starvation for power, and others fearful of a militarized Tutsi regime. But many of the memorials, which conceal deeper political complexities, will allude that neighbors killed their neighbors primarily out of ignorance and economic instability.

Previously, Rwanda was a part of German East Africa but became a Belgian territory under the League of Nations mandate in 1921, following World War I (Hatzfeld 237). In 1930, the Belgians put into effect a system that classified Rwandan ethnicity into three categories: the Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa. At that time, approximately 15 percent of the population identified themselves as Tutsi, 84 percent Hutu, and 1 percent Twa (Human Rights Watch). The historically derived difference between Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa is a classist one. The term 'Tutsi' was used to describe Rwandans, who owned ten or more cows. The term 'Hutu' meant you owned fewer than ten cows; thus, the more similar to 'common people.' The term 'Twa' refers to 'pygmy,' or 'indigenous' groups of Rwandans who live in remote forests and maintain their sustenance from the land. This classism differentiates between groups that loosely existed before the Belgian occupation, but it did not transition into a rigid, ethnic, caste system until 1930 when the government required all Rwandan citizens to carry identification cards with their ethnic subscription, and the Belgians posited the Tutsis as 'native rulers' because their collective, physical features most closely resembled those of the European Belgians (Human Rights Watch). Eventually, Rwanda, alongside the Belgian Congo, became a republic, independent from Belgium in 1960 (Hatzfeld 237).

In his article, "'Ancient Tribal Warfare': Foundational Fantasies of Ethnicity and History," Kenneth Harrow quotes anthropologist Johan Pottier in refuting the above history as a narrative in itself. Pottier and Harrow believe this tale of classist identity exploited by the Belgians gives too much fluidity to the transfer and passage of class and identity and would be propagated by the present Tutsi regime to defer ultimate blame to their Belgian colonizers and diminish their historical privilege. As Pottier counters:

[...] Hutu and Tutsi, had had virtually no control over their land labour power. The seeds of this inequality and the

severe poverty caused among both Hutu and Tutsi had been cast when King Rwabugiri, of the *nyiginya* dynasty, imposed his administration and harsh rule on formerly autonomous local lineages. The king confiscated their lands and broke their political power. Pursuing a kind of assimilation policy, Rwabugiri institutionalized ethnic divisions, mainly though not exclusively through the bonded labour service known as *ubertwa* – from which all Tutsi were excluded. European colonizers later adopted this central institution for their own political purposes. (37)

The Tutsi would choose not to propagate this version of their history because it displays both the Hutus' and Tutsis' subjugation to unfair rule by a disciplinary force before the arrival of the colonizers. And although the story of Rwanda is still a post-colonial one, its dysfunction does not begin with colonization. It's conflict, as Pottier points out, existed before seizure by Germans or Belgians, and the Tutsi eventually benefited from such antagonistic policies. The present Tutsi regime would prefer we believe, although unfair, that their hard work to attain ten or more cows placed them in a class above Hutus. The Tutsi regime does not want us to believe that the stratification between Hutu and Tutsi is not based on exploited merit but rather formed by an unexplained exclusion from bonded labor service by a previous dynasty.

Another version of this history exists, the Hutu's version. The Hutu colonial narrative affirms the Tutsis benefited from previous dynasty orders. However, this version does not simply label the Tutsi as inheritors of privilege. This Hutu narrative of Rwanda's colonial history gives Tutsis a more active label: tyrants. As Harrow explains, the Tutsis' description were of "oppressors, collaborators with the Germans and then worse, the Belgians. Prior to colonization, Tutsis' kingdoms, in horrific terms, described the royal palaces adorned with Hutu testicles" (35). This narrative clearly demonizes Tutsis and according to Hutu extremists, validated the Radio Mille Collines hate programs, which depicted the Tutsi as *Inyenzi*, or cockroaches. Harrow avows the hate propaganda was so atrocious that it portrayed Tutsis as "evil satanic beings who should be slaughtered down to the last baby or fetus" (35).

However, the Rwandan genocide memorials tell neither of these stories. The most in- depth historical account one receives is a summary, that Rwanda was once a colony of Belgium. The Belgians created the classification of Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa depending on who owned ten or more cows. Massive killing sprees of the Tutsis occurred following independence in 1963, 1973, and 1990. Divisions both economic and ethnic increased in the 1980s

following independence and instability in the coffee market. And on the early morning of April 7th, 1994, following the assassination of Rwandan Hutu President, Juvenal Habyarimana and massive hate radio campaigns by Hutu extremists, the “genocide against the Tutsi” occurred. Which brings us back to the main point of this paper: why is the present Rwandan government choosing to portray its history this way, and what are the larger consequences of purporting this post- colonial narrative over the other dissenting narratives?

Today, in the basement of Nyamata, a Catholic church, and national memorial, lays a coffin covered in a purple cloth and adorned with a white cross. Nyamata forbids cameras inside, so does any of the genocide memorials; thus, I cannot attach an image of this exact coffin in the appendix. But coffins like this one in Nyamata appear everywhere. A brief search in the Kigali Genocide Memorial archives would produce multiple images of the similar coffins in Butare, Gatandara, Nurabi, Mbogo, Nyamasheke, Cyangugu, and countless unidentified mass graves.¹ But in this coffin I am describing in Nyamata, are the remains of a pregnant woman. Beside her coffin are the tools used by the interahamwe to rape her over twenty times. A six-foot pole and a machete lay next to her coffin. She died while being raped with such tools. A tour guide will tell you her coffin, once open for visitors to observe how the pole and the machete eviscerated her body from her pelvic region up through her chest cavity, is now closed at the request of her surviving family members; they asked the memorial to preserve her dignity. They wanted their daughter's memory to be one of respect, not a spectacle.

A part of the reason for this tension between familial requests for reverence and the memorial's disgraceful pictorial conversation about this woman's body is the internationally sexist and sensationalist precedence of how society handles women's bodies. This sexism and sensationalism, being more characteristic of international culture than Rwandan culture, prove that the visible healing of Rwanda arises from a desire by the West to see reconciliation. It does not equal reconciliation in Rwanda. Rwandans are very reserved culturally and would not construct these graphic memorials for themselves. Binaifer Nowrojee and Regan Ralph of Human Rights Watch affirm in their article, “Justice for Women Victims of Violence: Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide,” sexist and sensationalist graphic images of deceased women continue to reciprocate because of “the international community's willingness to tolerate sexual abuse against women.” This images or narratives do not continue because of an “absence of legal provisions” nor

¹ For sources of these images please visit the photograph section of the Genocide Archive Rwanda website, <http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=Category:Photographs>.

because it is a cultural characteristic of Rwandans (162). They continue because the International Community expects it and allows it. It is then not surprising that Rwandans construct these graphic displays when we consider these assessments by Human Rights Watch, alongside the simple fact that Western foundations and non-profit organizations fund many of these memorials. They communicate their experience to Western observers who fund their recovery through familiar delivery – graphic images of females and unimaginable devastation that tacitly affirm the superiority of Western traditions. These images accepted by Westerners actually serve to suppress Rwanda’s healing because the sexually degrading constructions conceal a deeper layer of Western biases about the inadequacy of the African race; thus, entrapping Rwandans in a cyclical, belittling story. Very few stories or representations of African culture exist that give them adequate respect and validation from the Western perspective.

Behind the church in Nyamata is a massive graveyard. Appealing to the statistical mindset of the West are 10,000 naked, dismembered skeletons organized, categorized, and filed upon clean, neat, dirt shelves beneath the ground. Skulls are on the third row at eye level. Thighs bones are on the fourth row just above reach. The arms and the lower portions of the legs are below the skulls on the first and second shelves. Here, we see literal traces of Rwandans appealing to Western/colonial fetish in the need to categorize an existing of a race of people in an encyclopaedic fashion and an obsession with cataloging body parts and the weapons used to beat those body parts. In my time in Rwanda, I did not once see a Rwandan walk in such a mass grave, and I was there for the entire month of June, the month designated for genocide commemoration. The glass surrounding the entrance to this mass grave contains graffiti, suggesting disrespect, but whether the disrespect is for the bodies in the grave – which would signify Hutu hatred – or is about the message this grave propagates is unclear.

A similar case of skulls sits on a shelf when entering the genocide memorial in Karongi-Kibuye. The cabinet of skulls bares the English inscription “Never Again.” But as anyone who has spent time in Rwanda knows, the most commonly spoken languages in Rwanda are Kinyarwanda, French, and English as a distant third. If the memorial’s design were for Rwandans, it would be transcribed in Kinyarwanda or French. In the Kigali Genocide Memorial is also the following welcoming phrase in English: “We begin where we end, with the country we love.” Despite being a seemingly innocuous, if not pleasant sentiment, “we” is a falsely congruent categorization. “We,” which appears unified, contradicts the phrase “genocide against the Tutsis” which is incessantly retorted by the now Tutsi-led regime. As explained earlier, the Tutsis were the group targeted for extermination in

the genocide. The government was Hutu- dominated at the time of the genocide, but the Tutsis controlled the wealth. Following the genocide, the Tutsis are now in power, but they still preserve the wealth, and Hutus and Twas have little power or wealth similar to before. The Hutus wanted to kill the Tutsis because they considered themselves victims of poverty and believed it was the Tutsis fault they were poor. But in spite of such ideology, many Hutus died trying to save Tutsis from killing battalions. Complicating things further, Harrow maintains Tutsis have killed upwards of a million Hutus and Congolese citizens in refugee camps as revenge killings following the genocide (40). Tutsi lives were not the only lives taken in context to the genocide of 1994. The demographics of those killed complicate the singular story declared by the present Tutsi RPF government.

Harrow affirms: “the shrines [memorials] function to canalize our reactions and understandings into a fixed narrative of the genocide – one that seems almost to write itself” (41). Two things are important to note from Harrow’s statement: first, Harrow’s demarcation of a “fixed genocidal narrative” is important because not only does it prove these memorials are functioning as narration texts, the narrative they are telling is also restrictive, proven by the simplified tale they cultivate and juxtapose with the conflicting versions expounded upon previously. These memorials “seem almost to write themselves” because they defer association with historical and ethnic context. The gruesomeness and the repeated gruesome skeleton after gruesome skeleton articulate a “comfortable stereotype that these two ‘tribes’ with ancient tribal hatred” always fought one another and fought even more following colonization (35). Secondly, this brings us to Harrow’s identification of the “our” within his depiction of the memorials and how they “function to canalize our reactions and understandings.” Harrow uses the pronoun “our” to implicate himself and Western culture as recipients of the storytelling that occurs at these genocide memorials. In becoming recipients, we are also active participants in acknowledging the truthfulness of the narratives we are receiving. If we accept the information given to us, we are accepting this one-sided narrative that directs us. But perhaps in our knowledge, we accept and conceal our own reasoning for accepting this story. These memorials and their stereotypes perpetuate a colonial story that the present Rwandan government desires to have heard, but these stereotypes also sustain American pursuits and perceptions of power.

Referring to the Kigali Genocide memorial and others like it, one night over a few Stella Artois, my Rwandan host father whispered to me that the genocide memorials I had toured were without regards for him. My host father survived the genocide, and his lower, Tutsi, classification denies him access to power. He refuses to register as a member of the RPF (Rwandan

Patriotic Front). He says he has no need to visit the memorials; to do so would be torture. He explained the memorials were “made for me, Westerners, who cannot possibly understand the genocide, but are trying very hard to.” He professed the memorials encouraged a painful entrenchment in the past. “The memories of sleeping on the roof and in the marshes to avoid detection are enough,” he attested. “Moreover, I cannot support this government’s aims. My taxes go up every year, and I have yet to see anything done with that money or the money you donate.”

Danielle Beswick reasons in her article, “Managing Dissent in a Post-genocide Environment: The Challenge of Political Space in Rwanda,” that with “one half of the [Rwandan] government’s budget” coming from foreign aid, and the United States being Rwanda’s largest bilateral donor, it is in Rwandans best interest to prove decimation occurred in their country (230), even if proving such decimation in context of these stereotypical narratives takes away power from the typical citizen and gives more power to the present regime. In other words, 585 million USD per year is not simply dismissive. I do not think Rwandans, like my host father, who are unhappy with their government and the narratives of these genocide memorials want their reality misinterpreted, but they also will not survive if they expose the current human rights abuses of their present government. Their economy will collapse if we pull our funding, and their government would silence them for speaking out.

Beswick claims, using the genocide as a “victim’s license,” the current RPF government’s foundation for such a circumscribed narrative is that: “given the fragility of the country in these early of reconstruction and state building, the opening up of any political space presents an unacceptable risk and jeopardizes progress already made” (231). If a Rwandan were to speak against the circumscribed narrative portrayed at these memorials, even if just to add a small facet to it, they would be accused of ‘revisionism’ and ‘genocide ideology.’ Beswick states, “disappearances, threats, and intimidation are tactics used to silence criticism” (241), but as she confirms in a U.S. Department of State report:

Simply being accused by the [Rwandan] Government of supporting genocide ideology was enough to damage the ability of an accused organization from being able to work effectively, even if they were later absolved of guilt...After the release of the (parliamentary) report, independent human rights organizations were effectively dismantled, and all independent sources of information on the human rights conditions in the country disappeared in the second half of the year. (240)

The State Department report, Beswick cites, is from 2004. Thus, we are quite aware of the human rights abuses that are occurring in Rwanda. Similar citations by many social scientists and advocacy groups have dramatically increased since 2004. Yet, the Rwandan government has Rwandan citizens believing that we are not aware of their infractions and that we shouldn't be. Perhaps, to some extent, the US government does have a legitimate interest in downplaying its knowledge and activist stance towards Rwanda's RPF government because the more it lets on that it knows, the more recorded infractions disappear entirely as Beswick cites. Other scholars, within the field, believe, aside from explicitly signifying our still imperialist politics, we do not reprimand Rwanda because as they raid the DRC for genocidaires, we benefit from coltan extraction, which supplies our cell phone production.² I do not think our motives for continued support to Rwanda are succinctly either of these. I think the support in Rwanda are a complex combination of both altruistic and neo-colonial politics. Ultimately, I think we should accept Beswick's conclusion: "The [Rwandan] government's strategies for managing political space may well reflect a genuine fear of division and violence which it associates with more open political debate, but there is no guarantee that tightly, circumscribing, political space will not, ultimately, have the same negative consequences" as the genocide (248).

Presently, we see the one-sided narrative of the Tutsi regime, and overt violence intended for wealthy Western eyes. Despite the West's knowledge of human rights abuses in Rwanda, scholar Filip Reyntjens affirms the West continues to allow this spectacle and cycle of exploitation because of our own guilt surrounding our inaction during the genocide. Therefore, the postcolonial texts of Rwanda as told through their memorials will continue as unrepresentative and discriminatory, and we will continue to fund this story.

The Tutsi identification as the responsible stewards of power is understandable given the solemn loss of upwards of one million Tutsi lives in 100 days; nevertheless, their ideology is alarming. The upper-class Tutsis of a particular RPF ideology presently run the Rwanda government, and they dictate how life for all Rwandans shall proceed, from an illusory position of universally vindicated justice. They see themselves as the only survivors of the genocide and refuse to claim responsibility for the approximate one million lives of Hutus taken and are presently taking in the DRC. They have a monopoly entrenched in legitimate trauma. But their monopoly is crippling their own memorials and perpetuates their totalitarian vice upon society and the need for international validation. If history is endowing and prophetic,

² For more on this topic see Jonathan Glover, "Genocide, Human Rights, and the Politics of Memorialization: *Hotel Rwanda* and Africa's World War."

their monopoly will further propagate issues of colonialism that invigorated the conception of the genocide in the first place. Both the perpetrator and the victim deserve the title of “survivor” following such a prolific devastation that perturbs life, like genocide. Ugandan political theorist, Mahmood Mamdani, asserts in the last chapter of his book, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, “only the victor has the choice of reaching out to the vanquished on terms that have the potential of transcending an earlier opposition between the two... defining both as survivors of the civil war...transcend[s] the terms of the earlier opposition...and forge[s] a new community of survivors” (272). Mamdani continues that, “from this point of view, the term ‘survivor’ does not refer to surviving victims, which as I have pointed out is how contemporary Rwanda uses it, but to all of those who continue to be blessed with life in the aftermath of the civil war” (272-73). This is not the narrative told by Rwanda’s genocide memorials today.

Some portions of some memorials seem dissonant from the tightly circumscribed RPF narrative, and not even designed first and foremost for a Western view. The use of Kinyarwanda, on a banner, inside a bombed Sunday school, at the Ntarama genocide memorial, signals a moment of implicit privacy. The usage of their own language becomes a respectful haven. Ironically, though, Ntarama is also one of the most dangerous memorial locations as there are lethally poisonous spiders nesting behind 60 000 outfits soiled in 20-year-old blood. You can see outfits through the holes in the Sunday school’s exterior, made by grenades, which still give off radioactive toxins. As Rwandans cross the structurally weak threshold, which is held together by sheets of aluminum, they read “Iyo umenya naweukimenya ntuba waranyishe.” When translated: “If you knew me and you really knew yourself, you wouldn’t have killed me.”³ The logic conveyed to them is suspect. After all, some perpetrators knew their neighbours well and killed them anyway. To act as if the genocide occurred because the perpetrators sublimated their humanity is not an accurate explanation. It fails to account for and discourages us from asking: what kinds of circumstances compel disenfranchised people to kill other people? And what does life look like for people on both sides of the equation after the killing has stopped?

Taking a step back from examining the absence of life in the removed, time specific memorials in Rwanda, I will now switch to the less distanced view of everyday life through Max Rettig’s legal scholarship in his article “Gacaca: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Postconflict Rwanda?” Although not an apparent apparatus for memory, the verbal testimony was

³ Translated by tour guide and transcribed in my own notes.

given at Gacaca and transcribed into legal documents, becomes a postcolonial text, especially in the absence of an authorized, dissenting opinion. Rettig's study transforms my speculation into fact by proving that identity as a survivor is denied to a vast number of Rwandan citizens unless they are Tutsi. Moreover, the Gacaca courts are extensions of the ideology presented at the genocide memorials translated into everyday life. And the Gacaca courts are statistically proven to amplify conflict and ethnic disunity, not eradicate them.

Gacaca, which translates as "justice in the grass," was originally used before, during, and following the colonial rule (Reyntjens qt. in Rettig, 30). Gacaca courts settled disputes over property, inheritance, and reparation but ascribed no prison sentence. Present day 'inkiko gacaca,' or 'gacaca courts' are much more punitive. They are not 'restorative judicial mechanisms' some Western scholars romanticize them to be. They are highly dysfunctional and are Rwanda's allocation of justice following the genocide without incarcerating the estimated 80 percent of their population that participated in the genocide. Rettig states that Gacaca courts "make serious demands on the confessor," legally because confessions of the accused "require full disclosure of the crimes committed, the naming of accomplices, and an apology" (31). However, Gacaca administrators, ranging in education from illiterate to literate, have received only three full days of legal training before authorized to imprison people for life. Moreover, Gacaca administrators often deem very elaborate confessions as incomplete. Some sympathy elicits such rampant scrutiny in light of the cultural practice *Ceceka*: "an implicit pact by which Hutus agree not to give testimony against another Hutu" (40). Still yet, adding to questions surrounding the legitimacy of Gacaca are documented incidents by sociologist, Jean Hatzfeld, of Gacaca court administrators being implicated by countless genocidaires as partaking in the genocidal incidents they are sentencing a fellow perpetrator for.⁴ As stated, before giving a brief background on Gacaca, many women and men in Rwanda, neither perpetrators nor victims, identify as "nonsurvivors." Rettig's study states more people do not speak out against the unjust rulings because they are afraid of retribution and being accused themselves: "The survivors are the only ones

⁴ In his novel *The Antelope's Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide*, Hatzfeld transcribes: "A joke is going around the country. During a trial, a survivor accuses a man of joining in a massacre. The man denies this. A second survivor rises to charge him with the same crimes. He denies them. A third accuser, a fourth, cannot manage to shake him. Angrily, the presiding judge addresses him: 'Tell me, how many times are you going to deny the evidence and flout this court?' Turning toward the judge, the accused replies, 'You're asking me? You know perfectly well, since you were with me that day!'" (127).

who speak. Truly, there is no freedom of expression at Gacaca for ordinary people” (41). Not only is it troublesome that the woman Rettig quotes feels she cannot speak out because of de facto policies that reprimand citizens for speaking out against survivors, but most troubling is that she classifies herself as a not a survivor. In doing so, others deem a traumatic portion of her life as illegitimate. She and an overwhelmingly significant portion of Rwandan society must collectively disregard their existence to maintain an inevitably fragile and unjust sense of stasis.

Equally unsettling and illustrative with discrimination are Rettig’s conclusions that Gacaca is directly impeding reconciliation. When polled, 90 percent of respondents in Sovu, a community in Southern Rwanda, stated that they wished “gacaca would finish soon so that the community could move on” (42). Gacaca courts convene once a week and are now a facet of everyday life, making the post-colonial narratives told inescapable. Another male survivor informed Rettig, “There is a difference between peace and security. Today we have security, not peace. People do not turn violent only because they fear the authorities” (42). Another male, this time, a perpetrator, warned Rettig of future violence: “ Rwanda will become like Iraq very soon. Hatred is gaining another dimension and gacaca is causing family conflicts. Children whose parents are in jail will always ask where their daddies are. They will prepare revenge” (42-43). As stated earlier, estimates project that at least 80 percent of Rwanda’s population perpetuated the genocide. This prisoner’s prediction is thus, utterly valid. And perhaps most frightening of all, are the 29 percent of Sovu residents in Rettig’s study confirmed that they would commit “acts of violence if told to do so by the authorities” (44) even in light of the 800, 000 deaths in Rwanda in the spring of 1994.

This paper has a social activist tone to alter the situation on the ground in Rwanda. However, the complexities pertaining to issues of postcolonial narratives inherent at the genocide memorials and in the written testimonials of Gacaca court proceedings also propose urgent questions to the discipline of post-colonial literature as a whole. If post-colonial literature aspires to uncover and amplify voices once censored by the empire are arguments about the legitimacy of those voices once recovered, then the voices we are deeming post-colonial are not representative like the voices of the RPF government in Rwanda? Moreover, what if the post-colonial voices we are searching for are still silenced altogether because of the RPF tyrannical regime, like the voices of the Hutus, Twas, and poor Tutsis in Rwanda? Are irresponsible for waiting until the Rwandans strengthen their conditions, then write about their struggles down the road when more representation becomes permissible and legal? Furthermore, what does it mean that we are funding the current regime

that suppresses such representation and renders us as implicit enablers of egregious human rights abuses?

In closing, I am reminded once again of Harrow's scholarship. These memorials as post-colonial texts "render the old categories irrelevant" (40). Fictional vs. non-fictional, testimonial vs. imaginary – the narratives told at the Rwandan genocide memorials encompass all of these components both within their structure and the political actors that make their structure possible. Above all else, the memorials are accounts that "refuse[] to leave the reader out of it...the consequences are not over for us or for them...the account that implicates us all matters now – an account that not only attempts to convey what happened, but that requires us to recognize the need for involvement...because we are involved already by the account itself" (40). We are the intended audience of Rwanda's post-colonial texts, so interconnected that we are now a part of their story. Varied, diverse accounts of the genocide do not exist; they are not allowed to exist. The only post-colonial texts that exist are these genocide memorials, and if we look at them carefully enough and through the eyes of their disenfranchised people, we can see their reversion to the singular Rwandan narrative communicated through graffiti and avoidance. In witnessing both the false narrative, which we have obtained intelligence to contradict, and in recognizing these small acts of defiance by the Rwandan public, we must responsibly ask for more accountability from the RPF government. As a discipline, postcolonial literature can afford to be more active. Yes, we must be careful of reproducing colonial power structures, but accepting past notions of guilt and fearing colonial re-subscription are no longer adequate excuses for inaction from our field or for a more democratic world.

WORKS CITED

- Beswick, Danielle. "Managing Dissent in a Post-genocide Environment: The Challenge of Political Space in Rwanda." *Development and Change* 41.2 (2010): 225-251. *Business Source Complete*. Web. 26 Feb. 2015.
- Glover, Jonathan. "Genocide, Human Rights, and the Politics of Memorialization: 'Hotel Rwanda' and Africa's World War." *South Atlantic Review* 75. 2 (2010): 95 -111. *JSTOR*. Web. 06 Feb. 2015.
- Gourevitch, Philip. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda*. New York: Picador, 1998. Print.

- Harrow, Kenneth W. ““Ancient Tribal Warfare””: Foundational Fantasies of Ethnicity and History.” *Research in African Literatures* 36.2 (2005): 34-45. *Project MUSE*. Web. 10 May. 2015.
- Hatzfeld, Jean. *The Antelope’s Strategy: Living in Rwanda After the Genocide*. Trans. Linda Coverdale. New York: Picador, 2007. Print.
- Human Rights Watch*. HRW Report/1999/Rwanda, August 8, 2014. Web. 04 March 2015.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001. Print.
- Nowrojee, Binaifer., and Regan Ralph. “Justice For Women Victims of Violence: Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide.” *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing, and Social Justice*. Eds. Amadiume, Ifi, and Abdullah A, An-Na’im. New York: St. Martins Press, 2000. 162-75 Print.
- Rettig, Max. “Gacaca: Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation in Post-Conflict Rwanda?”. *African Studies Review* 51. 3 (2008): 25-50. *JSTOR Journals*. Web. 26 Feb. 2015.
- Reyntjens, Filip. “Post-1994 Politics in Rwanda: Problematizing ‘Liberation’ and ‘Democratization.’” *Third World Quarterly* 27. 6 (2006): 1103-1117. *JSTOR Journals*. Web. 26 Feb. 2015.