Display, concealment and ‘culture’: the disposal of bodies in the 1994 Rwandan genocide

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Introduction

In their ethnography of violent conflict, ‘cultures of terror’¹ and genocide, anthropologists have recognized that violence is discursive. The victim’s body is a key vehicle of that discourse. In contexts of inter-ethnic violence, for example, ante-mortem degradation and/or post-mortem mutilation are employed to transform the victim’s body into a representative example of the ethnic category, the manipulation of the body enabling the victimizer to materially actualize an otherwise abstract fantasy of alterity. Where research has focused on ultimate disposal, it has been in ‘cultures of terror’ where bodies are displayed and serve an instrumental and didactic role. While research has revealed commonalities in the discursive use of the body in such contexts, there has been less attention paid to contexts of *extermination*, where bodies are not called upon to play instrumental, didactic roles, but are concealed through burial (Srebrenica) or cremation (Auschwitz-Birkenau). If ante-mortem degradation and post-mortem mutilation in such contexts are to be understood as discursive practices drawing on cultural repertoires, is the manner in which the body is disposed of part of a continuum, or does it mark a disjuncture because the discursive potential of the body has been exhausted? Is the part the corpse plays in ‘cultures of terror’ absent from contexts of genocide because perpetrators *conceal* their intentions (from their victims and others) rather than communicate them through corpses?

In the case of the Rwandan genocide, the binary of concealment/didactic display is insufficient, given that bodies were concealed (collected and buried); dumped in rivers; and left exposed where they were killed. Using Rwanda as a case study, this chapter proposes an agenda for ethnographic research to explore the relationship between concealment and display in contexts of genocide, with attention to the discursive quality of the disposal of bodies. This relationship is explored in detail after a discussion of the historical background to the 1994 genocide.

Context: the Rwandan genocide

While for the period prior to 1860, historians know virtually nothing about how the terms ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Twa’ were used in social discourse,² we do know that the formation of pre-colonial Rwanda was driven by the expansion of a core central kingdom ruled by a *mwami* (‘king’) drawn from the *Bahindiro* Tutsi lineage of the *Nyiginya* clan.³ ‘Tutsi’ originally referred to this elite of cattle herders: the *mwami* and his court. Around 1890, chiefs introduced a form of unpaid labour (*uburetwa*) requiring tenant farmers to work for the chief. This was required only of farmers, who, in response to a gradual extension of the term ‘Tutsi’ to all herders, became known as ‘Hutu’ (a term previously used to indicate non-elite farmers or cattle herders).⁴ As a consequence, the paramount meaning of ‘Tutsi’ denoted proximity to the central court and ‘proximity to power’,⁵ while ‘Hutu’, which had initially indicated ‘social son, client, or someone who does not possess cattle’,⁶ ‘came to be associated with and eventually defined by inferior status’.⁷

It was to the apex of this system, the court of the central kingdom, that colonial authorities came (German 1897–1916, Belgian 1916 onwards) and erroneously took the ‘aristocrats of the Rwandan court to be the models of the “Tutsi” in general’,⁸ even though of 50,000 Tutsi men in Rwanda in 1900, only 2,500 (5 per cent) held any political authority, the rest being ‘*petits*’ or ‘*non-élite* Tutsi’.⁹

The Belgian authorities (with a significant input from Roman Catholic missionaries) intensified the existing *process* of hierarchialization with a form of indirect rule that devolved new forms of power and wealth accumulation to the chiefs, accelerating the crystallization of social distinction begun at the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ All of these *practical* changes were underpinned by a racial, social evolutionary ideology: the ‘Hamitic hypothesis’,

which asserted that African 'civilization' was due to racially distinct 'Caucasoid' invaders from the north/north-east of Africa.¹¹

The culmination of this process of *racialization* was the census of 1933–34, in which every Rwandan was assigned an 'ethno-racial' label (15 per cent Tutsi, 84 per cent Hutu, 1 per cent Twa) and issued with an ID card upon which the label was inscribed. Following patrilineal custom, children would inherit the identity inscribed on their father's ID card.¹² Until 1997, the French term *ethnie* and the Kinyarwanda term *ubwoko* appeared on the ID card. For the colonial authorities, both terms were 'synonyms for race in the biologically determinist sense'.¹³

As possible independence drew near, both a newly emergent Hutu elite (trained by the Roman Catholic Church) and the Tutsi court deployed the Hamitic hypothesis to argue, respectively, that the end of Belgian rule must also be the end of Tutsi rule, or that the Tutsi monarchy should remain in place.¹⁴ And yet, at the end of the 1950s, the average family income of Hutu and *petits* Tutsi (90–97 per cent of those designated Tutsi) was virtually the same,¹⁵ with only 10,000 élite Tutsi (out of 300,000 of those designated Tutsi) being associated with the political class¹⁶ – a 'minority among their own people'.¹⁷

Two political parties were formed in 1959, the elite-Tutsi Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR) and the Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu (Parmehutu), the latter founded by Grégoire Kayibanda. In November 1959 violence sparked by the assault of a Parmehutu leader by UNAR activists led to further violence,¹⁸ around 1,000 Tutsi were killed and around 10,000 Tutsi fled Rwanda.¹⁹ By 14 November, Belgian authorities had restored order in favour of Parmehutu (known as the 'Social Revolution').²⁰ In July 1960, the renamed Mouvement Démocratique Républicain-Parmehutu (MDR-Parmehutu) won two-thirds of the vote in communal elections and, in January 1961, seized power (with the help of the Belgians), Kayibanda becoming Prime Minister. MDR-Parmehutu won a majority in parliamentary elections in September 1961, Kayibanda became President in October, and a referendum abolished the monarchy. Rwanda gained independence on 1 July 1962.

In 1960, Tutsi exiles, calling themselves *ingenzi* ('brave'), but called *inyenzi* ('cockroach') by opponents, began to launch raids. Following a raid in December 1963, Tutsi politicians were executed and 14,000 Tutsi massacred. By January 1964, some 336,000 Tutsi had taken refuge outside of Rwanda.²¹

By 1970, the government was dominated by people from Kayibanda's home area in central Rwanda. To deflect regional resentment, Kayibanda used the killing of 150,000 Hutu in Burundi in April 1972 by the Tutsi-dominated army to 'check' whether the 9 per cent quota for Tutsi was being 'respected' in the civil service and schools.²² Unrest followed and Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana (from the north-west) seized power on 5 July 1973; declared himself President; created a new party in 1975, the Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND);²³ and excluded Tutsi from public life. In 1987, Tutsi refugees formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) with an armed wing, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA).²⁴

In a context of economic crisis, and after French President François Mitterand in June 1990 made development aid conditional on democratization, Habyarimana created a commission to investigate 'democratization'.²⁵ On 1 October, the RPA attacked from Uganda, but were repelled by the Rwandan army, the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR), who then proceeded to kill 1,500 Tutsi civilians.²⁶ A cease-fire was agreed in November.

In early 1991, the FAR murdered 1,000 Tutsi.²⁷ Following a new constitution (June 1991) opposition parties (demanding negotiations with the RPF) emerged, including the Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR) and the multi-ethnic Parti Liberal (PL).²⁸ In March 1993, 300 Tutsi were killed by the Presidential Guard and *interahamwe* militia (see below) after the state radio (Radio Rwanda) claimed that the PL and RPF planned to assassinate opposition leaders.²⁹ The opposition parties, however, remained united and forced Habyarimana to form a coalition cabinet with opposition party members.³⁰ On 1 April 1992, the racist and exclusively Hutu Coalition pour la Défense de la République (CDR) was formed.

On 2 April 1992, Dismas Nsengiyaremye (of the MDR) became Prime Minister and began negotiations with the RPF at Arusha, Tanzania, leading to the 'Arusha Accords' (see below), key features of which were: the right of Tutsi refugees to return to Rwanda; the integration of the FAR and RPA; and a multi-party 'Broad-Based Transitional Government' (BBTG) which would incorporate the RPF.³¹ Those in the MDR who had supported the negotiations with the RPF were denounced as traitors by anti-RPF elements of their own party who declared themselves 'MDR-Power'.³²

On 8 July 1993, the extremist Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) began broadcasting. Propaganda maintained that

the 'gains' of the 1959 'Social Revolution' (a state controlled by 'the Hutu') had to be protected from 'Tutsi feudalists' (RPF) who planned to exterminate Hutu assisted by Tutsi 'accomplices' (*ibiyitso*).³³

In August 1993 Habyarimana signed the Arusha Accords and in October the United Nations Security Council authorized 2,500 peacekeepers (the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda, UNAMIR) to oversee the installation of the new multi-party government.³⁴ On 21 October, the recently elected President of Burundi, Melchior Ndadaye (a Hutu), was assassinated by Tutsi army officers.³⁵ Two days later, at an MDR-Power rally, Froduald Karamira (second Vice-President of the MDR) rejected the Arusha Accords and declared that 'we have plans "to work"' (kill Tutsi).³⁶ In 1992 the Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement (MRND(D)) had formed the *Interahmwe* ('those who fight together') militia and in 1993 the CDR formed the *Impuzamugambi* militia ('those who have the same goal').³⁷ Both were given military training and arms by the Presidential Guard.

Returning to Kigali on 6 April 1994 from a conference in Dar-es-Salaam, Habyarimana's aircraft (also carrying President Ntaryamira of Burundi) was shot down by surface-to-air missiles, killing all on board. Although both Hutu extremists and the RPA have been accused of the attack,³⁸ a report by experts commissioned by a French judge concluded in 2012 that the missile was fired from a position held by the Presidential Guard.³⁹

On 7 April 1994, three Hutu opposition party ministers, the Hutu Prime Minister and ten Belgian UN peacekeepers were murdered by the Presidential Guard (Belgium withdrew its UN troops on 13 April). As coordinated massacres of Tutsi spread, and the RPF launched a new offensive, an 'interim government' was created at meetings on 8 April (chaired by Colonel Théoneste Bagosora) and Jean Kambanda became Prime Minister.

Soldiers and police distributed arms and coordinated killing by militia and civilians. Mayors coordinated house-to-house searches and roadblocks. RTLM incited killing and revealed where Tutsi were hiding. Members of the interim government continually made broadcasts, calling for '*inyenzi*' and '*ibiyitso*' to be killed. Tutsi (men, women and children) were killed with machetes, hoes, spears, hammers and nailed clubs, despite having sought safety at church and hospital complexes; because they appeared on a pre-written list; were personally known to their attackers; or because of ID cards.⁴⁰ Many Hutu refused to participate and/or hid Tutsi.⁴¹ The 2001 census estimated 937,000 Rwandans were killed

between April and July 1994, the vast majority Tutsi.⁴² In late 1994, a UN official alleged that the RPA alone had killed 25,000–45,000 Hutu in April–September that year.⁴³

The body as discursive vehicle

Anthropologists have argued that violence should be analysed as a 'discursive practice – whose symbols and rituals are as relevant to its enactment as its instrumental aspects'.⁴⁴ In other words, violence is a 'meaningful cultural expression' rather than 'the absence of and destruction of all cultural and social order'.⁴⁵ Mass violence, therefore, displays 'macabre forms of cultural design and violent predictability'.⁴⁶ This suggests that, in approaching episodes of genocide or mass violence, we must attend to the "poetics" of violent practice, those context-specific dimensions of violence that are 'used discursively to amplify the cultural force of violent acts'.⁴⁷

The key vehicle for the articulation of this discourse is the body. Difference is manufactured, actualized and amplified by manipulating the body.⁴⁸ Discussing the Rwandan genocide, Christopher Taylor states that 'it is the human body that serves as the ultimate tablet upon which the dictates of the state are inscribed'.⁴⁹ Citing Kafka's *In the Penal Colony* (1919), Taylor suggests 'that societies "write" their signatures onto the bodies of their sacrificial victims'. As in Kafka's story of a machine that writes with needles on the condemned, so the *direct* inscription of the tattoo received by Primo Levi at Monowitz (a satellite camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau) is part of a wider process where difference is inscribed on a body, from the shaving of the head, to emaciation, to the 'unnatural hard gait' caused by 'repellent wooden shoes'.⁵⁰ Given that the perpetrator's fantasies do not correspond with members of the target group ordinarily encountered (see Zygmunt Bauman's distinction between the 'real' and 'conceptual' Jew⁵¹) particular forms of ante-mortem degradation, killing and/or post-mortem mutilation are required to 'stabilise the body of the ethnic other', to make tangible and concrete what is otherwise 'unstable and deceptive'.⁵² It is in this sense that the target is 'elusive' because 'the people one kills are never those one actually sees but merely what they represent, that is, what is hidden under their mask of innocence and normality'.⁵³ Corporal manipulation, therefore, 'removes' the mask, thereby producing 'abstract tokens' of a targeted group 'out of the bodies of real persons'.⁵⁴ As Lisa Malkki observes in the context of the 1972

genocide of Hutu in Burundi, it is 'through violence that bodies of individual persons become metamorphosed into specimens of the [category] for which they are supposed to stand'.⁵⁵ In other words, it is through ante-mortem degradation, particular forms of killing and/or post-mortem mutilation that 'categorical certainty' is achieved.⁵⁶ Genocidal violence is, therefore, not simply a matter of eliminating the ethnic other; rather, it 'involves the use of the body to establish the parameters of this otherness, taking the body apart to divine the enemy within'.⁵⁷ In the case of Auschwitz, for example, there had to be a 'demolition of a man' in order that the 'true' *Untermensch* (sub-human) could be 'unmasked'.⁵⁸ As Michael Taussig suggests, 'the victimizer needs the victim for the purpose of making truth, objectifying the victimizer's fantasies in the discourse of the other', where the key vehicle for the articulation of this discourse is the body of the other.⁵⁹

This review of anthropological commentary suggests a consensus regarding the role of a victim's body ante-mortem in contexts of violent conflict, 'cultures of terror' and genocide. When the post-mortem disposal of bodies and their discursive role are considered, however, we encounter diversity. While genocide involves concealment of the dead (discursive/didactic potential is exhausted), violent conflict and 'cultures of terror' often involve display of the dead (discursive/didactic potential continues). The problem, though, is that not all contexts conform to this duality; not all cultures of terror involve display and not all genocides only involve concealment.

Regarding the didactic use of dead bodies in cultures of terror, María Victoria Uribe, writing on the context of *La Violencia* in Colombia in the 1950s (in which up to 300,000 people were killed), describes post-mortem 'semantic operations' which 'turned the victims into animals'.⁶⁰ As Uribe observes, '*La Violencia* wasn't simply about killing Others; their bodies had to be dismembered and transformed into something else'.⁶¹ These post-mortem 'semantic procedures' (cuts made with a machete) had a particular cultural logic, relying on folk understandings of the analogy between animal and human physiology. Moreover, the terms used for these cuts were everyday terms used for butchering and the preparation of food, and drew on the way the peasants conceived of their own bodies.⁶² These mutilated corpses were then used instrumentally, 'displayed in highly visible places' so that they became 'terrifying alterities, pedagogical and exemplifying texts that always achieved their objective' – to frighten inhabitants away.⁶³ Joost Fontein suggests that bodies used in this way possess a form

of 'agency' in that they affect 'the living, provoking and structuring their responses' through what he terms their 'emotive materiality'.⁶⁴

Deploying dead bodies as didactic objects is, of course, commonplace in 'cultures of terror'.⁶⁵ Regarding the comparative study of the disposal of bodies, this suggests a division between the instrumental, didactic display of bodies in 'cultures of terror', where the intention is to *discipline* a population, and, in contrast, the concealment of bodies in contexts of genocide, where the intention is to *exterminate* a population. And yet, this duality is insufficient. Not all 'cultures of terror' display dead bodies instrumentally.

Antonius Robben describes how during the 'Dirty War' in Argentina (1976–82) the military junta 'incinerated, dumped at sea or buried in mass graves' between 10,000 and 30,000 victims of the 'political left'.⁶⁶ As with the 'cultural logic' found in Uribe's Colombian example, so Robben suggests that the junta intentionally exploited a 'cultural complex' found in Argentina which requires 'general human care for the dead and the emotional need for mourning'. Although corpses were concealed, didactic terror was maintained, because disappearance struck at the 'very core of Argentine society', etching 'a silhouette in the homes of surviving family members'.⁶⁷ It was the absence, rather than the display, of the dead body that was instrumental.

While bodies can be displayed (Colombia) or concealed (Argentina), the case of political violence in Zimbabwe since 1999 demonstrates that both can be present. Joost Fontein notes that while some bodies of members of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) were 'deliberately left in prominent places, along roads or pathways', other bodies were concealed in concrete-filled coffins thrown into dams and lakes.⁶⁸ Although Fontein implies that while the displayed bodies served the didactic role noted above,⁶⁹ the concealment of bodies and the disruption of MDC funerals were intentionally designed to disturb practices akin to the 'cultural complex' noted by Robben,⁷⁰ by preventing 'the material, social and symbolic processes and techniques through which things and substances become human remains, bodies become bones, and living people become safely dead'.⁷¹ In the Zimbabwean context, both display *and* concealment served to transgress the normal processes of 'containment and transformation' of the dead.⁷² Given that the examples of Argentina and Zimbabwe disrupt the supposed nexus of 'culture of terror'/display, does the case of Rwanda correspond to the supposed nexus of genocide/concealment?

Flows, concealment and exposure in the Rwandan genocide

Christopher Taylor⁷³ suggests, in the context of Rwanda, ‘something political and historical happened in Rwanda in 1994, but something cultural happened as well.... Beneath the aspect of disorder there lay an eerie order to the violence.... Many of the actions followed a cultural patterning, a structured and structuring logic.’⁷⁴ In a sophisticated analysis drawing on his research into popular medicine in Rwanda and the cosmology of the pre-independence monarchy, Taylor⁷⁵ suggests that Rwandans⁷⁶ conceive of the body through a ‘flow/blockage symbolism’ (especially the orderly flow of fluids – milk, semen, blood) which ‘mediates between physiological, sociological and cosmological levels of causality’.⁷⁷ Within this symbolism, ‘unobstructed connection and unimpeded movement’ are valued, but there is also an ‘internal dialectic’ that one cannot have ‘flow’ without ‘blockage’.⁷⁸

Taylor suggests that this ‘flow/blockage’ metaphor is apparent in the 1994 genocide,⁷⁹ that methods employed by the perpetrators ‘betrayed a preoccupation with the movement of persons and substances and with the canals, arteries, and conduits along which persons and substances flow: rivers, roadways, pathways, and even the conduits of the human body such as the reproductive and digestive systems’.⁸⁰ In terms of the disposal of bodies, Taylor sees an expression of the flow metaphor in the dumping of bodies in the Nyabarongo and Akagera Rivers: ‘Rwanda’s rivers became part of the genocide by acting as the body politic’s organs of elimination, in a sense “excreting” its hated internal other’.⁸¹ At least 40,000 bodies were recovered from Lake Victoria, into which the Akagera River flows.⁸² The dumping of bodies in these rivers has also been interpreted as an expression of the Hamitic hypothesis.⁸³ In a speech delivered on 22 November 1992, Léon Mugesera, Vice-President of the Gisenyi *préfecture* section of the ruling MRND(D), stated: ‘Let me tell you that your home is Ethiopia and that we shall send you by the river Nyabarongo so that you’ll get there quickly’.⁸⁴ We should note, however, that the propositions that the ‘flow metaphor’ and that the Hamitic hypothesis both influenced the disposal of bodies are speculative and neither has been substantiated with ethnographic research among perpetrators.

This way of disposal, with its (possible) discursive element(s), sits alongside a multiplicity of different ways in which dead bodies were treated during the 1994 genocide. Corpses were often left exposed

where they were killed. When the journalist Fergal Keane arrived at Nyarubuye church (eighty-seven miles east of the capital, Kigali) the bodies remained where people had been killed three weeks earlier.⁸⁵ However, in the testimonies gathered by Omar McDoom⁸⁶ and Charles Mironko,⁸⁷ perpetrators indicate that victims were buried immediately. Then again, in the trial of Tharcisse Renzaho (*préfet* of Kigali-Ville during the genocide) at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) eight witnesses (four prosecution and four defence) gave testimony that Renzaho had 'instructed truck and bulldozer drivers to dig holes and to collect bodies'.⁸⁸ According to one witness, 'Staff from the Red Cross, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Public Works and the prefecture's sanitation service participated in the clean-up operation'.⁸⁹ The Trial Chamber (the three judges) was indecisive regarding Renzaho's intention – public health or concealment:

The Chamber observes that the removal of bodies from the streets of Kigali would certainly have the effect of improving the international community's impression of the situation. However, it would also have the effect of mitigating the public health risk. Therefore, concealment cannot be considered the only reasonable motive for the clean-up operation. The initiative and participation of the ICRC [International Committee of the Red Cross] in the task strengthen the notion that hygiene was a significant factor in the decision-making process.⁹⁰

Ethnographic research may, of course, lead to different conclusions than that reached by the three judges, but this episode raises important questions. Was concealment the main reason for Renzaho's action, given that, where perpetrators were aware of the presence of UNAMIR soldiers, bodies were removed and burned?⁹¹ Is the lack of concealment elsewhere (Nyarubuye for example) because these sites were distant from the capital and the international gaze, or is the lack of disposal in these sites simply due to a lack of authorities to implement such a policy and/or the absence of necessary equipment? Also, is 'public health', as the ICTR judgment implies, an 'acceptable' reason? Notions of disease, contamination, sanitizing and the need to protect 'public health' are prevalent euphemisms found in contexts of genocide.⁹² To what extent is cleansing a town of the dead derivative from cleansing a town of the living?

These alternative interpretations revolve around the tension between intentional concealment versus 'public health'. However, studies of funeral rites in Rwanda and Rwandan attitudes to the dead raise even more complex possibilities. Claudine Vidal notes that it was only colonization and the introduction of Christianity to

Rwanda that introduced the practice of burial in cemeteries.⁹³ Prior to that, 'Rwandan culture ... was not interested in dead bodies'.⁹⁴ Rather, 'Immediately after death bodies, wrapped in a mat, were carried and abandoned in the forest, or buried near the house, and in the latter case, no sign marked the place of burial: neither grave nor ceremony'. Vidal⁹⁵ notes that the success of the Roman Catholic Church in Rwanda during Belgian colonization was more of a 'political than a religious victory'⁹⁶ and that 'a lot of "Christians", forced to display a façade of Christianity, clandestinely practised the religion of their ancestors'. According to Vidal, even those 'authentically Christianised' did not adopt western funeral practices wholeheartedly, and cemeteries were not considered special places.⁹⁷

Additional detail provided by Gerard van't Spijker in his study of funeral rites in Rwanda suggests explanations for the diverse ways in which bodies were treated during the 1994 genocide.⁹⁸ Although van't Spijker indicates great diversity in the treatment of corpses in his study of funeral rites conducted in the 1980s, he describes a series of common post-mortem phases, one of which is *gushaka ishyamba*, the digging of the grave (commonly situated behind the deceased's house).⁹⁹ Vidal likewise states that 'the practice of burying the body in the family compound persists',¹⁰⁰ while other research reports that many genocide survivors favoured home burials and 'bemoaned the government's prohibition on private burials in the immediate vicinity of people's homes'.¹⁰¹

The significance of these insights for the treatment of bodies during the genocide is that the literal translation of *gushaka ishyamba* is 'look for a forest', which recalls the 'old custom of exposing the corpse in a non-cultivated place, forest or marsh'¹⁰² or 'wild place'.¹⁰³ In pre-colonial Rwanda, the prevalence of burial or exposure was influenced by region and social status. Aléxis Kagame states that the Tutsi exposed their dead because they had a horror of decomposition and preferred to be 'eaten by hyenas' rather than worms, while in the north of the country, where the influence of the Tutsi central court was weaker, burial was more common.¹⁰⁴ Strangers who died in the north would, however, be thrown into the bush, a marsh, caves or even into holes.¹⁰⁵ If we compare these accounts with the disposal of bodies during the 1994 genocide, a series of questions present themselves, questions that can be answered only through ethnographic research. Were quick burials in compounds a form of concealment or a maintenance of funereal practice for those one had murdered? Were dead bodies left exposed simply because there was no need to conceal

them, or was there some instrumental reference to *either* Tutsi as 'strangers' (the Hamitic hypothesis) or a mocking reference to pre-colonial/colonial practice in areas under the influence of the Tutsi central court? Rather than simply an indignity for the dead, were perpetrators re-enacting a symbolic 'ethnic' distinction from pre-independence Tutsi rule or an expression of Tutsi as 'Hamitic strangers'? Was exposure a symbolic reversal of the extremist media's description of Tutsi as 'hyenas who devour our children'?¹⁰⁶

Conclusion

The suggestive questions posed in the last section are highly speculative and research may reveal that the disposal of bodies was more pragmatic, more a matter of the prosaic than the 'poetic'.¹⁰⁷ And yet, it remains the case that possible 'poetic', discursive elements of the disposal of bodies in contexts of genocide have been given insufficient attention. While this chapter has raised some tentative suggestions for research in the context of Rwanda, the discussion suggests that all contexts of genocide should be revisited and that the same attention should be paid to post-mortem disposal as has been given to ante-mortem degradation.

Notes

- 1 A 'culture of terror' is 'a relentless assault upon a civilian population in which menace, torture, forced labour and imprisonment become endemic forms of socio-political control'. J. A. Margold, 'From cultures of fear and terror to the normalisation of violence: an ethnographic case', *Critique of Anthropology*, 19:1 (1999), pp. 63–88, at p. 64. See also M. Taussig, 'Culture of terror – space of death: Roger Casement's Putumayo report and the explanation of torture', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 26:3 (1984), pp. 467–97.
- 2 J. Pottier, *Re-imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- 3 N. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London: Pluto Press, 2004), pp. 12–19; C. Newbury, 'Deux lignages au Kinyaga', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 14:1 (1974), pp. 26–39; C. Newbury, 'Ethnicity in Rwanda: the case of Kinyaga', *Africa*, 48:1 (1978), pp. 17–29; C. Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1988), pp. 85ff.; D. Newbury, 'Understanding genocide', *African Studies Review*, 41:1 (1998), pp. 73–97.

- 4 J. Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (Oxford: James Currey, 2004), pp. 134–9.
- 5 Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression*, p. 51; J. Kagabo & V. Mudandagizi, 'Complainte des gens de l'argile', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines*, 14:53 (1974), pp. 75–87, at p. 76.
- 6 I. Jacob, *Dictionnaire Rwandais-Français: extrait du dictionnaire de l'Institut National de Recherche Scientifique* (Kigali: L'Imprimerie Scolaire, 1984), p. 590. Translations here and below from the French by the author.
- 7 Newbury, 'Ethnicity in Rwanda', p. 21.
- 8 J.-P. Chrétien, 'Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi', in J.-L. Amselle & E. M'Bokolo (eds), *Au coeur de l'ethnie: ethnies, tribalisme et état en Afrique* (Paris: Éditions la Découverte, 1985), p. 137.
- 9 I. Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), p. 18.
- 10 See Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 15.
- 11 N. Eltringham, '“Invaders who have stolen the country”: the Hamitic hypothesis, race and the Rwandan genocide', *Social Identities*, 12:4 (2006), pp. 425–46.
- 12 J.-P. Chrétien, J. F. Dupaquier, M. Kabanda & J. Ngarambe with Reporters Sans Frontiers (eds), *Rwanda: les médias du génocide* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1995), p. 161.
- 13 C. C. Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), p. 62.
- 14 See Eltringham, 'Invaders who have stolen the country', pp. 433–5; F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique* (Brussels: Centre de Recherche de d'Information Socio-Politiques, 1961), pp. 22–8, 35–6.
- 15 Linden, *Church and Revolution*, p. 226.
- 16 J.-P. Harroy, *Rwanda: de la féodalité à la démocratie* (Souvenir d'un compagnon de la marche du Rwanda vers la démocratie et l'indépendance) (Brussels: Hayez, 1984), p. 234; H. Codere, *The Biography of an African Society: Rwanda 1900–1960: Based on Forty-Eight Rwandan Biographies* (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1973); A. Appadurai, 'Dead certainty: ethnic violence in the era of globalization', *Development and Change*, 29:4 (1998), pp. 905–25, at p. 20.
- 17 G. Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), n. 72.
- 18 Linden, *Church and Revolution*, p. 271.
- 19 F. Reyntjens, *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise Rwanda–Burundi 1988–1994* (Paris: Karthala, 1994), p. 27.
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