EXPLORING THE VALUE OF 'THE RWANDAN GENOCIDE FILM' AS A PEDAGOGICAL TOOL FOR RAISING AWARENESS

ABSTRACT

The Rwandan genocide is a complex subject that even works of written historical discourse struggle to explain. Previous filmic studies have primarily focused on three well known Rwandan genocide films, *Hotel Rwanda, Shooting Dogs* and *Sometimes in April;* this thesis expands its focus to nine feature films. Genocide films come under immense scrutiny when judged against the events they seek to represent. This scrutiny is accompanied with a misunderstanding of what exactly genocide films are. I will be looking at four thematic topics to alleviate this misunderstanding: how the films represent the history of Rwanda and the genocide; physical violence and death during the genocide; the female experience of the genocide, with an emphasis on sexual violence; and the abandonment of Rwanda by the West, with a focus on afro-pessimism. Through this analysis, I will argue for the value they possess as a medium in being able to not only raise awareness about the genocide, but to also convey salient information, to viewers. Films are not substitutes for written historical discourse but should rather be seen as supplementary educational tools used to enrich the existing canon of work. Once one understands the different judging criteria that should be afforded to genocide films, one will be able to recognise the value they possess.

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INTRODUCTION

I watched *Schindler's List* for the first time in high school during a History lesson. At the time, I did not fully understand the link between historical fact and film. It really seemed to me as if I was viewing an accurate depiction of the Holocaust. It would be a few years later before I would view the film again for an undergraduate class at University. Through the course, I realised that there were a number of aspects that the film did not handle particularly well. But even with these various problems, it is still the feature film that most people will associate with the Holocaust.

Schindler's List as a genocide film is somewhat problematic. Whilst it encompasses a number of aspects of the Holocaust experience, it still conforms to what one expects of a 'Hollywood' film. It leaves one wondering, 'Is this a 'good' representation of the Holocaust?' Or more specifically, 'What is it that makes a good 'genocide film'?' There is no one answer to this question, because the genre is both complex and multifaceted. Rather than trying to answer this question, one will find that it is far easier to point to the negative aspects of a genocide film. I, therefore, made the decision to not only focus on 'the genocide film', but rather to consider how it is that these films are able to impart various forms of information to viewers. And in doing so, I will explore the extent to which, film as a medium, is perhaps able to give viewers an experience of genocide that is possibly inaccessible through written historical discourse.

My Honours thesis was focused on my parents' award-winning adult education programme that they founded and facilitated for a number of years. A significant portion of the learners were political refugees from the African diaspora, with a number of Rwandans among them. My father released a book looking at the refugee community in Cape Town and a number of the participants in the book were drawn from the programme.[1] I remember reading a passage in the book by a Rwandan refugee that really struck a chord with me, "I met a South African on a train. A man who does not know me. He was as black as I am and yet he called me kweri-kweri and spat on me. I did not say a word nor did I move. No one in the train said anything. On their faces no sympathy was shown."[2]

[1] Keith Adams, *We Came for Mandela* (Cape Town: Footprints Publishers, 2001)
[2] Ibid, 76.

I kept wondering what events or conditions it would take for someone to flee their country and livelihood, only for them to then put up with this abuse. It was this line of thought that moved me to focus on the Rwandan genocide.

This thesis is a result of my interest in film and my desire to better understand a devastating push factor such as genocide. I realised very quickly that I knew very little about the Rwandan genocide outside of having watched *Hotel Rwanda.* I decided that the first thing I needed to do was get myself acquainted with the Rwandan genocide. But it was not long before I appreciated just how complex and intricate the topic was. It is not an event that can simply be explained as a conflict between two ethnic groups. The more I read about the genocide, the more layered the subject became. This left me to wonder, 'How will a more or less two hour film be able to represent such a horrifying and traumatic event?'

The simple answer is that, it can't. In the same way that a sole piece of written discourse cannot encompass all facets of the genocide, so it is the same for a film. The answer that filmmakers therefore arrive at is 'selectivity'. Filmmakers must isolate what they believe are the most pertinent characteristics of the genocide and incorporate them. No film is perfect and while it may get one aspect right, it will invariably get another wrong. This is due to the fact that these various features of the genocide must be seamlessly interwoven into a captivating narrative. To achieve this, balance must be created between providing information and creating an engaging film.

Close to 800,000 Rwandans were killed as a direct result of the genocide, the majority of those killed were those classified and identified as Tutsi.[3] Since the 1959 'Hutu Revolution', being a Tutsi was deemed a disadvantage.[4] Prior to 1959, the Tutsi were those in power, supported by colonial forces who had judged them the superior inhabitants of Rwanda.[5] Between 1959 and 1994, those identified as Tutsi were discriminated against in almost all sectors of society.[6]

[3] Kingsley Chiedu Moghalu, *Rwanda's Genocide: The Politics of Global Justice* (New York: Palgrave Macmillian, 2005), 1.
[4] Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of Genocide* (London: Hurst and Company, First Published 1995, This Edition 2014), 48.
[5] Kenneth R. White, Scourge of Racism: Genocide in Rwanda (*Journal of Black Studies* 39.3 (2009)), pp. 471-481, 474.
[6] Helen M. Hintjens, Explaining the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda (*The Journal of Modern African Studies* 37.2 (1999)), pp. 241-286, 247.

The Tutsi as a group, found themselves being used as scapegoats for Rwanda's many problems. They even found themselves vulnerable to physical violence and death when the new Hutu state was threatened by external forces. The legacy of this type of violence would have a notable effect with regard to the 1994 genocide; take for example, the eerily similar events of 1963. A group of Tutsi exiles sought to stage a *coup d'état* but were stopped within sixteen kilometres of the capital.[7] In response the Rwandan government began rounding up Tutsi and political opposition: estimates put the number of those killed under the authority of the government at 14,000.[8]

On the evening of Wednesday April the 6th 1994, President Juvenal Habyarimana's private plane would be shot down as it returned from Dar es Salaam, killing him, the President of Burundi and the chief of staff of the Rwandan army. It would mark the beginning of the Rwandan Genocide and an unprecedented level of violence directed against those recognised as Tutsi.[9]

Despite how it may have seemed at the time, the Rwandan genocide was not an instantaneous eruption of violence. It was rather an outburst of conflict that had been reinforced by years of social tension and contentious ideologies. Whether one was identified as Hutu or Tutsi played a significant role in how one structured their social, economic and political reality; therefore, when Habyarimana's plane was shot down, this event supported a particular narrative for countless Rwandans; namely, a narrative in which those seen as Tutsi or opponents of 'Hutu Power' had to be eliminated.

The first chapter focuses on how the films introduce viewers to the historical context of the Rwandan genocide. The beginning of a film provides the framework within which the movie will situate its narrative. If a film provides a context that is too simplistic, it can prove to be detrimental to the rest of the film. This chapter will highlight the various ways in which the filmmakers have chosen to introduce historical context and whether or not they can be viewed as adequate with regard to the rest of the film.

The second chapter looks at how each film represents physical violence and death during the Rwandan genocide. When one thinks about 'the genocide film', one tends to gravitate towards a

[7] Scott Strauss, *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (USA: Cornell University Press, 2006), 185-186.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (US: Human Rights Watch Report *171-1* ,March 1999), 145.

depiction of violence, with a focus on blood and gore. While a number of the films do include visual representations of physical violence and death, it is my belief that they are not necessary factors in producing a good genocide film. What is most important with regard to defining genocide is intent, as Adam Jones writes, "Most scholars and legal theorists agree that intent defines genocide".[10] Therefore it is useless for a film to portray violence without sufficient reasoning. The inclusion of physical violence and death in a genocide film is of no use in the absence of adequate context.

The third chapter looks at the experience of women during the genocide, with a particular emphasis on sexual violence. Rape and sexual violence has long been recognised as a part of conflict and those most susceptible to this form of violence are women. Viewing 'rape' and 'genocide' as two separate crimes has been a contentious subject for quite some time. The Rwandan genocide has had a considerable effect in changing that, as René Degni-Ségui, UN Special Rapporteur on Rwanda at the time noted, "rape was the rule and its absence the exception".[11] Therefore the need for these *male* filmmakers to create nuanced and sensitive depictions of the experience of women is vital. These are not just random acts of violence but are significant components of the genocide itself.

The fourth and final chapter focuses on the evacuation of expatriates and how it symbolised the abandonment of Rwanda by the international community. This aspect of the genocide is something that all the films have represented fairly well. The reason for this success is due to the unmistakable reality of this abandonment. The eagerness with which the West arrived to evacuate their citizens stood in strong contrast to their reticence to intervene to stop the genocide. The drawback to these scenes of evacuation is that they draw attention to a theme that runs throughout a number of the films; Africa as a hopeless and helpless place. This chapter will be touching on this theme and looking at which of the films actively try to mitigate this stereotype.

The resources included within this thesis can be organised under three headings: the Rwandan genocide; the historical film and the Rwandan genocide film. The accessible literature and resources regarding Rwanda and the genocide is expansive and comprehensive. Studies by authors such as Catharine and David Newbury, Alison Des Forges, Mahmood Mamdani, Gerard

[10] Adam Jones, *Genocide: A Comprehensive Introduction (2nd Edition)* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 37.
[11] Ibid, 470.

Prunier, Scott Strauss and Lars Waldorf and Philip Gourevitch, among others, have extensively broadened our understanding of the circumstances and context of the Rwandan genocide.[12] Des Forges and Newbury in particular have played a vital role in our comprehension of early state building within the region.[13]

Authors such as Strauss, Mamdani and Prunier have tried to comprehensively unpack the Rwandan genocide and elucidate on how such a horrific tragedy could occur. The main focus of their investigations drew attention to what it was that drove people to kill and the context behind how these choices were made.

The literature focused on 'the historical film' is not as expansive as the literature on Rwanda, due to the fact that the area in question is a comparatively new one. Robert Rosenstone has served as a figurehead for many historians and academics in their understanding of the value of the historical film. This area of study is vital for this thesis, as it serves as the buttress of this study. It is a region of study that begets the question, 'How is the historical film valuable?' Authors such as Rosentone and the directors of these nine feature films have in my opinion put forth a very strong argument for the value of the historical film as a genre. This position is eloquently expressed in the words of Bruno Ramirez in the conclusion of his book, *Inside the Historical Film*:

> As professional historians, we are the major producers of historical knowledge, but we are far from being the primary agents of transmuting that knowledge into historical culture. Since the emergence of mass culture, that role has been taken over largely by the mass media, with their power to trivialize the past or use it to reinforce national myths. And possibly, the major vehicle has been the historical film, whether consumed in movie theatres or on television and computer screens. Its power in shaping a society's historical culture has been so overwhelming that one may legitimately ask how much of the knowledge the average citizen has of past national and international events and personalities is derived from movies and how much comes from courses and history books. Most often driven by box-office imperatives (or by "reason of state" in totalitarian regimes), most historical films bow to the altar of action, romantic love, or national founding myths. But the major reason why I have conceived and written this book is the existence of conscientious filmmakers throughout the history of cinema who have, still do, and will continue to use the power of their craft not merely to entertain audiences but to make them reflect on aspects of the past that speak to our lives.[14]

The literature and resources regarding the Rwanda genocide film is where I believe this thesis derives its value. The area of the genocide film is in my opinion comparatively oversaturated, due

[12] See bibliography.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Bruno Ramirez, *Inside the Historical Film* (Canada: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014), 223-224.

in no small part to the existence of the Holocaust and its position of importance within the West. The literature around the Rwandan genocide film is by comparison almost non-existent, and when these writings do appear they are invariably focused on three films, namely, *Hotel Rwanda, Sometimes in April* and *Shooting Dogs*, with *Hotel Rwanda*, occupying the majority of this focus. Alexandre Dauge-Roth, is one of the few academics and authors to explore the Rwandan genocide comprehensively through a combination visual media and literature. This thesis has followed Daugh-Roth's example by not solely focusing on the above three films. The selection and reasoning behind these nine films are fairly straightforward, with the main reason being that these are the only nine feature films, at the time of writing, that actively address the Rwandan genocide on screen. This study should hopefully shed some much needed light on the lesser known feature films about the Rwandan genocide.

By the end of this thesis I hope to have shown that these films have value. They attempt to represent the Rwandan genocide in a way that viewers can easily understand and relate to. Films take an empathetic approach to violence that is absent from the academic writing on the genocide. Unlike the latter, these films are not a study of the Rwandan genocide; they rather serve to highlight evocative and unique experiences. They expose viewers to the horror of genocide in a filmic encounter that is out of reach for authors of written historical discourse.

CHAPTER 1

ENLIGHTENING VIEWERS ABOUT RWANDA AND THE GENOCIDE

Films that deal with historical issues will almost always provide some historical background that will help viewers understand what they are watching. It will usually come in the beginning of the film, typically within the first ten minutes or so. The majority of Western viewers that watched *Hotel Rwanda*, for example, would most probably not have known too much about the Rwandan genocide itself. By introducing bits of information and easily recognisable imagery, filmmakers are able to elucidate the film further by setting the events of the film within a framework.

Each film has a main theme and the context will speak in support of this theme. The more one knows about the historical context, the less likely it is that one is going to believe falsehoods within these films. Furthermore, knowing more about the history behind the genocide, the more meaningful these bits of information become. All nine films have been made for Western audiences, thus, many of these contextual introductions may come across as somewhat unsubtle.

100 Days (2001) is the first feature film focused on the Rwandan genocide. Nick Hughes is known for being responsible for capturing one of only three pieces of footage showing people being killed during the genocide.[15] The film is shot in Rwanda and takes place mainly in Kibuye in the far West of Rwanda. The film is almost entirely in Kinyarwandan, the dominant language of Rwanda. The main character is a Tutsi female called Josette, (Cleophas Kabasita). She is in a

[15] Nick Hughes, Exhibit 467: Genocide through a camera lens, in Allan Thompson (ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 231.

relationship with a Tutsi man named Baptiste, (Davis Kagenza). Once the genocide begins Baptiste's entire family is killed. However, Baptiste is able to escape and ultimately joins the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). Josette and her family flee to the main church in Kibuye where she and the rest of the Tutsi encounter the priest of the church played by Kennedy Mazimpaka. The priest is complicit with the killers and the church eventually becomes a killing ground. The priest takes a liking to Josette and keeps her safe from the killers.[16]

Her safety however comes at a price. Josette is raped by the priest and falls pregnant with his child. The RPF, which includes Baptiste, eventually rescues Josette and the remaining survivors from the Church. Josette abandons the baby she gives birth to as she cannot bear the sight of it. The film is very straightforward in both its attempt to represent the violence of the genocide and who is to blame for it.

Hughes' message is very clear when he begins the film with a conversation between the *préfet* (Regional governor) and the *bourgmestre* (equivalent of a mayor) of Gitesi commune, Kibuye. The *préfet* says to the *bourgmestre:*

> Let me tell you the facts: All over Rwanda people are organised. Even herein your town (Kibuye), people are rising to this challenge. You must understand that the decision of this new government has been made. You have been told, ordered; that the first enemy, before the rebels, is the Tutsi population. Do not wish some of them dead. We are going to kill them all. That is most important, All.[17]

The *bourgmestre* eventually relays this very message to the Hutu residents of the commune.

The film conveys the notion that the genocide was a top down process. We see this by how instructions travel down the hierarchy of authority, *préfet* to *bourgmestre* to the crowd of ordinary people. The film also alludes to a certain reticence that is felt by the *bourgmestre* in following these instructions. In reality, this reticence was something very real and it occurred in a number of communes. By relying so heavily on this top down process one disregards the agency of those at the bottom. Scott Straus demonstrates this through one perpetrator's account of a *conseiller's* (administrative section head) resistance to the violence, "Our *conseiller* refused to help us, saying

[16] Nick Hughes, *100 days* (United Kingdom and Rwanda, Vivid Features, 2001)
[17] Alexandre Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda: Dismembering and Remembering the Traumatic History* (United Kingdom: Lexington Books, 2010), 209.

that he could not tolerate people being killed so we went to kill him".[18] Strauss lists another incident in which a different rebellious *conseiller* is told by his older brother, a member of those leading the violence in the sector that he would be killed:

> Mr. Burgomaster, I am writing you this letter with great sadness. Those who are called *interahamwe* (they are called that because we did not choose them) have informed me that I must be killed tomorrow morning. [name withheld] (my older brother) gave me the message; he is part of them. I asked him why I must be killed. He responded that I will be informed tomorrow morning before dying…It is sad that someone is targeted because of his goodwill.[19]

The next scene displays this visible reticence when the same *bourgmestre* asks the white priest in his commune for advice, "Father you are right, but I am being asked to kill". The priest replies, "Killing is wrong, but you are entitled to defend yourself. The teaching of the Catholic Church is quite clear on this point. God forgives us our sins, provided we confess, we repent, and we seek forgiveness"[20]

The film's condemnation of the church is made strongly through the above scene, not only by using the white priest as a catalyst to push the *bourgmestre* towards killing, but also by including the presence of the Rwandan priest when the *bourgmestre* addresses the Hutu crowd. A large number of Rwandans identified as Catholic and Christian which resulted in strong ties forming between the Church and state. Take for example, Archbishop Vincent Nsengiyumva who was part of the *Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement* (MRND) central committee until December 1989.[21] There were even clergy members who took part in the killing:

> Pastor Elizaphan Ntakirutimana has been indicted before the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in connection with the massacre at Mugonero and Abbé Wenceslas Munyeshyaka of the Sainte Famille Church in Kigali has been charged in France with torture. Two Rwandan priests have been found guilty of genocide and condemned to death by a Rwandan court.[22]

The Catholic Church has a long history in Rwanda. The 'Society of the Missionaries of Africa' or the 'White Fathers' as they are more commonly referred to, were a Roman Catholic organisation which formed part of the Church. Their job was to 'educate' and convert the indigenous

[18] Straus, *The Order of Genocide,* 75.
[19] Ibid,76.
[20] Hughes, *100 days,* 2001.
[21] Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 273.
[22] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to tell the Story,* 190.

population.[23] The first White Fathers arrived at Tutsi court in 1900 and by 1905 the first permanent church was built.

The White Fathers' belief was that if you converted those at the top then the rest would follow. The Tutsi court however was strongly against this religious teaching and instructed the White Fathers that they should be given a secular education.[24] The building of the Church at Save in 1905 was a blatant display of how the court's power was slowly being overridden. To build the church, the clergy at Save asked the court for several hundred giant trees, to which the court complied, "for four months approximately ten thousand men were forced to labor for the new church".[25]

What this indicates is how the church began to be seen as an edifice of authority. This view of the Church as an authority continued to be held during the course of the genocide. Hughes is able to show just how much influence the Church had through the inclusion of influential members of the clergy within the film. The inclusion of the white priest in particular is significant because it signifies that his authority comes from the institution of the Church and not the Rwandan government. Hughes therefore, highlights the church's strong presence within Rwandan life and the devastating repercussions of this social positioning.

Before the film switches to the narrative involving Josette, a small block of text appears on screen:

> Bound by volcanoes and lakes, Rwanda is so small it is lost between the two plains of East Africa and the Congo jungle. The land keeps two tribes, the Hutu and the Tutsi. Years ago, the Tutsi ruled Rwanda, but the Hutu overthrew their master. For 30 years, the Hutu Elite disguised their wealth and the People's poverty by teaching that the Tutsi were the cause of all Rwanda's troubles. The Tutsi rebels invaded and waged war; the Hutu rulers plotted genocide.[26]

In terms of 'ethnicity', the film takes a very simple binary approach. Using the very problematic term 'tribes' to describe Hutu and Tutsi. The distinction itself is much more complicated than the term 'tribe', a label so often associated with Africa. Ethnicity and its place in Rwanda is a contentious subject. The distinction between Hutu and Tutsi should not be recognised as one of

[23] Alison Des Forges and David Newbury (Editor), *Defeat is the Only Bad News: Rwanda Under Musinga: 1896-1931* (USA: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 27.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Ibid, 56.
[26] Hughes, *100 days,* 2001.

ethnicity as Eltringham states, "Hutu, Tutsi and Twa are not, 'in reality', ethnic groups because they do not conform to the 'conventional' definition of such entities: they do not speak different languages, practise different religions, eat different foods, reside in different territories".[27]

An excellent way to understand the origin of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction is through the case study of Kinyaga by Catharine Newbury.[28] Kinyaga located in the extreme southwest of Rwanda was only brought under court control after the middle of the 19th century.[29] The power in Kinyaga resided almost solely with the lineage heads, however, once court control tightened this began to change:

> Early in the reign of Rwabugiri, the Impara and Abiiru areas of Kinyaga were each placed under the authority of a provincial chief (*umutware w'ubutaka* or *umutware w'intebe*) appointed directly by the king (Mwami). Each of the provincial chiefs gradually extended control over most of the hills lying within his geographically defined province; in order to obtain this control, the chiefs used various forms of patron client ties.[30]

Newbury's conclusion of the Kinyaga case study alludes to the nuanced nature of the Tutsi and Hutu divide:

> Theoretically, most of the aspects of chiefly rule applied to the population in general, but the impact fell much more heavily on Hutu (i.e. the definition of Hutu meant, in this context, one who was relatively deprived of power), and partly because those of Tuutsi status could more easily find means of defending themselves.[31]

The definition is very similar to the conclusion that Mamdani makes when he says, "To be a Tutsi was thus to be in power- just as to be a Hutu was more and more to be a subject".[32] What is apparent from the Kinyaga case study was that the distinctions 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' had less to do with conventional ethnicity and more to do with social and political factors.

100 Days is a film that is not afraid to point fingers. It not only condemns the Hutu hardliners within the government but the institution of the Church itself. From the very start of the film, Hughes makes it clear to viewers that there will not be a neat and happy conclusion.

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[27] Nigel Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debate in Rwanda* (London: Pluto press, 2004), 5.
[28] Catharine Newbury, Ethnicity in Rwanda: the Case of Kinyaga (*Africa: Journal of the international African institute* 48.01 (1978)), pp. 17-29.
[29] Ibid, 17.
[30] Ibid, 19.
[31] Ibid, 25.
[32] Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 75.

Sometimes in April (2005) by Haitian director Raoul Peck is almost entirely in English and was filmed on location in Rwanda. The main plot is focused on two brothers Augustin, (Idris Elba) and Honoré, (Oris Erhuero). The protagonist of the film is Augustin, a captain in the Rwandan Army who finds himself in charge of training militias. Honoré is a DJ on a radio station that broadcasts propaganda and messages of hate against the Tutsi. During the course of the genocide, Augustin loses both his wife and children. Augustin then meets his brother in Arusha ten years after the genocide. Honoré is in Arusha awaiting trial for his role in the genocide. Both brothers ultimately struggle to come to terms with their roles in the genocide and the indelible stain that it has left on their lives.[33] The film shows that Peck has researched the history of the genocide thoroughly. He packs as much information into the film as he can whilst still keeping the film engaging and manages to strike a good balance.

The film begins with a map of Africa. It becomes more detailed as the camera zooms in on Rwanda.[34] Text starts appearing on screen, superimposed on the shifting image of Africa. The text takes up roughly two minutes of the film from start to finish. In its entirety the text itself is fairly dense, but it is through this text that the majority of the exposition of the genocide is provided. To understand just how well thought out Peck's introduction is, one needs to breakdown the text into separate parts.

Mahmood Mamdani refers to three silences around accounts of the Rwandan genocide:

> The first concerns the *history* of genocide: many write as if genocide has no history and as if the Rwandan genocide had no precedent, even in this century replete with political violence. The Rwandan genocide thus appears as an anthropological oddity. For Africans, it turns into a Rwandan oddity; and for non-Africans, the aberration is Africa. For both, the temptation is to dismiss Rwanda as exceptional.[35]

Peck uses the text to address this first silence, by showing that there is a process to genocide. Peck is also the only filmmaker that comments on German colonialism and the fact that it differed from Belgian colonialism:

> For centuries, The Hutus, Tutsi and Twa of Rwanda shared the same culture, language and religion. In 1916, Belgium took control of Rwanda from Germany and installed a rigid colonial system of racial classification and exploitation. By

[33] Raoul Peck, *Sometimes in April* (USA, HBO FILMS, 2005)
[34] Ibid.
[35] Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers,* 7-8.

> elevating the Tutsi over the Hutu, they created deep resentment among the Hutu majority.[36]

Many trace the Rwandan genocide to Belgian rule, and while there certainly is credence to going this route, it was also under German rule that many big changes were made. It was under German occupation that vital support was given to the Tutsi court to allow them to increase their influence in the outlying areas.[37] One of the big ways in which Belgian and German rule differed was in scale, as Des Forges explains:

> German needs were smaller and their resources more limited, they had imposed their demands on relatively few people, mostly on those who lived in the vicinity of their posts. Now the demands were universalised. Those who had suffered under the Germans found little to differentiate them from the Belgians[…] The Belgians originally demanded only one or two francs from each lineage of perhaps ten men, by 1921 they were beginning to ask this amount from each individual adult man[…] soon Belgians were forcibly recruiting men to build the system of roads they believed necessary to enable future development of the economy[38]

These increased exactions resulted in a harsher rule for ordinary Rwandans. It was under German rule that classifications such as Twa, Hutu and Tutsi were formally recognised but it was under Belgian rule that they became concrete. To better understand how this change was possible, one needs to understand the Western perceptions of these groups.

Early Missionary and colonial historiography describes Rwanda as a society split into three distinctly separate races. Each of which arrived in the area of Rwanda in three separate historical periods.[39] Each race supposedly had various somatic features that made it easy to tell them apart. The first race was the Twa; described as hunter gatherers and the earliest inhabitants of the land, they made up the smallest group, equating to around 1% of the population:

> Members of a worn out and quickly disappearing race… the Mutwa presents a number of well-defined somatic characteristics: he is small, chunky, muscular, and very hairy; particularly on the chest. With monkey-like flat face and a huge nose, he is quite similar to the apes he chases in the forest.[40]

The Second race, were the Hutu, who made up the bulk of the inhabitants:

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[36] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[37] Des Forges and Newbury, *Defeat is the only Bad News,* 129.
[38] Ibid, 175.
[39] Jean-Paul Kimonyo, *Rwanda's Popular Genocide: A Perfect Genocide* (USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016), 10.
[40] Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 6.

> The Bahutu display very typical Bantu features. […] They are generally short and thick-set with a big head, a jovial expression, a wide nose and enormous lips. They are extroverts who like to laugh and lead a simple life.[41]

What we see from these two racist descriptions is similar to much of the colonial writings describing indigenous inhabitants of soon to be colonised lands. What makes these two descriptions stand out so starkly is when contrasted against the description of the Tutsi:

> The Mututsi of good race has nothing of the negro, apart from his colour. He is usually very tall, 1.80m. at least, often 1.90m. or more. He is very thin, a characteristic which tends to be even more noticeable as he gets older. His features are very fine: a high brow, thin nose and fine lips framing beautiful shining teeth. Batutsi women are usually lighter-skinned than their husbands, very slender and pretty in their youth, although they tend to thicken with age. […] Gifted with a vivacious intelligence, the Tutsi displays a refinement of feelings which is rare among primitive people. He is a natural-born leader, capable of extreme self-control and of calculated goodwill.[42]

These descriptions of the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa were nothing more than pseudo-science. Yet, this did not stop these dubious somatic portrayals from gaining salience. Peck gives evidence of this through the inclusion of the imagery of a Rwandan's facial features being measured by Europeans with various instruments.

The Belgian administration conducted an official census in 1933-34.[43] The effect of this census was to make the difference between Tutsi and Hutu concrete. Before, while rare, one could become Tutsi if one attained enough 'power', but with the census this became almost impossible. What the Belgian administration did through this census was "to take an existing socio-political distinction and racialize it".[44] Peck makes this racialisation clear through both the text and imagery.

Another important point that Peck touches on, is the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF):

> In 1959, the Belgians handed control of Rwanda to the Hutu majority. With independence came decades of institutionalized anti-Tutsi segregation and massacre. Hundreds of thousands of Tutsi and moderate Hutus were forced into exile. In 1988, some of these refugees formed a rebel movement called the Rwandan Patriotic front (RPF) to reclaim their homeland. In 1990, from their

[41] Ibid.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 98.
[44] Ibid.

> base in Uganda, the RPF launched an offensive against the Hutu regime that was stopped with French and Belgian military support.[45]

Gerard Prunier estimates that between 1959 and 1973 almost 700,000 people had fled Rwanda due to political persecution.[46] It would be from amongst these people that the bulk of the RPF would be formed. The RPF originated in Uganda, starting out as a foundation called the Rwandese Refugee Welfare Foundation (RRWF), founded in June 1979. Its intent was to give support to victims of political repression after the fall of Idi Amin.[47] In 1980, the RRWF changed its name to the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity (RANU). RANU was a more politically militant version of the RRWF that directly explored the question of the exiles returning to Rwanda.[48]

The RPF invaded Rwanda on October 1st 1990. Their main goals were the repatriation of the exiles and the end to the despotic rule of Habyarimana. The civil war with the RPF was one of the main catalysts that made the Rwandan genocide possible. Of all nine films, Peck uses the method of textual exposition most effectively. The text provided is both informative and concise and stays away from many of the stereotypical explanations for the genocide.

Peck takes a broad look at the genocide, by beginning at pre-colonial Rwanda and putting emphasis on the effects that colonialism had on Rwandans. Peck has previously done two other works focusing on the Congo, where he lived for much of his childhood and adolescence.[49] In both works, one feature film and one documentary, he lays the blame heavily, but not solely, at the feet of Belgian colonialism.[50]

The next scene is set in a classroom. Rwandan school children watch footage of Bill Clinton making a speech on the Rwandan genocide. Augustin, now a school teacher watches resolutely with the children. Once the footage is finished, a child asks him a question, "Could it have been stopped? All the dying?" While another girl in the back interjects, "That's the past; those bad

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[45] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[46] Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 63.
[47] Ibid, 67.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Pierre-Pierre, Gary. "AT LUNCH WITH: Raoul Peck; Exporting Haitian Culture to the World" NYTimes.com. https://www.nytimes.com/1996/05/08/garden/at-lunch-with-raoul-peck-exporting-haitian-culture-to-the-world.html (accessed August 20th, 2018)
[50] Raoul Peck, *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet*, (1990) and Raoul Peck, *Lumumba* (JBA Production, 2000)

things are in the past".[51] Augustin then replies, "Maybe if some of us were more courageous, maybe if the world had paid more attention… I don't know".[52]

It is important to acknowledge that Peck's film is meant mainly for a North American audience which is why the film focuses on a lot of the inaction and actions of the US government. There is a part in Clinton's speech in which he alleges the US ignorance of the situation in Rwanda, "All over the world there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and speed with which you were being engulfed in unimaginable horror".[53] Even though Peck does not include this specific portion of the speech in the film, the events of the film prove his contention to be false. It is untrue that America did not understand what was going on, as Des Forges states, "In January, an analyst of U.S. Central Intelligence Agency knew enough to predict that as many as half a million persons might die in case of renewed conflict."[54]

The above scene in which the two children discuss the past is symbolic as it highlights the fact that Rwandans themselves still have many unanswered questions. Peck also accurately depicts the split within Rwandan society; in reality, many people wish to move forward, whilst others find it impossible to forget the past. This is particularly the case for survivors who find it hard to deal with their trauma, as Innocent Rwililiza states:

> Rwandans that have returned home say that the survivors are growing bitter, withdrawn, almost aggressive. But this is not true: we are simply rather disheartened because we gradually let ourselves become isolated. We survivors, we are growing more like strangers in our own land- which we have never left- than all the foreigners and expatriates who consider us so anxiously.[55]

The film provides a detailed description of the past, showing how the terms Hutu, Tutsi and Twa have changed over time. Peck also notably mentions how the concept of race gained a prominent position in relation to this distinction. This racialisation of the Hutu - Tutsi distinction would prove to be a devastating component of the Rwandan genocide. *Sometimes in April* has a strong

[51] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (US: Verso, 2004), 261.
[54] Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story,* 20.
[55] Jean Hatzfeld and Linda Coverdale (Translator), *Life Laid Bare: The Survivors in Rwanda Speak* (New York: Other Press, 2006), 114-115.

focus on Western apathy with regard to the genocide, but also importantly shows the political components that go along with it.

Hotel Rwanda (2004) directed by Terry George, is the most well-known feature film about the Rwandan genocide and yet it is the only film not shot in Rwanda. The film is entirely in English with the actors attempting to mimic a Rwandan accent. The film is based on the story of Paul Rusesabagina, whose tale first appeared in Philip Gourevitch's book, '*We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we Will be Killed with our Families'.*[56] Rusesabagina's autobiography about his experience during the genocide '*An Ordinary Man'* would actually come out three years after the film.[57] The film follows Rusesabagina, the Hutu manager of the Hôtel des Mille Collines played by Don Cheadle. When the genocide breaks out on April 6th, Rusesabagina, armed with only his position as manager and some remarkable negotiating skills, is able to shelter and protect the lives of 1,268 people. While it is the most well-known film, it is also the film that has courted the most controversy.[58]

The film begins with a radio broadcast from a channel that is meant to be Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM):

> When people ask me good listeners, why do I hate all the Tutsi, I say read our history. The Tutsi were collaborators for the Belgian colonists, they stole our Hutu land, they whipped us. Now they have come back, these Tutsi rebels. They are cockroaches, they are murderers, Rwanda is our Hutu land, we are the majority, they are a minority of traitors and invaders. We will squash the infestation, we will wipe out the RPF rebels, this is RTLM Hutu Power radio, stay alert, watch your neighbours.[59]

Hotel Rwanda spends a lot of the beginning of the movie providing context through exposition; this forms the basis for how the film will unfold. The film starts with a broadcast by RTLM, a motif that is ubiquitous throughout the film. Thomas Wilke illustrates the pervasiveness of this motif, "In general radio can be described as a distinctive component in *Hotel Rwanda* that is dealt with rather implicitly. To put it into numbers, radio appears 9 times during the movie and is

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[56] Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we Will be Killed with our Families* (London: Picador, First published 1998,This Edition 2015).
[57] Paul Rusesabagina and Tom Zoellner*, An ordinary Man* (UK, Bloomsbury Publishing PLC, 2009).
[58] Alfred Ndahiro and Privat Rutazibwa, *Hotel Rwanda: Or the Tutsi Genocide as seen by Hollywood* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008) ; Edouard Kayihura and Kerry Zukus, *Inside The Hotel Rwanda: The Surprising Story…And why it matters today* (USA: Benbella Books, 2014). Debunk and refute many of the claims made by the film and question Rusesabagina's role in the genocide in general.
[59] Terry George, *Hotel Rwanda* (USA: United Artist, 2004)

shown for 9 minutes, 22 seconds compared to the film's actual length of 118 minutes".[60] The problem with *Hotel Rwanda's* excessive use of RTLM as a repetitive theme is that it is so deeply integrated within the narrative, that it does not leave room for the inclusion of other factors that led people to kill.

One is then introduced to Rusesabagina as he goes about his daily tasks, getting a glimpse into the knowledge he has gained as a hotel manager. This knowledge is displayed in a conversation he has in the car with one of the hotel workers, Dube; "This is a Cohiba cigar, each one is worth ten thousand francs but it is worth more to me than ten thousand francs. If I give a businessman ten thousand francs, what does that matter to him, he is rich, but if I give him a Cohiba cigar, straight from Havana, Cuba, that is style Dube".[61]

The introductory context spends a lot of time focusing on Rusesabagina. There is particular focus on Rusesabagina's skills in diplomacy; a skill that Rusesabagina himself believes he has a gift for:

> I suppose I was adept at using the same skill at negotiation…If anybody tried to threaten me I would simply look him in the eye and ask him in a firm but friendly voice, "Why?" The bully would have no choice but to engage me verbally, and this made violence next to impossible. I learned that it is very difficult to fight someone with whom you are already talking.[62]

The film then introduces viewers to Georges Rutaganda, second vice president of the *Interahamwe*, the youth wing of the *Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement* (MRND), a group that would be synonymous with those who killed during the genocide. It is from Rutaganda that Rusesabagina purchases much of the provisions for the hotel. While Paul walks around the warehouse with Rutaganda, a forklift drops a crate, littering the warehouse floor with machetes. Rutaganda picks up the machete and says, "A bargain buy from China, ten cents each".[63] Linda Melvern explains the scope of these imports from China, "As an illustration of the sheer volume involved, the total number of machetes imported in 1993 weighed 581,175 kilos and cost US$725,669: there was an estimated one new machete for every third male in the

[60] Thomas Wilke, On the Meaning, Uses and Representation of Hate Radio in Hotel Rwanda, in Grażyna Stachyra (ed), *Radio – Community, Challenges and Aesthetics* (Poland: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2013), 195.
[61] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004.
[62] Rusesabagina and Zoellner, *An ordinary Man*, 55.
[63] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004.

country".[64] On the drive back to the hotel, Paul remarks to Dube, "Rutaganda and his people, they are fools Dube, their time is soon over, anyway this is business".[65]

Hotel Rwanda singles out the villains in the film very simplistically, particularly in the case of Georges Rutaganda. No one will deny that Rutaganda was a villain, but he was much more complex than the one dimensional characterisation present in *Hotel Rwanda*. One of the scenes in the film shows a United Nations (UN) convoy, which is carrying guests from the hotel, being attacked. In the film, Rusesabagina's negotiation skills are highlighted as the reason why the convoy is saved, however, Amadou Deme, a UN officer present at the event tells a different story:

> Rutaganda met the same rage we had encountered, but he persisted and eventually got some of the apparent leaders to enter into a grudging dialogue. That crowd did not know or like Mr. Rutaganda. They saw him as a traitor trying to help their enemies. What he did was very dangerous. The afternoon was growing dark, soon killers and looters would be in charge. Had he been the cynical brute as depicted in the film he would have turned away. Fortunately for our UN mission and everybody at the barricade, Rutaganda is in fact a large, friendly, soft spoken and intelligent man who saved the day.[66]

The film's portrayal of Rutaganda is an archetype of villainy which fails to show that the killers were not without agency of their own. It is a representation that ultimately fails to show that the genocide as a whole was not clear cut; it was not simply good versus evil.

The next scene is important because it emphasises the direction that the film will take. The simplistic exposition present in the scene is characteristic of much of the film.

An American journalist sitting at the bar asks a Rwandan sitting next to him, "So, what is the actual difference between a Hutu and a Tutsi" the Rwandan replies:

> According to the Belgian colonist, the Tutsis are taller, more elegant, it was the Belgians who created the division…They picked people, those with thinner noses, lighter skin; they used to measure the width of people's noses. The Belgians used the Tutsis to run the country and when they left, they left the power to the Hutus and of course the Hutus took their revenge on the Tutsi for years of oppression.[67]

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[64] Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 56.
[65] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004.
[66] Alfred Ndahiro and Privat Rutazibwa, *Hotel Rwanda: Or the Tutsi Genocide as seen by Hollywood* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 20.
[67] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004 .

This exchange between the two characters is problematic. It tries to explain the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi in an overly simplistic and misguided way. It also attempts to blame this divide solely on Belgian colonists while denying that there was already a divide before then. Once the viewers are provided with this information, the film then locates this arbitrary character as an expert that should not be questioned: "Benedict is the finest journalist in Kigali and an expert on the subject"[68] The problem lies not with creating such a space within the film. It lies with the fact that the film squanders this space by putting very little effort into the information that fills it.

There is much contention behind the history of Rwanda, with the current RPF government blaming the divide between Hutu and Tutsi and the eventual genocide solely on colonial forces:

> The official narrative claims that colonial administrators and missionaries invented ethnicity and promulgated a false belief that the different ethnic groups came to the territory that is now Rwanda in successive, distinct waves of migration. It further asserts that these false teachings set the stage for the genocide…[69]

Scholars such as Catharine Newbury, Alison Des Forges and Mahmood Mamdani have gone on to contradict this official narrative of the RPF government.[70]

The current government continues to be perceived as predominantly Tutsi. They therefore have a vested interest in portraying Rwanda as an essentially peaceful place until the arrival of colonists, to downplay the Hutu and Tutsi division. Some of the films, including *Hotel Rwanda*, choose to conform to the more simplistic RPF narrative rather than give a more complex and historically grounded explanation. The 'RPF explanation' focuses on colonists as the sole contributor to genocide and this unfortunately fits neatly into a stereotypical 'African narrative', without providing any complexity.

Shooting Dogs (2005) is an English language film directed by Michael Caton-Jones. It is based upon the true story of the events that took place at the École Technique Officielle (ETO) in Kigali. Once the genocide began many Tutsi sought refuge at the ETO. Almost all of them were

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[68] Ibid.

[69] Sarah Warshauer Freedman, Harvey M. Weinstein, K.L. Murphy and Timothy Longman, Teaching History in Post-Genocide Rwanda, in Scott Strauss and Lars Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 301.

[70] Catharine Newbury, Ethnicity in Rwanda: the case of Kinyaga (*Africa: Journal of the international African institute* 48.01 (1978)), Alison Des Forges and David Newbury (Editor), *Defeat is the Only Bad News: Rwanda Under Musinga, 1896-1931* (USA: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001)

killed when the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) contingent abandoned them on the 11th of April.[71] The two main characters are two white men; Father Christopher (John Hurt), a priest at the ETO and Joe (Hugh Dancy), an English teacher also stationed there. It was filmed on location at the École Technique Officielle. The main problem with the film lies in its decision to not give Rwandans a voice of their own.

The film's introduction to context is somewhat detrimental to the film itself. It begins with text that reads, "This film is based on real events and was made at the locations depicted".[72] More text then appears on screen:

> Rwanda 1994: For thirty years the majority Hutu government has persecuted the minority Tutsi people. Under pressure from the West, The Hutu President has reluctantly agreed to a deal to share power with the Tutsis. The UN has deployed a small force around Kigali, the Capital, to monitor the fragile peace.[73]

This beginning, in which it states that it is based on real events, is problematic. It locates itself in a position of authenticity that seeks to equate what viewers see on screen as 'reality'. The film tries to make it seem as if it has a unique insight into history as Alexandre Daugh Roth explains, "such realist claims seek to obliterate the *mediated* nature of reality within their representations and make the viewers rhetorically believe of the possibility of an unmediated *immediacy* and intimacy in the depiction of history".[74]

Throughout the opening one sees a very simplistic viewpoint of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. The text seeks to include the political component of the genocide without giving any dates or mentioning that the power sharing was not a binary Hutu-Tutsi division. It fails to mention the fact that Hutu moderates also sought a democratic state.

Viewers are then introduced to Joe and Father Christopher as they interact with the children and staff at the ETO. The next scene shows Joe and Francois, the groundsman, driving in a truck around Kigali and going on various errands, before they are stopped at a roadblock. They are, however, able to get through the roadblock easily due to the fact that Francois is Hutu. Others at

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[71] Paolo Tripodi, When Peacekeepers Fail Thousands are Going to Die. The ETO in Rwanda: A Story of Deception: Report from the Field (*Small Wars and Insurgencies* 17.2 (2006)), pp. 221-236, 222.
[72] Michael Caton-Jones, *Shooting Dogs* (United Kingdom: BBC, 2005).
[73] Ibid.
[74] Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda,* 172.

the roadblock are not so lucky.[75] Father Christopher is walking around Kigali and begins talking to a Rwandan woman in what is supposedly Kinyarwandan. He sees men in suits consulting papers and asks her who they are, she replies, "They are making a list of Tutsi families in the area".

The film does well in showing that there was planning that went into the violence of the genocide. It does this through the inclusion of the officials listing the Tutsi families and by showing the roadblocks and how they functioned. Joe and Father Christopher are emphasised as outsiders but the film goes one step further and delineates Joe as completely ignorant of Rwanda and Rwandan culture. Joe serves as a stand in for Western audiences, a fictional character who will learn new things at the same time as they do. This is one of the reasons why he is able to ask so many questions. Father Christopher is not Rwandan but he speaks the language and is well versed in Rwandan culture, which positions him as a voice of authority. It is unfortunate that a film which tries to portray itself as authentic, ends up creating two fictional white characters as the main protagonists.

Joe encounters a British reporter called Rachel and they begin talking about her last assignment:

> …covering the peace rally, mostly Tutsis, all of a sudden this bunch of Hutu thugs turn and start laying into them with machetes…and the police just stood there doing nothing, doing fuck all…This place is supposed to be a point where Hutu and Tutsi can live together in peace and harmony like cabernet and merlot, all blended together into one glorious Bordeaux.[76]

In Joe's conversation with Rachel, the film seeks to give viewers an easy-to-understand metaphor for the Tutsi-Hutu distinction but fails spectacularly. The metaphor strips away any nuance with regard to the distinctions and also inadvertently makes these two labels something organic. As if Hutu and Tutsi are separate biological groups that should get along wonderfully. This conversation exemplifies the type of over simplistic arguments that are rife within the film. This, taken together with the filmmaker's failure to adequately contextualise the genocide, is indicative of the stereotypical approach taken by the film.

Shake Hands with the Devil (2007) is an English/French language Canadian feature film directed by Roger Spottiswoode. It is based upon the autobiography of Lieutenant-General Roméo

[75] Caton-Jones, *Shooting Dogs,* 2005.
[76] Ibid.

Dallaire titled, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda',* with Roy Dupuis portraying Dallaire. The film recreates some of the experiences that Dallaire had to deal with when he was head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR). It was shot in and around Rwanda and gives one an eclectic view of Rwanda's different landscapes. Another facet of the film deals with the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that Dallaire suffers as a result of the genocide.

The film begins with a textual introduction:

> Rwanda is a small country in central Africa. For centuries its 10 million citizens viewed themselves as one people. In 1916, Belgium colonized Rwanda, introducing a system of identity cards separating the majority Hutus from the minority Tutsis. The Tutsis were given preference in education, jobs and power. In 1959, when Rwanda became independent, the Hutus rebelled and took over the government, exiling and killing Tutsis. In 1990 a Tutsi-led, multi ethnic force invaded from Uganda. French troops intervened. The invasion ended when both sides signed a peace treaty in 1993, a treaty the UN was sent to protect.[77]

The text that the film provides is somewhat problematic. Whilst it does not stick to a simplistic binary distinction between Hutu and Tutsi, it also does not adequately explain the classifications. It makes the distinction seem arbitrary and ahistorical. Furthermore, the text states that Rwanda gained independence in 1959, when in fact Rwanda only formally gained independence on the 1st of July 1962.[78] There is obviously a need to condense information, but the film tries to cram too much of this material into a small block of text. The 1959 Revolution is confused with independence and it is seen as a *coup d'état* without context. This inaccurate condensing of contextual information ends up doing more harm than good.

The film begins with Dallaire wearing a blazer and tie sitting across from a woman in a darkened room. The woman asks a despondent Dallaire, "Do you want to continue living?" It then jumps back in time, showing Dallaire at UN headquarters meeting with Under Secretary General Kofi Annan.[79] The film begins by immediately drawing attention to how the genocide has affected Dallaire but perhaps importantly it firmly situates the filmic narrative around Dallaire.

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[77] Roger Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands with the Devil* (Canada: Seville Pictures, 2007).
[78] Philip Verwimp, *Peasants in Power: The Political Economy of Development and Genocide in Rwanda* (Netherlands: Springer, 2013), 52.
[79] Roger Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands with the Devil, 2007.*

One then sees UN troops arriving in Rwanda and viewers are formally introduced to Major Brent Beardsley assistant to Dallaire and General Henry Kwami Anyidoho, head of the Ghanaian contingent of UNAMIR. One is also shown a glimpse of the Belgian contingent headed by Colonel Luc Marchal. By seeing the diverse make up of UNAMIR, one is able to better grasp the difficulty of heading a force of soldiers from so many different backgrounds.

Dallaire addresses the various heads of the different forces within UNAMIR, "We come here from a dozen different countries to help Rwanda find peace and security. They have had thirty years of conflict, often violent and brutal and now both sides want to find a way to a lasting peace".[80] He then points out Rwanda on the map and describes its position in relation to its African neighbours. He then talks about the invasion by the predominantly Tutsi RPF which originated from Uganda three years ago. He further indicates the areas that are under RPF control and the DMZ zone that the cease fire has identified. Dallaire then explains the role of UNAMIR:

> Our first duty is to be impartial; we are referees, not coaches and definitely not players. By the way our weapons are for show gentleman, we don't even have enough rounds for target practise, we are here to create a climate of security, to stabilise the situation, not to create a permanent solution, that's their job.[81]

This scene in which Dallaire is talking to the different heads of the various contingents is framed as if Dallaire is explaining this to the viewers as well. Through this method, it allows onlookers to be more engaged with the important information that is being provided to them.

Viewers are then introduced to Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, member of the political party *Mouvement Démocratique Républicain* (MDR). Uwilingiyimana was an integral figure in relation to the genocide. Her death was intimately tied to those of the ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers ordered to protect her. These soldiers' deaths would act as a catalyst for the weakening of UNAMIR.[82]

The film roughly explains the duties of UNAMIR, painting them as a neutral force that should not involve themselves outside of the keeping of peace. Many have criticised Dallaire and UNAMIR

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Romeo Dallaire and Brent Beardsley, *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (United Kingdom: Arrow Books, 2004), 172.

for their lack of action during the genocide, as current president Paul Kagame said in an interview in 1996:

> UNAMIR was here, armed – they had armored personnel carriers, tanks, all sorts of weapons- and people got killed while they were watching. I said I would never allow that. I would take sides, even if I were serving the U.N.; I would take the side of protecting people. I actually remember telling him that it is a bit of disgrace for a general to be in a situation where people are being killed, defenceless and he is equipped- he has soldiers, he has arms- and he cannot protect them.[83]

Under the Arusha Accords the mandate of the neutral force, (which would be UNAMIR), differed from the mandate that the Security Council would eventually agree on in accordance with Security Council resolution 872.[84]The terms stipulated in the Arusha agreement asked for a neutral force with a mandate that would "guarantee the overall security of the country" but the mandate that UNAMIR was given was ultimately worded as: "contribute to the security of the city". [85] Meaning that UNAMIR had very little agency of their own to ensure the safety of civilians. The rules of Engagement (ROE) set forth for UNAMIR was also a point of contention for many, with the ROE being very limited due to directions by the UN. Therefore, when UNAMIR arrived in Rwanda they were already a more or less muzzled force. UNAMIR's ability to act independently was severely restricted, a point that Spottiswoode emphasises throughout the film.

The film is successful in providing viewers with a rough understanding of the RPF and how the civil war started. It shows how Rwanda is situated in relation to its African neighbours and more importantly shows how much of Rwanda was currently under RPF control. This is crucial, as the proximity of the RPF had a measureable effect with regards to the level of violence during the genocide as Strauss points out:

> The critical change that stopped the violence from taking hold was the arrival of the RPF rebel troops. Although the troops did not set foot in the communal administrative headquarters for another week, they arrived in the neighboring Rutare Commune the night of April 9, and knowledge of their presence was widespread in Giti April 10. Just knowing the RPF troops had arrived and had

[83] Philip Gourevitch and Paul Kagame, After Genocide: Interview with Paul Kagame (*Transition* 72 (1996)), pp. 162-194, 175.
[84] Fred Grünfeld and Anke Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda: The Role of bystanders* (Lieden/Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2007), 40.
[85] Ibid, 41.

> stopped the violence in Rutare was enough to calm the situation and block a dynamic of violence from taking hold in Giti.[86]

Having a white male protagonist may seem problematic in *Shooting Dogs* but it is less of an issue in this film because it is about Dallaire, who was in command of UNAMIR between July 1993 to September 1994. By focusing on Dallaire, the filmmaker is able to introduce a number of things that are not really explored in other films. The film does not begin on the eve of the genocide or in post-genocide Rwanda but rather in 1993, when UNAMIR arrived in Rwanda. By framing the film before the genocide, it gives the narrative a chance to consider issues that are hard to touch upon in the midst of the genocide itself.

A Sunday in Kigali, (*Un dimanche à Kigali*) (2006) is a French language Canadian feature film directed by Robert Favreau, which is based upon the book '*A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali'* (*Un dimanche à la piscine à Kigali*) by Canadian author and journalist Gil Courtemanche. The film was shot in Rwanda and used the Hôtel des Mille Collines as one of its main shooting locations. The protagonist of the film is a white Canadian journalist and documentary film maker called Bernard, portrayed by Luc Picard.

During his time in Rwanda, he falls in love with a Rwandan waitress working at the Hôtel des Mille Collines called Gentille, (Fatou N'Diaye). Gentille is Hutu but fits into the stereotypical image of a Tutsi woman; she therefore finds herself a target of discrimination. Bernard and Gentille get married but eventually get separated at the start of the genocide. Most of the story is told retrospectively with Bernard looking for Gentille months after the genocide has ended. The film focuses on the way in which outsiders attempt to understand the genocide, and shows that no matter how good their intentions, without being Rwandan, they can only view events through an opaque lens.

The film begins with a short textual introduction:

> On April 6, 1994, The Rwandan president Juvénal Habyarimana's plane, is shot down by two missiles. The President's guard and its militias take action. This is the beginning of the genocide. Three months later, the Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF) victory ends the killing. Most of the 800,000 victims were ethnic Tutsis.[87]

[86] Straus, *The Order of Genocide,* 87.
[87] Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda,* 207.

A Sunday in Kigali begins in a very worrying way. It attempts to use the shooting down of President Habyarimana's plane as the sole catalyst of the genocide, thereby ignoring all the other important factors. In doing so, the film creates a very neat and simplistic explanation for the genocide. It essentially erases all of the complexity and nuance of the Rwandan genocide. The film furthermore uses a binary system to make it seem as if the genocide could be attributed to two forces, namely, the presidential guard and militias on the one hand and the RPF on the other. This has the effect of obscuring the involvement of other parties, particularly that of France, a country referred to throughout the film. The oversimplification is to help the film come across as coherent with regard to the narrative. The four line textual introduction attempts to make it seem as if the cause of the genocide is very clear cut. This small historical summary is fundamentally ahistorical, as Dauge-Roth explains:

> *A Sunday in Kigali's* historical summary is, in this sense, a perfect example of a narrative whose pertinence rests on its internal coherence- which provides a clear and reductive causality coupled with a dualistic view of the de-historicized power relations- rather than on its correspondence to the social reality it purports to explain.[88]

The film begins six months prior to Bernard going back to Rwanda after the Genocide. Bernard is having breakfast at his hotel when a waitress catches his eye, the waitress is Gentille. The next scene has Bernard filming some generic building in a rural area. He then sees the *Impuzamugambi*, the youth wing linked to the extremist party, *Coalition pour la Défense de la République* (CDR), training. He asks Modeste, his cameraman to film them. The *Impuzamugambi* begin chanting, "The Party is the CDR, The Tutsis are the real enemy, and everyone knows it, you bastard!" In the midst of filming this training, a Rwandan man in a suit approaches them and threatens to have Bernard's press pass and papers confiscated if he continues recording.[89]

The film introduces viewers to the training of the militias, but also more importantly, it points to how this training was overseen by the government. It does this by showing that the man who asks them to stop filming has the power to retract Bernard's press pass and other documentation. Another feature that the film draws attention to is the developmental aid machine that was such a big part of Rwandan life. The film does this by having Valcourt be in the process of making a documentary on the AIDS epidemic in Rwanda. Developmental aid played an integral part in the

[88] Ibid, 208.
[89] Robert Favreau, *A Sunday in Kigali* (Canada: Equinoxe Productions, 2006)

genocide, to some degree even funding some of it. Peter Uvin explores this theme in his seminal work, *Aiding Violence*, explaining how deeply entrenched the developmental aid machine was within Rwandan life, "By the beginning of the 1990s, Rwanda had one of Africa's highest densities of NGOs: according to my calculations, there was approximately one farmer's organization per 35 households, one cooperative per 350 households, and one developmental NGO per 3,500 households".[90]

The next scene shows Bernard at a table by the hotel pool surrounded by Rwandan friends. In the background one can see a French soldier harassing a Rwandan woman by the pool. One of the topics they discuss is how the extremists are trying to get UN forces to leave by killing some Belgian UN soldiers, "Like the US in Somalia". Another topic involves Bernard's friend, Raphael and his recent promotion, "They say you're VP because of your Tutsi sisters, who sleeps with the Banks's white director".[91]

The introduction seeks to separate Bernard from the rest of the foreigners, firstly, by surrounding him with Rwandan friends and secondly, through the inclusion of the unruly French soldier. The soldier acts as a contrast, trying to show just how different Bernard is to the other white male characters in the film. The conversation at the table focuses on two very important topics, the perception of Tutsi women and the plot by extremists to get rid of UNAMIR. Tutsi women prior to 1959 were seen as unattainable for Hutu men but once the dynamics of power shifted post-1959, Tutsi woman saw the advantages of marrying a Hutu man. This shift, however, did not change the view of Tutsi women, with many government officials choosing to have Tutsi wives and mistresses.[92] These perceptions resulted in an onslaught of propaganda against Tutsi women in the lead up to the genocide:

> In the years shortly before the genocide, the image of the alluring Tutsi woman appeared once again. In Hutu extremist literature, Tutsi women were depicted as prostitutes capable of enlisting Western support for the RPF cause through the use of their sexual charms. In one cartoon, Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, the head of the United Nations peacekeeping force in Rwanda (UN), is shown in

[90] Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (USA: Kumarian Press Inc.,1998), 48.
[91] Favreau, *A Sunday in Kigali,* 2006.
[92] Christopher C. Taylor, A gendered genocide: Tutsi women and Hutu extremists in the 1994 Rwanda genocide (*Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 22.1 (1999)), pp. 42-54, 46.

> an amorous embrace with two Tutsi women. The caption on the Cartoon reads: "General Dallaire and his army have fallen into the trap of fatal women".[93]

In October 1993, eighteen American soldiers were killed in an attempt to arrest a warlord in Somalia. The images from this mission caused an outcry in America and precipitated a withdrawal from Somalia by UN forces.[94] Therefore, this plan to kill Belgian peacekeepers to cause a withdrawal of UNAMIR was not without credence and this is exactly what more or less happened, as Grünfeld and Huijboom point out:

> As was predicted months before, on the first day following the plane crash, ten Belgian peace keepers were deliberately murdered in order to prompt the withdrawal of the peace-keepers. This was the result of a deliberate and well-organized plan to kill some peace-keepers. It was carefully designed to bring about a withdrawal of all international interference[95].

The film is based on a fictional book, which means that the film is working around an existing framework. It is not the framework of the genocide but the framework of a love story between Bernard and Gentille. The book has a tone of cynicism and weariness on the part of Bernard that the film is unable to achieve. Take for example one of the opening paragraphs of the book which introduces Valcourt, "He writes to put in time between mouthfuls of beer, or to signal that he doesn't want to be disturbed. Rather like a buzzard on a branch, in fact, Valcourt is waiting for a scrap of life to excite him and make him unfold his wings".[96] The Bernard in the film differs from the Bernard in the book. In the film he is portrayed as a more likeable and empathetic character. This change has a notable effect on how 'film Bernard' interacts with those around him.

The Day God Walked Away, (*Le jour où Dieu est parti en voyage)* (2009) is a French language Belgian feature film directed by Philippe Van Leeuw, filmed in Rwanda. The main protagonist in the film is Jacqueline, (Ruth Nirere) a Tutsi maid for a Belgian family living in Rwanda. Once the white family is evacuated, Jacqueline is forced to fend for herself by hiding in the attic of the abandoned home. She eventually ventures out, only to find her two children dead and her home repossessed. Jacqueline flees to the forest near her home and on the way meets an injured Tutsi man, (Afazali Dewaele), together they try to survive the genocide. The film is almost without dialogue, with Van Leeuw rather trying to tell the story visually. It is the first film that tries to

[93] Ibid, 47.
[94] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 142.
[95] Ibid, 166.
[96] Gil Courtemanche, *A Sunday at the pool in Kigali* (UK: Canongate, 2004), 4.

portray the experience of surviving in forests and marshes during the genocide. Jacqueline is a strong female protagonist and the film shows, how even someone with such strong mental fortitude, could become overwhelmed by the events of 1994.

The film begins with a voice reading the text that appears on screen, "This story takes place during the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. The victims were mostly Tutsis, whose ethnicity sentenced them to death, along with the regime's opponents. Between 800,000 and a million perished".[97]

While the text at the beginning of the film is greatly condensed, it does provide good context in which to locate the film. The information is pertinent to the narrative of the film and therefore does not seek to give an explanation as to the cause of the genocide. It also touches on the fact that while it was mainly Tutsis who were targeted, opponents of the regime in general were also killed. The text fits very well within the framework of the film which focuses on the experience of a Tutsi woman as she struggles to survive and stay sane during the genocide.

The next scene shows Jacqueline lying down by a river and smiling. She is playing with her two children; she laughs and hugs them both. However, the next shot is a close up of Jacqueline with tears in her eyes, holding her face and looking distraught.[98]

The film's focus on Jacqueline's psychological state is important. At the beginning of the film, Jacqueline is portrayed as a contented person, without a care in the world. However, once the genocide begins, one sees a very different Jacqueline, a woman who does not have the capacity to smile again. At the very onset of the film, one glimpses the destructive nature of genocide, showing, in particular, how genocide does not only cause physical damage. The next scene shows the wife of the expatriate family comforting Jacqueline telling her that they have to leave but they will be back. Before the family leaves they help Jacqueline hide in the attic.[99]

The film represents the evacuation of the expatriates on a very personal level. While scenes of the evacuation are present in many of the other films, *The Day God Walked Away* is the only film to begin with the evacuation. French forces began their evacuation on the 9th of April with Belgian forces arriving on the 10th to begin their evacuation. During the period of the evacuation that

[97] Philippe Van Leeuw, *The Day God Walked Away* (Belgium: Les Films du Mogho, 2009).
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.

stretched until the 15th, there was a force of 1,700 well trained and equipped troops in the region in addition to UNAMIR.[100] The evacuation showed Rwandans that the international community had well and truly abandoned them.

The next scene shows Jacqueline hiding in the attic, as she begins hearing the voices outside, drift up towards her. The scene then shifts to Rwandan men swarming into the home with guns and machetes, followed by unarmed women, to strip the house of any valuables. Whilst this is happening, one hears the radio broadcasting: "We know who's in league with the rebels, Sebucinganda, from the Budaho district, Laurence and her husband, the Butete councilman. And a big rebel bar owner, in Kidaho. He's called Haguma. Without exception, every young Tutsi is collaborating with the rebels in Burambi".[101] The motif of the radio in this scene is emphasised, not as a simplistic rationale for murder, but rather as a tool to assist the killers. Radio was used numerous times as an apparatus for identifying and tracking down opponents of the state as a report by British human rights organisation 'ARTICLE 19' shows, "The stations aided militias and security forces in their search to identify and locate individuals targeted for elimination".[102]

What this beginning shows viewers above all else is, apathy. It is the imagery of watching a white, generic and relatable family, abandon a defenceless woman. The reason why the West is so moved by the Holocaust is due to its relatability. As Peter Novick writes: "We can't know that one of the reasons Americans have been so moved by the fate of the Jews of Europe is because they were perceived to be 'like us.' But it seems probable".[103] The inability of the West to relate to African suffering has meant that the imagery of this suffering skews toward gratuity, as Sontag writes, "The more remote or exotic the place, the more likely we are to have full frontal views of the dead and dying".[104]

To remedy these viewpoints, Van Leeuw shines the spotlight on the white family. Essentially saying, that if you as a viewer cannot feel empathy towards Jacqueline, then look at this fleeing white family and at least feel guilt. Van Leeuw is clear in his condemnation of not only the perpetrators of the genocide but of those that stood idly by and did nothing.

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[100] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 177.
[101] Van Leeuw, *The Day God Walked Away,* 2009.
[102] Linda Kirschke, Broadcasting genocide: censorship, propaganda & state-sponsored violence in Rwanda 1990-1994 (*Article 19*, *Vol. 2210* (1996)), 71.
[103] Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1999), 236.
[104] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), 63.

Munyurangabo (2007) is Kinyarwandan language film directed by Lee Isaac Chung, filmed on location in Rwanda. It is set a number of years after the genocide. The film was made by Chung after he followed his art therapist wife, Valerie Chu, to Rwanda. The film was a result of the filmmaking class that Chung taught in 2006. The two main actors are non-professionals that Chung got to know through this filmmaking class.[105] The film follows two young boys called, Ngabo, (Rutagengwa Joseph) and Sangwa, (Ndorunkundiye Eric).

They are on a journey to kill the man who is responsible for the murder of Ngabo's family during the genocide. On the journey to kill this man they first stop off at Sangwa's family home, where he has not visited for a number of years. They are stuck at this house while Sangwa helps his family on the farm. Tensions are raised once the concept of 'ethnicity' is brought up within the film, Sangwa being Hutu and Ngabo being Tutsi. The film handles this post-genocide reality with delicacy, with Chung filling the film with beautiful long takes. It is the only film that shows some of the reality of the bucolic lifestyle that is so often spoken about with regard to Rwanda. It is also the only film out of all nine that takes place completely in post-genocide Rwanda. One is given very little context about the genocide. There is no textual introduction and the only indication we get that this is a film about the Rwandan genocide is given visually.

The film begins with Ngabo sitting at the edge of a market staring at a machete left unattended. A fight breaks out in the market and people gather around to watch, Ngabo uses this distraction to steal the machete. Once the camera focuses in on the machete one sees that it is covered in blood, however, once the camera pans back the blood has vanished.[106] The scene then switches to Ngabo and Sangwa walking down the street with their arms around each other.

Munyurangabo gives no indication it is a film about the genocide outside of the visual of the bloodied machete. The dynamic of 'ethnicity' is only brought up later on in the film. However, by not being so direct about 'ethnicity' and rather by uncovering it slowly, the film highlights the everyday situation in Rwanda. While the mention of 'ethnicity' has been banned in public

[105] Lim, Dennis. "Rwanda, Speaking in Its Own Voice." New York Times. https://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/23/movies/23lim.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (Date accessed 8 April 2018)
[106] Lee Isaac Chung, *Munyurangabo* (Almond Tree Films, 2007).

discourse by the current government, this has not stopped it from being a part of everyday life.[107] A life, in which victims and perpetrators, are forced to live in close proximity to one another.

The scene that sticks out however is not the one concerning the bloody machete but the one focused around the unremarkable. Sangwa and Ngabo are walking down the street; the camera is behind them focused on their backs. Chung films this all in one long take that is slowed down while music by Wibabara Claire is all viewers hear.[108] The two friends have their arms around each other and one can tell immediately how at ease they are with one another. Chung introduces us to a beautiful friendship between two boys, one Hutu and the other Tutsi. Jane Bryce draws attention to how the friendship between the two boys is central to the film, "The film establishes as its most important element the brotherly relationship between two street boys who, for whatever reason, have been surviving together in Kigali and are now accompanying each other on a mission."[109]

When 'ethnicity' is ultimately introduced into the film, it is this relationship that is threatened. Post-genocide Rwandan life is complex, the effects of the genocide continues to disturb multiple levels of everyday social life. What Chung has done is focus on something very personal, a friendship, to highlight how damaging the effects of genocide can be. Andre Sibomana explains just how difficult it is to move on:

> We must remember that it takes two to achieve reconciliation, and many people on the other side are not playing by the rules either. I am not only referring to Hutu extremists in exile who are proud of their crimes. I am thinking of those inside the country who have not always succeeded in shaking off the terrible propaganda which led them to murder.[110]

Kinyarwanda (2011) is an English/Kinyarwandan language film composed of different interweaving stories, directed by Alrick Brown. It focuses on a small group of characters:, Jeanne and Patrique (Hadidja Zaninka and Marc Gwamaka), a young couple caught in the middle of the

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[107] Lars Waldorf, Instrumentalizing Genocide: The RPF's Campaign against "Genocide Ideology", in Scott Strauss and Lars Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 48-50.

[108] Chung, *Munyurangabo,* 2007.

[109] Jane Bryce, "My Story is Not a Nice Story" Sometimes in April (2005) and the Rwandan Genocide in Toni Pressley-Sanon and Sophie Saint-Just (eds.), *Raoul Peck: Power, Politics, and the Cinema of Imagination* (London:Lexington Books, 2015), 68.

[110] Andre Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guilbert and Herve Deguine* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 139.

genocide; Lt. Rose (Cassandra Freeman), a soldier in the RPF; Emmanuel (Edouard Bamporiki), a former *Interahamwe* and lastly, two religious leaders, a Catholic priest (Mazimpaka Kennedy) and the Mufti of Rwanda, (Mutsari Jean), who both try to save those in need during the genocide.[111]

The film brings attention to a number of issues such as the response of the Muslim community in Rwanda to the genocide and the re-education camps that took place after the genocide. One of the main faults of the film lies in the apparent lack of research on the part of the filmmakers. The filmmakers have tried to create a film that can be seen as conclusive. Where there is conflict, the film tries to resolve it with a neat resolution, but what the film fails to understand, is that there is no straightforward ending to genocide.

Being the most recent film out of all nine, one would think that the film would have a satisfactory introduction to context. The filmmakers would have had access to other films and materials and therefore should have been able understand how to create an engaging and informative introduction. This is unfortunately not the case.

The film begins with text explaining that Kinyarwanda is the official language of Rwanda. The film then switches to a voice-over, by the character Jeanne:

> The Rwandan Genocide lasted three months, about a hundred days, from April 3rd to July 4th 1994. It was long enough for the Seasons to change, long enough for governments to stand by and do nothing, long enough for some to become heroes and others villains, long enough for me to get bored. [112]

For a film to get something as basic as the date of the Rwandan genocide wrong is inexcusable. It would be different if the 3rd of April was something significant for one of the characters in the film. However, there is no explanation in this vein and the film ignores this huge error.

The film then switches to a fancy house party, in which both Jeanne and Patrique are in attendance. Patrique then turns on the Radio and we hear in English, "…reports that hundreds of cockroaches that were hiding out in Sainte-Famille Church-", Patrique abruptly switches the radio off. Patrique walks Jeanne home and on the way they encounter a roadblock, in which men with machetes are surrounding a group of kneeling people. Patrique seems to know the man in charge

[111] Alrick Brown, *Kinyarwanda* (USA: Visigoth pictures, 2011).
[112] Ibid.

and they exchange waves and the couple are able to avoid the roadblock. Jeanne comes home to find her family dead.[113]

What the film shows clearly, and something that a number of the other films have chosen to ignore, is 'class'. The house party calls attention to a division, which is not solely predicated on 'ethnicity' but wealth. Prunier further explains this distinction:

> This social aspect of the killings has often been overlooked. In Kigali the *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* had tended to recruit mostly among the poor. As soon as they went into action, they drew around them a cloud of even poorer people, a *lumpenproletariat* of street boys, rag-pickers, car-washers and homeless unemployed. For these people the genocide was the best thing that could ever happen to them. They had the blessings of a form of authority to take revenge on socially powerful people as long as these were on the wrong side of the political fence.[114]

The report on the radio further draws attention to this class divide. While they are having a great time at the party, those of the same 'ethnic' classification are in danger of being killed. When Patrique abruptly turns off the radio, it reflects the desire of those in the room to remain within this safe middle class space. It is only once Jeanne returns home, that she finds that this purported safety is merely an illusion.

A blank screen with an intertitle that reads 'Re-eduKation Camp, 2004' is shown. Lt. Rose is speaking to a group of men in English explaining the purpose of these camps:

> …You are the ones who have caused great suffering and pain. I talk to you about forgiveness, because you more than anyone else must understand what it means to forgive you. You must understand the pain and suffering you have caused so many. You must take full responsibility for what you have done and repent…. [115]

Lt. Rose describes just how complicated the process of forgiveness is; it is something that is impossible for many Rwandans. As survivor Esther Mujawayo very importantly articulates:

> Fundamentally, for the survivor and for the perpetrator, it is not the same forgiveness that is at play. For the perpetrator, it is a kind of salvation because it equates a certain reduction in his or her sentence: for the victim it amounts to

[113] Ibid.
[114] Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 231-232.
[115] Brown, *Kinyarwanda,* 2011.

> impossibility and sacrifice…To forgive in regard to 274 lives who have been taken away. Just the sentence makes you realize the absurdity of the equation.[116]

It is a pity that the film begins so badly since the film does focus on topics that the other films do not, such as the 'Re-edukation Camps'. The RPF government has led an aggressive campaign of reconciliation. This has led to the marginalisation of the survivors, with them being seen as a burden in post-genocide Rwanda. Reconciliation is necessary for a number of reasons but the more practical reason for this aggressive push had to do with prison population. Reconciliation was a way for the state to alleviate some of this burden. The state could not handle so many incarcerated Rwandans; at its highest, Rwanda's prison population was 130,000 in 1998.[117] Conditions in these prisons were so bad that prisoners were dying before even standing trial. As Andre Sibomana explains:

> Whether innocent or guilty, these prisoners are gradually rotting away . When I say 'rotting away' I mean it literally. At least one UNAMIR officer can testify to that. When he visited Gitarama Prison and gave a nice speech to the detainees, one of them ripped his toe off and threw it in his face. After weeks of standing upright, day and night in the mud, the prisoners feet had started decomposing.[118]

These 'Re-eduKation Camps' are a way to facilitate reconciliation and forgiveness between prisoners and survivors. But another part of these camps is also to give prisoners the 'real' history of Rwanda and the genocide. Susan Thomson was in Rwanda conducting research for a book when the RPF government ordered Thomson to undergo 'reeducation' in one of these camps because her research was "against national unity and reconciliation".[119] Thomson was made to attend a camp with newly released prisoners and her findings from the experience are enlightening:

> The graduates of these *ingando* camps that I met do not believe in the national unity of the re-imagined past or in the reconciliation of a re-engineered future. Rather, they see the camps and their ideological discourse as efforts to exercise social control over adult Hutu men. Instead of being reeducated, these graduates

[116] Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda,* 257.
[117] Carina Tertsakian, "All Rwandans Are Afraid of Being Arrested One Day", in Scott Strauss and Lars Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 212.
[118] Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda,* 137
[119] Susan Thomson, Reeducation for Reconciliation: Participant Observations on Ingando, in Scott Strauss and Lars Waldorf (eds.), *Remaking Rwanda: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 301.

> have merely learned new forms of "ritualized dissimulation" and strategic compliance.[120]

Thomson's experience illustrates how these re-education camps do not achieve true reconciliation but rather a sort of negotiated obedience. Lt. Rose's speech has a very similar tone to that which Thomson observed, the speech is littered with aphorisms and does not actually contain anything of substance, other than alienating the prisoners. Therefore when these prisoners in the film show any remorse we are left feeling somewhat unaffected, due to the fact that we are constantly seeking some sign of sincerity.

After looking at all nine films, the main theme that stands out among all of them is 'ethnicity'. Each film tries to give some reference to it, in its own way. For some it will merely be that Hutu and Tutsi are two different distinctions but for others like *Sometimes in April*, there will be some attempt to provide some history to these two terms. It is the latter that will always provide viewers with a better introduction to context because it stops these two terms from being arbitrary. By giving these distinctions some history it helps viewers to understand that these terms have a complexity to them.

Another important point that a number of the films allude to is the deliberate nature of the violence. It is important that viewers understand that the Rwandan genocide was not a singular unprompted outburst of violence but rather organized violence. By disregarding this planning, one relegates the genocide into yet another 'African conflict', something ubiquitous to the continent. Another name for this train of thought is Afropessimism: "Simply put, Afropessimism is the consistently negative view that Africa is incapable of progressing".[121] It is important that films that deal with African conflict do not simply reinforce this negative outlook of Africa.

Films introduce context very differently to written historical discourse, rather than taking a wide contextual outlook, films need to be very selective in what they choose to explain. Especially, since it needs to contribute to the coherence of the filmic narrative. No film is all encompassing and each film has its own focus. While some of them have unique points of attention, generally

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[120] Ibid, 338.

[121] Martha Evans and Ian Glenn, TIA—This is Africa: Afropessimism in Twenty-First-Century Narrative Film (*Black Camera* 2.1 (2010)), pp. 14-35, 14.

many of these themes tend to overlap, making it easier to identify which of the films excel in their chosen areas of emphasis.

CHAPTER 2

REPRESENTING PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND DEATH ON FILM

Representing the dead and physical violence on film differs greatly to written historical discourse. When the countless deaths, as a result of the Rwandan genocide, are mentioned within written historical discourse, it is usually as a number or as a statistic. An example of this can be seen in Hatzfeld where he writes, "In a tiny, landlocked African country smaller than the state of Maryland, some 800,000 people were hacked to death, one by one, by their neighbors", and in Prunier, "Thus the approximate number of deaths in the genocide could be placed at between 800,000 and 850,00, a loss of about 11% of the population".[122] In film, however, one is able to present a visual representation of the dead and the horrors that accompany it. Even more importantly, one is able to convey the human reactions to these atrocities on screen. This is the main difference between reading about genocide and 'viewing' genocide.

Whilst some of the films tackle the genocide more directly, trying to recreate the experience of the genocide itself, others try to give an explanation for the genocide or go further by showing the effects of the genocide years later.

All of the films show just how hard it is to represent genocide on film, particularly one situated in Africa. The depiction of Africa in general has always been problematic. Take for example the media coverage of the Rwandan genocide, Tendai Chari did a study of the framing of the Rwanda genocide in the New York Times, and found that, "The Rwandan conflict was simplistically and stereotypically represented as rooted in ancient and primitive tribal hatred between Hutus and Tutsis in a hopeless and dark continent which the Western audience of the *New York Times* could not easily understand".[123]

One therefore has to grapple with the challenge of representing an African genocide for an audience that practically ignored the Rwandan genocide itself. Sontag writes, "For photographs to

[122] Jean Hatzfeld and Linda Coverdale (Translator), *Machete Season* (New York: Picador, 2005), vii; Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 265.
[123] Tendai Chari, Representation or misrepresentation? The New York Times's framing of the 1994 Rwanda genocide (*African Identities* 8.4 (2010)), pp. 333-349, 347.

accuse, and possibly to alter conduct, they must shock".[124] The word 'shock' that Sontag mentions is significant; how exactly does one shock a viewer who knows that they are watching a genocide film? Sontag further argues that one becomes "familiar" with this notion of being shocked.[125] In this modern world in which information is just a click away, we have become habituated to horror, therefore it becomes harder and harder to 'shock' viewers.

Terry George touches upon an important concern for directors of genocide films, when he states, "The whole gore factor didn't interest me in the slightest, I wanted people to feel a love story and an individual story rather than a docudrama about massacre".[126] What is apparent is that George does not fully grasp the complexity of genocide. He is solely focused on the physical aspect of the genocide that he seems to disregard the concept of genocide itself. One can be shown the horrors of genocide without resorting to graphic depictions of physical violence as Stephen Cooper explains with regard to Péter Forgács's found footage Holocaust documentary *Danube Exodus*:

> Genocide can be addressed on film effectively, even sublimely, without resorting to graphic images of violence…Eschewing stock images of cattle cars, electrified fences, and smoking chimneys, much less any charnel-house shock-value photos, Forgács film nonetheless succeeds in bringing the off-screen tragedy of the Holocaust powerfully to bear, and never more for me than during a brief scene showing the boat's passengers dancing on the afterdeck, the simple human joy in their faces emphasizing the undepicted horrors these people were fleeing *and about which I now knew more than they did as they danced.* [127]

Representing genocide should not solely be focused on what ones sees, but rather what one doesn't see. It is not the acts of violence that should be seen as representational of genocide but rather the reasoning behind these acts. Giving viewers an understanding that these acts of physical violence are a *result* of genocide can be seen as a more accurate portrayal of genocide on screen. This chapter will be looking at scenes within the films that can be regarded as the most graphic depictions of physical violence and death.

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[124] Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* 72.
[125] Ibid, 73.
[126] Terry George, *Hotel Rwanda: Bringing the True story of a African Hero to Film* (New York: New Market Press, 2005),52.
[127] Stephen Cooper, Through the Open Society Archives to The Portraitist: Film's Impulse towards Death and Witness, in Kristi M. Wilson and Tomas F. Crowder-Taraborrelli (eds.), *Film and Genocide* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 192-193.

The reason for doing this is to ascertain whether or not these scenes of physical violence are there without context, to put it simply, 'Are these just gratuitous scene of violence?' It is not the act of violence itself that is important but the context behind it. Especially with regards to how well the director can make the link between genocide as the cause of the violence. Before one goes further, it is important that one acknowledges that all the directors, with the exception of Peck, are 'outsiders'. They are directors who are foreign to the region in which they are trying to represent, and therefore their area of focus is very different from that of African film-makers as Nyasha Mboti explains:

> The concern in African film, I argue, has – in fact – never been with adapting physical violence to the screen. This may explain why there tends to be only a few well-known so-called action movies and thrillers from Africa. Rather, the concern is with the hidden, hegemonic, sinister system form of violence one may call systemic violence. Systemic violence is not only largely invisible, but is the kind of violence which enables all other violences. Hence it has seemed more important for African film-makers to show this kind of violence rather than the lesser, undeveloped –vulgar- physical forms. Where physical violence occurs, it is merely *symptomatic* of the preoccupation with systemic violence.[128]

African film-makers are not primarily focused on this physical violence but rather on the larger structural forces that makes these outbursts of violence possible. That is not to say that there is no significance to these outbursts of physical violence, but it is not the main area of focus for African-filmmakers.

There is one more thing that needs to be touched upon before we begin, and that is the viewpoint of the survivors. What do the survivors of the Rwandan genocide think of this endeavour to recreate their worst experiences in life?

Shoah, directed by Claude Lanzmann is a documentary that uses no dramatic re-enactments or archival footage. It is a documentary based almost entirely around the testimony of survivors. While it has been almost universally praised, the main criticism that has been directed at Lanzmann is his treatment of his subjects (survivors) and how it can lead to 'retraumatization'. This is displayed most blatantly in the segment with Abraham Bomba who was part of the *Sonderkommando* at Treblinka. In reliving his memories, Bomba is brought to tears and yet Lanzmann pushes him, telling him, "Go on, Abe. You must go on. You have to", Bomba is

[128] Nyasha Mboti, Violence in postcolonial African film (*Journal of Literary Studies* 30.2 (2014)), pp. 38-48, 42.

shaken and replies softly, "It's too horrible…" Once more Lanzmann pushes him, "We have to do it. You know it".[129]

Reliving painful memories can be highly traumatic for those who have lived through it. Even without the images, just vocalising the memories can be devastating, As Sylvie Umubyeyi, a Rwandan genocide survivor elucidates, "Ten years ago, if I tried talking about what I lived through during the genocide, I became too shaky, I couldn't go on. Whenever I ventured back into my story, emotions would boil up, my confidence would drain away, and panic would overpower me; I'd have to get out. It was too soon".[130]

Many survivors bear not only the physical scars of the genocide but the psychological ones as well. Eight of the nine films were shot in Rwanda, with many survivors serving as crew, extras and even more being positioned as onlookers to the shooting of the films. They saw first-hand how these filmmakers were arming Rwandans with machetes and asking them to re-enact these horrors. Jean Hatzfeld was there when the crew of *Sometimes in April* arrived in Rwanda to shoot the film, and he observed some of the response to it, "The hundreds of onlookers crouching on the grass remain eerily silent, stunned by an enterprise that is to them unthinkable: to make a muddy kid rehearse and play this scene of killing. And they will talk about *that* for days".[131] The view of how to remember the Rwandan genocide varies greatly depending on whom one speaks to. But the main point that almost all the survivors concur upon is that no one will ever truly know what it was like for them during those three months. Therefore any representation will never be adequate from the survivors' perspective.

This chapter will start with analysing *100 Days*. The reason for this is that Nick Hughes's film is the first feature film to be made about the Rwandan genocide and it was targeted specifically at Western audiences. Therefore what we see in Hughes's film are many scenes that are meant to shock Western viewers. The scene this chapter will be focusing on is the killing of Baptiste's family.

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[129] Torner, Carles. "The Silence of Abraham Bomba." Words without Borders.org. https://www.wordswithoutborders.org/article/the-silence-of-abraham-bomba (Date Accessed 10 April 2018)
[130] Jean Hatzfeld, *The Strategy of Antelopes: Rwanda after the Genocide* (USA: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009), 85.
[131] Ibid, 97.

The scene takes place at night. It is in this night time setting, that a mob emerges out of the darkness carrying various weapons and chanting against the noise of the rural night. The scene then switches to Baptiste and his family packing, hoping to escape to a safe place.[132] Another aspect of the scene is the colour; the scene gains an almost blue hue to it when the camera switches focus to Baptiste and his family. This use of light is highlighted by Urther Rwafa and Maurice Taonezvi Vambe:

> Film-makers choose the kind of lighting, colours and sounds that best affect the audience. For example, film-makers may use white light and blue colours accompanied by low pitched sounds in an attempt to show how these signifiers can be interpreted to legitimize the power of the dominant group.[133]

It illustrates how important it is to pay attention to, not only the content, but also the form of the film. The noise from the mob grows louder as they move closer to the camera. The baby begins to cry and the camera shows a close up of its face. Suddenly, the mob appears right against the doors of the room, Baptiste and his family flee, followed by the noise of a woman screaming. We see and hear the breaking of the glass on the doors, as a result of the assailants trying to gain access to the house.[134]

The sequence leading up to the violence more resembles a horror film than a historical movie, especially with the use of light, colour and sound. By framing the film in such a way, Hughes gives this violence an almost supernatural quality to it. By giving it this tone, Hughes stresses the almost unmanageable task of giving authenticity to physical violence, emphasising the impossibility of recreating the experience of the genocide. No matter how well film-makers recreate these scenes they will all fall short in comparison to the reality. Therefore this tone of the otherworldliness acknowledges this shortcoming, without trying to give itself power over the authenticity of the representation.

Baptiste picks up a machete and wields it against one of his attackers. The action of Baptiste in defending himself, directly contradicts the portrayal of the Tutsi solely as victims. This is important because it demonstrates that those targeted during the genocide, particularly the Tutsi, were not all passive victims. In the majority of genocide films, the targeted group is almost

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[132] Hughes, *100 Days,* 2001.
[133] Maurice Taonezvi Vambe and Urther Rwafa, Exploring the Communicative Function of Light, Sound and Colour in Hotel Rwanda (*Journal of African Cinemas* 3.1 (2011)), pp. 43-50, 43-44.
[134] Hughes, *100 Days,* 2001.

always portrayed as helpless victims. Aaron Kerner mentions this with regard to the Holocaust: "One of the major thematic tropes of a Holocaust film is the representation of victims and perpetrators…. Holocaust victims, and especially Jewish victims, have traditionally been feminized"[135] The targeted group is not only portrayed as passive but vulnerable as well. It was in Kibuye, where the film is set that the largest Tutsi resistance to the genocide took place as Philip Verwimp in his study of the killings in Kibuye highlights:

> Knowing that they had to rely solely on themselves, a large number of them-estimated in this paper at almost one quarter of all Tutsi killed in the prefecture-mounted a strong resistance against their attacks in Bisesero. They succeeded in defending themselves for more than a month after the start of the genocide, and their fate differed from that of the other Tutsi in the prefecture. [136]

Baptiste is eventually overwhelmed by the attackers but is able to flee. Baptiste's family escapes into a room to the side of the camera frame. The camera, in a static shot of the hallway, shows the attackers piling into the room containing Baptiste's family. The scene itself is harrowing but the real core of the violence is not the sound of swinging machetes or the look of abject fear on Baptiste's face but the aftermath of the killing. The next scene takes place the following day, when Baptiste's friend goes to the house and encounters the result of the slaughter.

Baptiste's friend opens the door and enters the room; we see blood stains on the wall as if bloody hands have slid down it. The camera than pans to a shot of Baptiste's parents, lying face down drenched in blood. On the light blue floor, the deep red pools of blood stand out starkly, as do the footprints of the murderers. The camera then focuses on a bloody blanket on the floor. When Baptiste's friend pulls the blanket back, viewers are assaulted by the sight of a small arm and the back of a baby's head. The camera then pulls back to where it is shooting from the doorway of the room, giving viewers a complete look of the butchery.[137] What stops the scene from being viewed as merely a gratuitous display of dead African bodies is context. Heike Härting writes about how the African corpse has become a spectacle for the West: "Read as sublime spectacle of death, the African body, like an Aristotelian tragedy, instills pity and fear and functions as an exhibited

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[135] Aaron Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust: New Perspectives on Dramas, Documentaries, and Experimental Films* (New York: Continuum Books, 2011), 4.
[136] Philip Verwimp, Death and Survival During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda (*Population Studies* 58.2 (2004)), pp. 233-245, 234.
[137] Hughes, *100 Days,* 2001.

commodity to create a consensus of affect that helps reproduce Africa as an object of humanitarian aid".[138]

By giving viewers of the film a good introduction to context at the beginning of the film, Hughes makes sure that the violence that follows is not senseless or without reason. When viewers see the body of a dead baby, there is significance to it. It is as if Hughes is saying that no one is safe from genocide.

*Hotel Rwanda'*s approach to representing violence is misguided. As was mentioned earlier, George was very reluctant to include gory depictions of violence. There are two main reasons for this reticence that can be observed, Firstly, it is a personal and creative choice by George as he says, "there was no way I was going to shoot a bloodfest film with people being hacked to death with machetes…I set out to create a political entertainment story rather than a pornographic depiction of the terror and violence".[139] Then secondly is the more practical, commercial reason; in limiting violence, George is able to get a lower age restriction and therefore reach a wider audience.

The main problem with *Hotel Rwanda*'s depiction of violence is its lack of context as Mohamed Adhikari explains:

> *Hotel Rwanda* makes little more than a cursory attempt to explain why the genocide happened or to sketch the political and historical context in which it unfolded. The film instead focuses on the intense drama around Rusesabagina's heroic attempts to save his charges. The choice of strong dramatic centre clearly did not preclude Terry George from providing sufficient background to make the slaughter credible. This disembodiment of Rusesabagina's story from the complexity of its context is the central weakness of *Hotel Rwanda*[140].

There is only one scene in the film in which viewers see an attempt by George to represent the physical violence of the genocide. Viewers glimpse this footage on a small television screen in a hotel room, secretly shot by journalists within the film. The material is eerily similar to the

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[138] Heike Härting, Global Humanitarianism, Race, and the Spectacle of the African Corpse in Current Western Representations of the Rwandan Genocide (*Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 28.1 (2008)), pp. 61-77, 66.

[139] Mohamed Adhikari, Hotel Rwanda: Too Much Heroism, Too Little History- or Horror?, In V.Bickford-Smith and R. Mendelsohn (eds.), *Black and White in Colour: African History on Screen* (Cape Town: Doube Story Books, 2007), 291.

[140] Ibid, 280.

footage that was shot by Nick Hughes "in a building of the French School in central Kigali".[141] We see bodies strewn all over the road, while men with machetes wave their weapons around. The footage shows people cowering from the men with machetes. Suddenly, two of the men begin attacking the victims, until the targets of their violence stop moving

The second scene focuses more on the result of the physical violence of the genocide, namely, the dead. Rusesabagina and Gregoire, a hotel worker are driving down a road that Rutaganda recommends, having just come from his place to procure food supplies. The foggy night makes it hard for the viewers and characters to see the road. What one can discern is the car and how it shakes and squeals after it moves over the 'uneven' road. Rusesabagina becomes worried about the way the car is shaking due to their proximity to the river. He suggests they stop to investigate the cause. As soon as Rusesabagina steps out of the car he trips and falls over a pile of bodies. We see a close up of a girl with her mouth frozen open, her head covered with her hands, and the side of her face bloodied. As we see her face, we hear the sound effect of a swinging machete. Rusesabagina crawls away from the body of the girl and stares around himself in horror. The camera then focuses on a shot of Rusesabagina staring down the road littered with corpses.[142]

Hotel Rwanda provides viewers with very little real context to the genocide itself. All one is told is that there is some sort of conflict which is grounded in 'ethnicity'. The Rwandan genocide has effectively been depoliticized. By focusing almost entirely on Rusesabagina and a stereotypical view of 'ethnicity', the scenes of the violence and the dead that follow reflect a stereotypical outlook on African conflict, as Härting indicates, "it relies on the appropriation of a smooth and perfectly displayed image of African suffering and constructs a "wider essentialism of Africa" that dramatizes the African corpse as a sublime spectacle of empathy".[143]

George does not explore any of the mechanics behind the genocide and therefore chooses to turn the genocide into just another African conflict in some generic 'banana republic'. The main problem with George's approach is his focus on Rusesabagina. The bulk of the movie tries to develop Rusesabagina as a character rather than exploring the dynamics of the genocide. To do this, George creates fairly two dimensional supporting characters. An example is Tatiana, she

[141] Hughes, Exhibit 467, 232.
[142] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004.
[143] Härting, Global humanitarianism, race, and the spectacle of the African corpse in current Western representations of the Rwandan genocide, 66.

seems to only be there to show how good of a husband Rusesabagina is, and the same can be said of his children. The inclusion of these superfluous characters, centralize Rusesabagina as the narrative's focus which shifts the gaze of viewers away from the genocide itself. Therefore, when viewers encounter these two scenes, their immediate thought is not the genocide but Rusesabagina's reaction to it.

George fails to create a balance within the film between Rusesabagina and the genocide. Therefore when one sees these acts of violence they almost seem as if they are positioned in a sphere separate to the Rwandan genocide.

Sometimes in April does a good job of providing viewers with a structure in which to situate the physical violence that viewers encounter. Peck did a lot of research before shooting the film, with Alison Des Forges serving as his historical consultant for the movie.[144] Peck does not use violence for shock value but rather as a form of evidence to back up a piece of information that has been provided earlier. Peck also does not stick to one portrayal of violence; it is not all machetes and corpses. Each scene of violence gives viewers some sense of the complex nature of the genocide.

The first scene concerns Augustin and his friend Xavier, both Hutu army officers. They are in a car hoping to escape to the Hôtel des Mille Collines where they have heard it is safe. At this point in the film, Xavier has been labelled as a traitor on the radio, effectively marking him for death. On their way to the hotel they see dump trucks piled with bodies and stained heavily with blood. They are shortly thereafter stopped at a roadblock. Augustin is given little trouble; however Xavier, having been named on the radio, is singled out from the group at the roadblock. Augustin tries to intervene to help his friend but he is unsuccessful. He is then given a machete and is instructed to get rid of the 'traitor'.[145] It is here that we see some skillful camerawork by Peck that gives the viewers some indication of just how devastating the genocide was. The reasoning for participation in the genocide was heterogeneous; there was no single motive, as Strauss points out:

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[144] Alyssa Goldstein Sepinwall, History is too Important to Leave to Hollywood: Colonialism, Genocide, and memory in the Films of Raoul Peck, in Toni Pressley-Sanon and Sophie Saint-Just (eds.), *Raoul Peck: Power, Politics, and the Cinema of Imagination* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), pp. 13-36, 19.
[145] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.

> The overwhelming majority of perpetrators in rural areas were ordinary men. They were fathers, husbands and farmers who had average levels of education and who had no prior history of violence…Their reasons for committing genocide are also, in the aggregate quite banal. Many men chose to join groups of attackers because they feared punishment from other Hutus if they refused to take part in the violence.[146]

What this stresses, is the ease with which men who have not been previously disposed to commit acts of violence, are able to kill others once their own lives are under threat.

Augustin is holding the Machete tightly in his hand and Xavier is in front of him on his knees. The camera focuses on Augustin as he advances towards Xavier, Xavier looks at the advancing Augustin and screams, "Don't, No, Don-!" Augustin lifts up his arm but before he can do anything, Xavier is shot from behind. Augustin immediately drops the machete in shock.[147] The camera never once shows the gunman behind Xavier, so all the viewers see is Augustin as he advances on Xavier. For a brief moment Augustin is presented to viewers as a killer. If the gunman had not shot Xavier, Augustin would have been nothing more than another perpetrator. Peck does an exemplary job of highlighting this ambiguity of roles in the genocide. Displaying how the notion of victim and perpetrator had less to do with the type of person one was and more to do with one's circumstances.

Many would consider the following scene to be the 'goriest' in the film. It takes place at Augustin's daughter's school, as génocidaires, consisting of men with machetes and men in military uniforms, storm the school grounds. Martine, a teacher at the school gathers a group of schoolgirls into a room hoping to keep them safe. The sounds of gunfire can be heard outside of the room. Martine explains to the girls that the men about to come into the room will separate them by 'ethnicity'. The girls tell the teacher that they refuse to be separated. Men in military uniforms barge into the room and direct the girls to separate, "Hutus here, Tutsis there". They refuse to move. The military men open fire into the room, shooting the schoolgirls. The camera pans around the room and we see the girls piled on top of one another, men with machetes and axes then come into the room to check for any survivors and finish the job.[148]

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[146] Straus, *The Order of Genocide*, 96.
[147] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[148] Ibid.

The scene touches on two important topics. One is the co-operation between military and civilian militias and the second is highlighting the fact that that there were a number of Hutu who decided to stand with their Tutsi compatriots, even if it meant death.

Des Forges highlights the role of the military with regard to the genocide:

> Although usually few in number at sites of massive killing, their tactical knowledge and their use of the weapons of war, including grenades, machine guns, and even mortars, contributed significantly to the death tolls in these massacres. It was only after the military had launched attacks with devastating effect on masses of unarmed Tutsi that civilian assailants, armed with such weapons as machetes, hammers and clubs, finished the slaughter.[149]

The role of the military during the genocide is in many ways astounding, especially when one considers the fact that there was a 'conventional' war with RPF going on at the same time. The way in which the soldier directs the schoolgirls to separate is not a novel experience; it was common practise throughout the genocide. This is why the identification documents, listing their owner's 'ethnicity' was tantamount to a death sentence for many. In Gisenyi, a similar incident to the scene above occurred:

> His band of a hundred and fifty militants was composed largely of ex-FAR and *interahamwe*. During their attack on the school in Gisenyi, as in the earlier attack on the school in Kibuye, the students, teenage girls who had been roused from their sleep, were ordered to separate themselves – Hutus from Tutsis. But the students had refused. At both schools, the girls said they were simply Rwandans, so they were beaten and shot indiscriminately.[150]

Peck gives viewers an acceptable framework to allow these scenes to be viewed as a direct result of the genocide. He also gives viewers many other snippets of information throughout the film leading up to these scenes of violence. These pieces of information are directly linked to the viewpoint of the American administration at that time.

A particularly important scene is the one between Prudence Bushnell and Colonel Théoneste Bagosora. Bushnell is very clear in stating that the US government knows that the deaths that are occurring are not just a result of a fight between the Rwandan army and the RPF. Bushnell further indicates that Bagosora should stop the killing. By directing this at Bagosora, Peck delineates him as the main architect behind the genocide. When Bushnell threatens consequences in regard to Bagosora's inaction, he replies, "Really, you will send the marines, we have no oil here, we have

[149] Des Forges, Leave None to tell the Story, 12.
[150] Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You, 353*.

no dimaonds, we have nothing you need in Rwanda, why would you come?"[151] Peck makes sure that viewers realise that Bagosora, and by association the genocidal government he represents, is very aware of the priorities of the international community. Since Rwanda has no value, no one cares and no one will intervene. This knowledge makes the violence even more devastating since viewers realise that there will be no international intervention to stop it.

The short scene above is one of many that Peck intersperses throughout the film to give viewers a better understanding of some of the mechanisms and conditions of the Rwandan genocide. By building this framework, Peck makes certain that the scenes of violence are not just gratuitous displays of bloodlust but that there is a certain structure to it. Having this structure in place ensures that viewers know that they are watching a film about the Rwandan genocide and not some 'generic African conflict'.

Shooting Dogs is very problematic in how it chooses to frame physical violence. The problem once again stems from the choice of having two fictional white protagonists as the focal point of a Rwandan genocide film: one of the final scenes in the film even has Father Christopher being shot and killed after he saves a number of Rwandan children. All the killing in the film is in many ways senseless, no motivation for the killings has been provided outside of the notion of 'ethnicity'. This is highly problematic as it makes not only the perpetrators faceless but the victims as well. It is shocking that the film puts more emphasis on the death of an imaginary white priest, than that of the Rwandans who have actually died.

Take for example the first real scene of physical violence that viewers are shown. Joe, Rachel and her cameraman are stopped at a road block that is strewn with corpses. They are made to kneel before the militia, as flies circle them, attracted by the corpses. While they are kneeling there a bloodied Rwandan man kneeling alongside the road is dragged away into the bushes. Joe stares as they drag him away. Rachel tells Joe to look away but he continues to stare and shake. They hit the man again and again with machetes until he stops moving.[152] Joe's stare as this nameless and faceless African man is killed is emblematic of a trend of displaying exotic suffering with relative indifference. As Sontag writes: "Generally, the grievously injured bodies shown in published

[151] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[152] Caton-Jones, *Shooting Dogs,* 2005.

photographs are from Asia or Africa. This journalistic custom inherits the centuries old practice of exhibiting exotic – that is, colonized – human beings…"[153]

The Rwandan man's face is only briefly shown before he is shoved down onto the ground and hacked to death. The camera's gaze is more focused on the reaction of Joe than the suffering of the murdered man. The above scene is indicative of a larger problem; there are no scenes of physical violence in which Father Christopher or Joe are not involved in some way as witnesses or victims. This need to provide audiences with a surrogate they can identify with is altogether misguided. In trying to give Western viewers an identifiable focal point, the film effectively shifts attention away from Rwandans whom the film is meant to be about.

The reason why this is so problematic is because the film has tried to identify itself as an authentic representation of the genocide. It even begins with a disclaimer attesting to this authenticity. It then goes even further by listing Rwandan members of the crew who are genocide survivors. These two parts of the film try to point to an authentic representation of the genocide that is at odds with the content of the film. By choosing to have fictional white men as 'heroes', the film effectively silences all of the many real Rwandan heroes of the genocide. The problem is not so much with the fictitious white protagonists themselves but rather with the lack of representation of Rwandan voices. When one does see these scenes of violence, they are without substance because there is no real motive for the violence. It ultimately falls back on the stereotypical portrayal of a chaotic and violent Africa, with tribal and ethnic violence.

Having fictional characters as protagonists in films representing real events is in itself not problematic, as many films in the thesis have utilised fictional characters. Toplin further writes about the importance of fictional characters:

> "Invention is fundamental in this genre. To simplify detailed and complicated information and make it understandable to audiences, cinematic historians fictionalize. Often they invent the movie's principal characters, which ensures the key figures in the film participate in many important historical events (certainly far more events than real-life figures encountered). [154]

The real problem is that by repeatedly positioning these severely misplaced white characters at the forefront, they begin to distract from the event itself.

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[153] Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* 65.

[154] Robert Brent Toplin, *Reel History: In Defense of Hollywood* (USA: University Press of Kansas, 2002), 201.

Caton-Jones was asked about his choice to use white protagonists and his response was: "The bottom line is: we still live in a racist world and the film would not have been made if it was purely about Rwandans. You just have to accept it and I think it is more important that the film is made at all".[155] To some degree, the director's viewpoint is understandable but ultimately Caton-Jones has focused on a very extreme perspective. On the one hand he has said it cannot be 'purely' about Rwandans and yet he has created a film that is almost 'purely' about two make-believe white men. In his inability to strike a balance between Rwandan and Western characters he ends up relegating Rwandans to the background.

BBC Films were one of the production companies for the movie, and this ultimately results in a very biased and positive depiction of the national broadcaster. Take for example how the film chooses to recognise the violence as genocide, by using Rachel, a white female BBC journalist. Media coverage of the Rwandan genocide has been a topic of focus for numerous scholars. The BBC in particular has received a lot of criticism for its refusal to call the Rwandan genocide; a 'genocide'.

Yet in the film, the BBC seeks to vindicate itself by positioning a character as their imaginary moral compass as if to assuage their guilt. Mark Doyle, the BBC correspondent that was responsible for reporting on the genocide at the time recalls that he only used the term genocide on the 29th April 1994; more than three weeks after the genocide had started.[156] Georgina Holmes in her study of the BBC's *Newsnight* found that: "The word genocide was only mentioned five times between 6 April 1994 and 27 July 1994, before the RPF claimed victory and declared a unilateral ceasefire. *Newsnight* presenters refer to the term just three times and only after the USA and UK recognize the RPF government at the end of July".[157]

What we see in reality is a national broadcaster that refused to use the term genocide when it was blatantly appropriate, yet the film tells viewers a different story. Rachel, the BBC journalist is interviewing the Belgian UNAMIR officer in charge at the ETO and asks, "Some people are starting to call this a genocide, would you call it that? Because you know if this is a genocide, you

[155] Piotr Cieplak, The Rwandan genocide and the bestiality of representation in 100 Days (2001) and Shooting Dogs (2005) (*Journal of African Cinemas* 2.1 (2010)), pp. 49-63, 56

[156] Mark Doyle, 'Reporting the Genocide' in Allan Thompson (ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 154.

[157] Georgina Holmes, *Women and War in Rwanda: Gender, Media and the Representation of Genocide* (London: I.B.Tauris and Co Ltd, 2014), 136-137.

are obligated to intervene".[158] It is shocking to see the hypocrisy in how the BBC chooses to represent themselves in the film. Linda Melvern even notes that during the events that took place, there were no BBC film crews in Rwanda.[159]

The physical violence and its identification as genocide within the film is entirely misguided. The violence itself is without real motive and context and uses Rwandan bodies to evoke a reaction from fictional white characters. Once the film chooses to formally identify the violence as genocide, it uses a character to serve as a surrogate for the BBC to absolve them of any blame with regard to their real life coverage of the genocide.

Shake Hands with the Devil is an interesting film with regards to how it chooses to approach representing physical violence. The main reason for this is because it is solely from the perspective of Dallaire. The violence, the injured, and the corpses that we see, are through the viewpoint of Dallaire. The reason why this is nowhere near as problematic as *Shooting Dogs* is because Dalliare is a real person, and therefore when the focus is on Dallaire it is a legitimate focal point.

Interesting enough, the first real view of physical violence one observes involves ten dead Belgian soldiers. They are piled up on top of one another, bloodied and beaten to an unrecognisable state. None of the other films display white bodies in a way that mimics the depiction of African corpses. Their clothes are torn and we see white flesh peeking out against the Belgian para-commando uniform. In the film, Dallaire begins counting the bodies; he stumbles as he gets to eight and tries again and again. Dallaire turns to one of the Rwandan army officers and says with anger in his voice, "See these men are washed and laid out properly. Treated with respect".[160] Dallaire explains this particular scene in his book and we therefore see that Spottiswoode did a good job of bringing it to life:

> At first, I saw what seemed to be sacks of potatoes to the right of the morgue door. It slowly resolved in my vision into a heap of mangled and bloodied white flesh in tattered Belgian para-commando uniforms. The men were piled on top of each other, and we couldn't tell how many were in the pile. The light was

[158] Caton-Jones, *Shooting Dogs,* 2005.
[159] Nigel Eltringham, Besieged History? An Evaluation of Shooting Dog (*Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 26.4 (2008)), pp.740-746, 741.
[160] Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands with the Devil,* 2007.

> faint and it was hard to identify any of the faces or find specific markings. We counted them twice: eleven soldiers. In the end it turned out to be ten.[161]

Almost all the acts of violence one sees can be backed up with an account from Dallaire's book. Because the film is about Dallaire's command of UNAMIR during the genocide, there are not any scenes of violence included solely for their shock value. The scenes that are most affecting are not those depicting the killings of Rwandans, but the scenes that use Rwandan corpses, without denying the value of the bodies themselves.

Such a scene involves Dallaire crossing a simple wooden bridge after having a meeting with Paul Kagame. He stops in the middle of the bridge when he notices a piece of fabric sticking out from between the planks. He begins pulling the planks of the bridge away. Eventually he stops and stares at what he has uncovered, the camera then takes an overhead shot of the scene underneath the bridge. The corpses have floated down the river and have piled up underneath the bridge, they are covered in mud and many have decayed to the point that one can see large sections of bone.[162]

These faceless bodies remind the viewers of the many Rwandans that were ignored by the International community. When Dallaire pulls those planks away he is showing viewers a scene that is hard to stomach. Spottiswoode essentially forces viewers to look at the result of Western inaction. Dallaire as a character comments on this scene in the film: "I couldn't bear it, walking on that bridge...up and down on their bodies. Till then I had been walking around with a protective screen, I put up that screen whenever I wanted, whenever I had to, the screen shattered"[163] Spottiswoode breaks this protective screen for viewers in the same way, when he shows these bodies.

The film powerfully conveys how violence not only affects the victims, but also, those who witness it. When one realises how deeply affected the witnesses of the genocide are, it reminds one how even more intense the experience is for Rwandans themselves. There is a scene in which one of the Polish UNAMIR officers removes a mortar bomb that has crashed through the UNAMIR offices but has not exploded. He nonchalantly carries the mortar bomb outside while

[161] Dallaire and Beardsley, *Shake Hands with the Devil,* 171.
[162] Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands with the Devil,* 2007
[163] Ibid.

the rest of the UNAMIR officers look on in shocked silence.[164] Dallaire comments on this scene in his book:

> As we made our way back to the office, Brent looked through a broken panel on the roof and saw an unexploded 120-millimetre mortar-bomb wedged between some pipes. He passed on the job of safely removing it to one of the Polish engineer officers who had witnessed the Gikondo Parish massacre. We found out later that he had simply picked up the unexploded bomb and carried it through the building, out of the compound and across the street where he set it down. It could have exploded at any time. Brent suspected he had suffered psychological damage and had a death wish after witnessing the Gikondo massacre. The officer was repatriated shortly afterwards, not the last psychological casualty of UNAMIR.[165]

The violence in the film is not without context which is very important. In the very beginning of the film, Spottiswoode brings in the political element of the genocide. The inclusion of the individuals such as Colonel Bagosora, Paul Kagame, Agathe Uwilingiyimana and many other political figures gives one a sense that this 'conflict' is not just about 'ethnicity'. Many of the scenes of violence are also based upon real events, such as when one is shown the corpses of the Gikondo Parish massacre. Dallaire comments on this scene and at the same time highlights one of the limitations of film with regards to representation, "The church scene in which there was the massacre is pretty close to reality. The volume was really unnerving. You didn't just walk next to numerous bodies, but piles of cadavers. Second, the smell. I don't know how you can reconstitute that in a film, the smell".[166]

This need for many directors of genocide films to give an authentic representation of events, in order to close the gap between reality and representation, is as Dallaire points out, impossible. No film or book can truly represent the violence of the Rwandan genocide but if one is able to give viewers and readers enough information behind the violence, they should at least be able to have a small sense of just how terrible a stain it has left on human history.

A Sunday in Kigali's approach to the visual representation of physical violence is almost exclusively directed against women, which is why it will be reserved for the next chapter. The reason why viewers see so little of the violence is because Bernard is not in Rwanda when it takes place. He therefore learns about the violence as an outsider by listening to the experiences of

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[164] Ibid.
[165] Dallaire and Beardsley, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, 203.
[166] Audio commentary by Romeo Dallaire in Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, 2007.

Rwandan survivors. The film chooses to show these scenes of violence not with images but with the oral retelling of them. Take for example how Bernard is told of Raphael's fate by his Rwandan friend Victor, "For Raphael, it was…it was horrible. They shut all the local Tutsis in the church. Raphael was tortured on the front step. They cut off his extremities first, then his genitals. And they…left him to bleed to death".[167]

The choice to represent violence as a memory is an interesting one, and ultimately a very effective one. Especially due to the fact that it is Victor, a Rwandan, telling Bernard what it is that has happened and not the other way around. In having the scenes of violence retold by Rwandans it creates a divide between those who have experienced the genocide and those who have not. Bernard is someone who has been portrayed up until the genocide as an individual at ease with Rwandan urban life but the aftermath of the genocide shows viewers just how much of an outsider he is. He may have Rwandan friends and a Rwandan lover but he is not Rwandan and therefore his view of the genocide is opaque.

The film's problem also resides in its lack of context. The film relies heavily on the hatred against Tutsis to serve as a motive for the violence. It tries to give viewers some more context forty minutes before the film ends, through the inclusion of a priest retelling the confession he has heard from Bagosora. But it ultimately proves to be inadequate. It seeks to simplify and explain the genocide as merely a grab for power by Bagosora, erasing all of the complexity from the genocide.

While the scene above in which viewers are told of Raphael's death demonstrates a sound way to represent violence, it is let down by the lack of weight behind the death. Raphael's death is portrayed as merely a result of his 'ethnicity'. The elements of power and politics that the film tries to convey through Bagosora's confession emerge too late in the film. It is, therefore, overshadowed by the weight that is given to 'ethnicity' as a motive throughout the rest of the film.

The Day God Walked Away utilises a diverse range of methods to represent violence. The film itself is very visually orientated with Jacqueline having almost no dialogue. The first scene of physical violence begins with a cacophony of voices. The voices are heard in the background as

[167] Favreau, *A Sunday in Kigali,* 2006.

the camera shows a close up of Jacqueline's face with tears running down her cheeks and her hands covering her ears. Van Leeuw then quickly switches to a roadblock and viewers realise that the noise is coming from the shouts of those manning the roadblock. A quick shot of the blockade shows bloodied bodies and men with machetes waving them menacingly. The juxtaposition of this shot and Jacqueline's distressed face shows viewers how frightening 'noise' by itself can be.

This focus on noise is important. For many survivors, the killings during the course of the genocide were not actually witnessed by them. They were so busy hiding or fleeing, that they did not have time to see their attackers. Noise is not only an auditory experience, it has meaning outside of just hearing. Sounds and words during the genocide could no longer be trusted. Take for example, Janvier Munyaneza who was fourteen at the time of the genocide and a survivor from the Kibungo marshes. He explains how the killers would trick those hiding to come out, "At the beginning, the Hutus tried tricks in the Papyrus. For example they'd say, "I recognized you, you can come out", and the most innocent ones would get up and be massacred where they stood".[168] It got to a point where even when they were rescued by the RPF they refused to leave the 'safety' of their hiding places in the marshes, "When the *inkotanyi* came down to the marshes, to tell us that the massacres were over, that we would live, we didn't want to believe them. Even the weakest refused to leave the papyrus".[169]

The belief that noise can be violent is well captured by Van Leeuw. Jacqueline's auditory experience is in many ways a much better way to represent the violence of the genocide than visually showing physical violence. By choosing not to show the visual recreation of physical violence, the film acknowledges the impossibility of accurately representing the genocide. Van Leeuw rather chooses to focus on the sounds of violence and lets the viewers create their own imagery.

The next scene displays just how well Van Leeuw is able to utilise this method of representation. Jacqueline is hiding in the attic as she listens to the chaos around her. But the most affecting noise

[168] Hatzfeld and Coverdale, *Life Laid Bare,* 51-52.
[169] Ibid, 53

she hears is the voice of a little girl screaming and crying. It is even more disturbing for her because she is worried about her own children.[170]

We hear the voice of the little girl, sharply followed by the loud voice of a man screaming at her, "I'm gonna kill you and toss you into the toilets, Hey you! I'm gonna smash your head". The girl continues screaming and we hear the sound of running as she screams, "I want my mamma". The same man then screams at her, "Come over here! Sit Down!". The little girl screams, "Let go of me! Let go of me!" The whole time that we hear this interaction, the camera does not move from the shot of Jacqueline, crouched in the darkened attic as she becomes more and more distressed. We still hear the little girl, as her screams become more desperate, "Let me go! Take pity on me! Bring back my mamma!" A single distinct shot is heard; the girl speaks once more before she succumbs, "Give me my mamma".[171]

Out of all scenes in this chapter, this sequence is arguably the most distressing. Van Leeuw does not try to 'represent the 'unrepresentable'', he leaves it off-screen. This scene strongly contrasts to the opinion of George who was so reticent to show gore and violence. Van Leeuw proves that there does not need to be blood and gore to be able to represent physical violence. There are multiple ways to represent violence, without resorting to the simplistic re-enactment of people repeatedly striking bodies with machetes.

Another way that Van Leeuw represents violence is through comparison. In the beginning of the film we see Jacqueline's two children playing and laughing; a picture of happiness. However, when we next see them they are in a very different state. Jacqueline has managed to escape from the attic and has walked to her home, passing bloodied bodies all along the way. When she arrives home she finds her children dead and bloodied and laid out next to one another side by side. A Hutu woman confronts Jacqueline and asks her what she is doing there and informs her that it is no longer her home. She is chased out of her village by a number of Hutu women. Jacqueline stands at the edge of the forest and watches as the same Hutu woman drags her children naked

[170] Van Leeuw, *The Day God Walked Away,* 2009.
[171] Ibid.

and lays them outside her new home. A truck soon arrives; two men get out and roughly pick up the bodies and dump them at the back of the vehicle.[172]

Van Leeuw shows the children before and during the genocide without sharing how they were killed. There is no need to know how they died; the not knowing is more effective than trying to recreate the method of their deaths. Aaron Kerner highlights the fact that so much of the violence in Holocaust films happens "off-screen"; this is something with which filmmakers continue to grapple.[173] Van Leeuw calls attention to this gap by showing the children alive and then dead without explaining how this transition occurred. The film does not shy away from violence but rather chooses to be creative in how it represents it.

Munyurangabo includes no scenes of physical violence; it rather focuses on the systemic violence that was touched upon earlier in the chapter. It is this invisible form of violence that acts as an enabler to physical violence. In 2001, the RPF effectively passed a law that criminalised the use of 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' in public discourse.[174] Even though the distinction was supposedly banned, it continues to be an important and salient division within Rwandan society. As Lars Waldorf sums up in a short anecdote: "On a recent visit to Kigali, a Rwandan acquaintance quietly told me how one of the luxury hotels was excluding Hutu from its swimming pool. Whether this is true or not, the striking thing is that Rwandans still talk about ethnicity – and more worryingly, about ethnic grievances".[175]

The film alludes to this invisible tension between Hutu and Tutsi by bringing the notion of 'ethnicity' to the forefront. When one first encounters Sangwa's family, one sees that they are facing hardships. Therefore, the cold welcome that Ngabo receives from Sangwa's family is harsh but understandable. On the surface, Ngabo represents another mouth to feed, in a family struggling to feed themselves. However, as the film goes on, it becomes clear that the tension that exists, particularly between Ngabo and Sangwa's father, is based upon much more than just food scarcity.

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[172] Ibid.
[173] Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust,* 26.
[174] Lars Waldorf, Revisiting Hotel Rwanda: Genocide Ideology, Reconciliation, and Rescuers (*Journal of Genocide Research* 11.1 (2009)), pp. 101-125, 103.
[175] Ibid.

The first mention of the genocide is introduced in a scene in which Ngabo and the whole of Sangwa's family is hoeing their piece of land. Ngabo suddenly walks off and sits down complaining he is tired. One immediately gets the feeling that he is not used to farm work. Gwiza, Sangwa's friend from childhood approaches Sangwa and asks him different questions and through these questions one gets a better picture of who Ngabo is. Ngabo is from near Kibuye and his parents were killed in the genocide, when Gwiza hears this he does not know how to react and decides to tell Ngabo a joke. It makes Ngabo smile brightly.[176]

Approximately half an hour into the film, 'ethnicity' is explicitly mentioned. The camera is on a close up of Ngabo as he lies down resting, when suddenly the voice of Sangwa's father is heard in the background, "Don't you know the Tutsi are nasty? They have put our people in submission now. Now I'm suffering because of them. They tried to put me in prison even though I'm old. And yet you walk with them? Hutus and Tutsis are enemies. Don't you know?" Ngabo opens his eyes halfway through Sangwa's father's speech and sits up, blankly starring in front of him.[177]

The next scene shows how close this tension gets to full on physical violence. Ngabo is sitting outside; his bag with the machete concealed inside is next to him. Sangwa's father appears in the frame and stands apart from Ngabo without saying anything. Ngabo surreptitiously reaches his hand inside of the bag and grasps the machete handle. Sangwa's father does not do or say anything and eventually goes inside.[178] This is as close as we come to the physical violence we associate with the genocide.

The film perfectly captures the situation in which Hutus and Tutsis live, particularly the dynamic in which survivors and perpetrators co-exist. Sangwa's father is never directly labelled as someone who participated in the genocide, but due to his demographic and his views on the Tutsi, it is strongly inferred. To live together, Hutu and Tutsi have used a strategy Susanne Buckley-Zistel calls 'pretending peace'.[179] This strategy essentially involves a form of 'conscious amnesia', which involves omitting specific sectors of memory to stop them emerging into the public sphere, to avoid open conflict. Buckley-Zistel illustrates this by looking back at some of

[176] Chung, *Munyurangabo,* 2007.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid.
[179] Susanne Buckley-Zistel, Remembering to Forget: Chosen Amnesia as a Strategy for Local Coexistence in Post-Genocide Rwanda (*Africa*: *Journal of the International African Institute* 76.02 (2006)), pp. 131-150, 145.

her interviewees, "My interviewees, in particular those engaged in reconciliations efforts, caution me not to trust my impression of peaceful coexistence; they suggest that people hide their true feelings, especially from an outsider like myself"[180]

Ngabo and Sangwa represent for viewers a new generation of Rwandans. The film is simultaneously optimistic and pessimistic. The prognosis for the future is very negative when one focuses on the interactions between Ngabo and Sangwa's father. These exchanges serve to represent the continued tension between the new and the old social order. But it is in the interactions between the two friends, Sangwa and Ngabo, that the filmmaker imparts a sense of optimism for what is to come. The two friends serve as an ideal of what could be. The film does not delve into the many different grievances that Hutu, Tutsi, survivors and other sections of Rwandan society feel under the current RPF government but what it does do very well is illustrate the tension that exists within Rwandan life.

'Hutu Moderates' is a phrase used retrospectively in post-genocide Rwanda, as if to imply that all the 'Hutu Moderates' died in the genocide and that the remaining Hutus are guilty in some way of participating in the genocide.[181] This binary of Hutu/Tutsi and Perpetrator/Victim that Eltringham mentions is very important because it shows once again just how significant 'ethnicity' still is. If this large 'invisible divide' is not properly addressed it could end up leading to further violence. *Munyurangabo* shows just how easy it is to go from a point of tension into renewed violence.

Kinyarwanda introduces viewers to physical violence and the genocide simultaneously. The scene in which we see this happen is the portion of the film that takes place in the 're-edukation camps'. The perpetrators are all dressed the same and they sit around in a circle as each one 'confesses' to their crimes. It is interesting not only due to the fact that the physical violence is vocalised but because it gives viewers a better understanding of the dynamics of how some of the violence was carried out. It also draws attention to the aggressive push by the RPF government to get rid of talk of 'ethnicity'. For example, when one of the men confesses, "I killed nine Tutsi", the RPF Officer Lt. Rose intervenes and says in English, "No, you killed nine people".[182]

[180] Ibid.
[181] Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror,* 75.
[182] Brown, *Kinyarwanda,* 2011.

The use of the circular discussion allows the film to draw attention to different topics whilst still staying within the narrative of the 're-edukation camps'. One of the perpetrators contrasts strongly to Augustin in *Sometimes in April,* he represents what Augustin could have become, "I was a soldier before the war. I trained some of the Interahamwe youth. When the war started… I was given a list of traitors. We took them from their homes, schools and churches…"[183] A number of various characters are explored through these scenes. This is important because so often perpetrators are portrayed homogenously and one forgets that they are individuals as well. The motivations for killing differed for each person and by delineating the perpetrators as individuals it gives viewers an understanding of just how complex the genocide was.

One participant at the camp explains the dynamic at many of the roadblocks:

> I was at the road block near Nyamirambo and I saw a family drive by. A Tutsi family. We knew they were Tutsi even though they did not want to show their identification cards. So the Bossman made them get out of the car and kneel down. It was easier to chop when they are on their knees. Especially if you were short like me. The Bossman made all of us chop someone. Then he took her baby…and he…He held it up by the feet. And chopped off the head.[184]

What is emphasised here is very important. It explains how the Tutsi were known to many even without their identification cards. Rwanda is densely populated, with people living in close proximity to one another. It is therefore not strange that neighbours knew each other's 'ethnicity'. As Sibomana explains: "In Rwanda, in normal times, everyone sees and knows everything immediately."[185] A number of Hutu were killed at roadblocks because they looked Tutsi or did not have an identification card. While people were known within the communes and cells they resided, once people began moving to different communes, they encountered people with whom they were not familiar and therefore identification cards became vital.

Kinyarwanda is the only film that discusses what those belonging to the Muslim faith did during the genocide. In the film, Muslims are portrayed as individuals who are completely against violence as if 'ethnicity' is not even an issue for them. It is untrue to say that no Muslim participated in the genocide. Yet, this is a narrative that even the Head Mufti of Rwanda, Sheikh Saleh Habimana has propagated, as he says in an interview in 2009:

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[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid.
[185] Sibomana, *Hope For Rwanda,* 68.

> Since Muslims suffered as much as the Tutsis did from 1925 on, and especially from 1959 on, we felt a friendship with them. We lived in the same places as them, the same towns, and realized that genocide was never productive, never the answer. So even in the lesser genocides and periods of violence before 1994, Muslims never participated or facilitated such killings. And, of course, in the 1994 genocide, we were not involved in any of the killings. In fact, many, many Muslims helped to hide and protect Tutsis during that time.[186]

While it is true is that the percentage of Muslims that took part in the genocide was lower in comparison to those who identify as Catholic or Christian in Rwanda, it is a mistake to portray them as a group without 'guilt'. This narrative of non-participation in the genocide is heavily pushed by the film and therefore viewers do not see any Muslims in the film involved in any acts of violence.

Hassan Ngezi, editor of the hate newspaper *Kangura*, currently in jail for his role in the genocide is Muslim.[187] One survivor had this to say about Muslim participation in the genocide:

> Muslims and Christians are all killers! Less blame is apportioned to Muslims for reasons I do not agree with. Muslims and Christians equally took part in the genocide but what makes the difference is the small number of Muslims compared for example to the Catholics and their position in government.[188]

While it is untrue that no Muslim participated in the Genocide, the dynamic of being Muslim during the genocide did have significance as one Rwandan Muslim points out:

> Unlike Christians, Muslims showed emotional restraint towards fellow Muslims, regardless of their ethnic identity. A Tutsi Muslim was less likely to be killed by a Hutu Muslim, it was much easier for a Hutu Muslim to kill a Tutsi who was not a Muslim. Evidence to show that this happened is not lacking. [189]

The film represents a very one dimensional ideal of the Muslim community as protectors, without showing any of the negatives. By presenting the Muslim community as 'saintly', one gives viewers a distorted view of the genocide itself. It makes it seem as if the choice to not participate in the violence of the genocide was simplistic and easily made.

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[186] Jason Klocek and Sheikh Saleh Habimana, "A Discussion with Sheikh Saleh Habimana, Head Mufti of the Islamic Community of Rwanda." Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs. https://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-sheikh-saleh-habimana-head-mufti-of-the-islamic-community-of-rwanda (Date accessed May 2 2018)

[187] Anne N. Kubai, Walking a Tightrope: Christians and Muslims in Post-Genocide Rwanda (*Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations, 18:2 (2007*)), pp. 219-235, 227.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid, 228.

The real problem with the film's representation of physical violence is once again context. There is no mention of politics within the film, outside of the presence of the RPF. The presence of the RPF as a whole makes the lack of context even more problematic.[190] It results in a portrayal of the genocide and the civil war as a single entity. While both the civil war and the genocide are closely linked, the genocide was entirely separate in its organisation, mobilisation and motivation. By failing to differentiate between the two through adequate context, Brown ultimately leaves viewers confused, making it seem as if the acts of violence viewers witness were done under the umbrella of the civil war.

This argument is one that has been made by many genocide deniers and they label this theory 'double genocide'. Daugh Roth explains this theory of 'double genocide' and how dangerous it is, "Double genocide promoted by various deniers of the genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda- deniers who try to blur the distinction between state-planned genocide against the Tutsis and the war opposing the RPF and the Habyarimana regime".[191] It is therefore very important that films make the distinction between civil war and genocide clear.

From briefly looking at all of the films, it becomes apparent that there are multiple ways to represent physical violence and death. When written historical discourse describes, lists or explains violence and death, it lacks the visual aspect that a film can provide. In the films, even when characters are just describing the violence, the whole atmosphere of the film is there to back up those words. Films possess a lifelike quality that viewers can relate to. Written historical discourse, especially those that deal with genocide tend to present violence and death in a very clinical fashion. Take for example how Adhikari describes the dead of the Rwandan genocide:

> In what many will rank as the most horrifying episode in African history, an estimated 800 000 people, mainly Tutsi, were massacred by their Hutu countrymen in little more than three months between April and mid-July 1994. Most victims were hacked to death with machetes, spiked clubs or farming implements.[192]

Humans cannot properly conceptualise this level of violence and death, especially for those in the West who are so far away from this level of conflict. Matthew J. Newcomb tried to understand the number 800,000 by comparing it to his dripping shower, "The Shower in number 28 only dripped

[190] Brown, *Kinyarwanda,* 2011.
[191] Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda*, 92.
[192] Adhikari, Hotel Rwanda, 279.

about ten drops per minute. With a little multiplication, it comes to 600 drops per hour; 14,400 drops per day; and 432,000 drops per month. It would take until halfway through day 56 to reach 800,000 drops". [193] There is a sense of helplessness and impotence that individuals feel in the face of such numbers.

Films are important because it makes these deaths 'real', death and violence effectively gain a description. There is still that sense of helplessness we feel when we see masses of nameless bodies but films have the ability to ascribe a backstory to the dead. They are able to bestow emotions, families, feelings, and numerous others things to the dead in a way that written discourse struggles with. It has the ability to make victims, perpetrators and even corpses relatable.

What the above films have shown us is that for a movie to do this well, it needs to anchor itself with enough context to ensure that these characters do not just become props. Some films do this better than others but each film at least tries to lessen that gap between statistic and individual. Film-makers try to find a balance between giving enough context and creating a filmic narrative. Peck comments on this in an interview: "Cinema has its rules. Not being didactic is one of them".[194] While there is definitely wisdom in the rule, it is one that should not be strictly applied to genocide films. What one has seen above is that, it is better to give more information in which to contextualise the film than less. Africa continues to be linked to atavistic stereotypes, it is therefore important that filmmakers discourage this linkage through informed and nuanced depictions of violence.

[193] Matthew J. Newcomb, Feeling the Vulgarity of Numbers: The Rwandan Genocide and the Classroom as a Site of Response to Suffering (*JAC* Vol. 30, No. 1/2 (2010)), pp. 175-213, 175.
[194] Oliver Barlet and Raoul Peck (Translated by Sophie Saint-Just), Lessons from the Cinema of Raoul Peck, in Toni Pressley-Sanon and Sophie Saint-Just (eds.), *Raoul Peck: Power, Politics, and the Cinema of Imagination* (London: Lexington Books, 2015), 253.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN AND GENOCIDE

The emphasis on sexual violence against women does not disregard the sexual violence that occurred against men and children during the genocide but rather reflects the focus of the films. It is also an acknowledged truth that females in general are one of the most vulnerable groups in times of conflict:

> Throughout the world, sexual violence is routinely directed against females during situations of armed conflict. This violence may take gender-specific forms, like sexual mutilation, forced pregnancy, rape or sexual slavery. Being female is a risk factor; women and girls are often targeted for sexual abuse on the basis of their gender, irrespective of their age, ethnicity or political affiliation.[195]

In a 1996 UN Report, it was estimated that at least 250,000 women were raped during the Rwandan genocide.[196] It was also estimated by the Rwandan National Population Office that between 2,000 – 5,000 children were born as a result of rape during the genocide, these children are called among others names, 'children of hate'.[197] One is once again faced with figures that as an individual one has trouble conceptualising. It should be noted that these figures are estimates and the real number is thought to be higher. In 1998, during the trial of Jean-Paul Akayesu, the former *bourgmestre* of Taba commune, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) came to the decision that the rape and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) that took place during the genocide should be categorised as crimes of genocide. This is because "there was evidence of the intent to destroy in whole or in part an ethnic group".[198]

At the time of the Akayesu trial, the above decision was considered a landmark ruling. Before the ruling, rape was considered a lesser crime as a Human Rights Watch report published in 1996,

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[195] Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives: Sexual Violence during the Rwandan Genocide and its aftermath* (New York, Human Rights Watch, 1996), 2.
[196] Ibid,7.
[197] Human Rights Watch, *Struggling to Survive: Barriers to justice for Rape Victims in Rwanda (*New York, Human Rights Watch, 2004), 4.
[198] Holmes, *Women and War in Rwanda,* 72.

two years before the Akayesu ruling states, "There is a widespread perception among the Tribunal investigators that rape is somehow a "lesser" or "incidental crime not worth investigating".[199]

As one observed in the previous chapter, representing physical violence and death is a complex endeavour. This chapter works upon the assumption that representing sexual violence is even more challenging, due to the fact that it is a form of violence directed against *women*. Sexual violence against women on screen has been a problematic theme in films for quite some time. Adam Brown and Deb Waterhouse-Watson studied Charlie Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940), and mentioned how disturbing it was when the Hitleresque character played by Chaplin attacked his secretary.[200] The attempted rape is used as a vehicle to demonise Hitler and yet the significance of the assault itself is deemed unimportant.[201]

Sexual violence against women on screen is generally utilised as a tool for a film's narrative, thus rendering the act itself insignificant. Sarah Projansky uses the 1948 film, *Johnny Belinda* to show how rape on screen is used as a vehicle to turn strong independent women into shells of their formers selves, "Belinda has become even more silent, vulnerable, and dependant on others than she was at the beginning, having (supposedly) lost her language skills, her ability to think, and even her right to talk".[202]

The attempt to represent sexual violence on screen becomes even more complex when one realises that none of the films below have been directed by women. Having a female director does not automatically result in a more gender-sensitive portrayal but the difference is one that must be discussed. The 2016 film 'Fences' is based on the play of the same name by August Wilson. Wilson was very adamant that an on-screen adaption of his play should be directed by a black filmmaker.[203] When the director of the film Denzel Washington was asked about this, his response was:

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[199] Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Live,* 55.
[200] Adam Brown and Deb Waterhouse-Watson, 'Representing rape in Holocaust film: exhibiting the eroticized body for the camera's gaze' in Karen Auerbach (ed.), *Aftermath: Genocide, Memory and History* (Clayton: Monash University Publishing, 2015), 169.
[201] Ibid, 169-170.
[202] Sarah Projansky, The Elusive/Ubiquitous Representation of Rape: A Historical Survey of Rape in US Film, 1903-1972 (*Cinema Journal* (2001)), pp. 63-90, 68.
[203] Loynd, Ray. "Wilson Seeking Black Director for Film Version of His 'Fences." Los Angeles Times. http://articles.latimes.com/1990-01-09/entertainment/ca-203_1_august-wilson (Date Accessed 5 May 2018)

> It's not colour, it's culture," Washington said. "Steven Spielberg did Schindler's List. Martin Scorsese did Goodfellas, right? Steven Spielberg could direct Goodfellas. Martin Scorsese probably could have done a good job with Schindler's List. But there are cultural differences. I know, you know, we all know what it is when a hot comb hits your head on a Sunday morning, what it smells like. That's a cultural difference, not just colour difference.[204]

Washington touches on a very important aspect of representation when he mentions 'cultural difference'. While a man *can* direct a film in which there are scenes of sexual violence against women, they will never fully understand how women interact with the world. That is not to say that because the films are directed by men they are bad representations. But one can be confident, that if they were directed by women, they would most probably be different.

Sexual violence during the Rwandan genocide was systemic. It was used strategically as a weapon to demoralise and traumatise those primarily identified as Tutsi as Donatilla Mukamana and Petra Brysiewicz explain:

> Hutu leaders ordered their troops to rape Tutsi women as part of their genocidal campaign. Women are at the centre of both family and cultural reproduction and they become strategic targets when the aim is to eradicate people. When rape is committed on a massive scale, the social fabric of family and community unravels exponentially, weakening people's capacity to resist.[205]

The use of sexual violence as a weapon throughout the genocide was sanctioned by those in power.[206] While a number of the films allude to this widespread sexual violence, only three of the films make the decision to try to represent the act itself. The inclusion of a female character in a genocide film comes with a certain connotation. For these female characters death is not their only worry. There are numerous accounts of women surviving horrific instances of sexual violence and then being forced to live with the immense trauma, as one survivor says, "Rape is a crime worse than death."[207] The propaganda that was directed at Tutsi women has been briefly mentioned in a previous chapter, but it is important that we discuss the perception of Tutsi women within Rwandan society in general, in order to better understand what it means to be framed as a Tutsi female in a Rwandan genocide film.

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[204] SiriusXM, "Denzel Washington: It's not color, it's culture." Filmed [December 2016]. Youtube Video, 03:07. Posted [December 2016] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Ayf8Iny9Eg

[205] Donatilla Mukamana and Petra Brysiewicz, The Lived Experience of Genocide Rape Survivors in Rwanda (*Journal of Nursing Scholarship* 40.4 (2008)), pp. 379-384, 379.

[206] Ibid.

[207] Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Live,* 28.

In the first chapter, we dealt with the physical attributes that each group (Hutu, Tutsi and Twa) was meant to possess. However, when it came to Tutsi Women these dubious physical attributes remained the standard of beauty even when the social hierarchy was reversed. Christopher Taylor makes a strong argument for how human beauty is not about aesthetics but politics, "The dominant standards of beauty in any given social system, such an argument would assert, are the standard of the dominant class".[208] Tutsi beauty was intimately tied to Western perceptions of beauty. This would explain why Tutsi women were seen as almost completely different to 'ordinary' Rwandan women. Rwanda is therefore unique in that the dominant standard of beauty was that of the oppressed.

This myth around 'Tutsi beauty' became something of a reality, especially when this myth began appearing aggressively in propaganda. The myth of Tutsi women using their beauty to entice Hutu men and Europeans to their 'cause' was used extensively in propaganda. In the December 1990 issue of *Kangura,* it published the now infamous 'Hutu ten commandments'. Four of these commandments were exclusively focused on *women,* and three of those four specifically targeted Tutsi women as objects of scorn:

> 1. Every Hutu should know that a Tutsi Woman, wherever she is, works for the interest of her Tutsi ethnic group. As a result, we shall consider a traitor any Hutu who: marries a Tutsi woman; befriends a Tutsi woman; employs a Tutsi woman as a secretary or a concubine.
> 2. Every Hutu should know that our Hutu Daughters are more suitable and conscientious in their role as woman, wife and mother of the family. Are they not beautiful, good secretaries and more honest?
> 7. The Rwandese Armed forces should be exclusively Hutu. The experience of the October [1990] war has taught us a lesson. No member of the military shall marry a Tutsi.[209]

What one observes is an obsession with Tutsi women that borders on psychosis. What is even more baffling is that even after the majority of the killing was done, this perception of Tutsi beauty remained intact. When the very controversial French intervention called 'Operation Turquoise' arrived in Western Rwanda in June, RTLM made this broadcast to the waiting Hutu populace, "You Hutu girls wash yourselves and put on a good dress to welcome our French allies. The Tutsi girls are all dead, so now you have your chance".[210] Once one has a small

[208] Taylor, A gendered Genocide, 46.
[209] Binaifer Nowrojee, A Lost Opportunity for Justice: Why did the ICTR not Prosecute Gender Propoganda? in Allan Thompson (ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (London: Pluto Press, 2007), 366.
[210] Taylor, A gendered Genocide, 50.

understanding of the fixation around Tutsi beauty, it is easier to comprehend how vulnerable Tutsi women were during the genocide.

In *Shake Hands with the Devil,* there is a strong allusion to the gendered nature of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana's death. The reason why this suggestion is so strong is because the film makes the link between sexual violence and genocide. This linkage is created through the scene, in which Beardsley is reporting to Dallaire, on the death of six children, "That place is well into Hutu territory. Why would Tutsi rebels go all that way just to murder and rape six kids?"[211] Through this interaction, Spottiswoode explicitly brings sexual violence into the filmic narrative.

Uwilingiyimana is a Hutu moderate but perhaps more importantly she is also a woman. Spottiswoode makes this point clear when she is introduced to Dallaire "I'm a Hutu. *Obviously, it's bad enough to be a woman*. If I were a Tutsi as well, I wouldn't be prime minister. I'm a Hutu but…since I'm a so-called moderate, the Hutu hardliners hate me."[212]'The final image of Uwilingiyimana, before her death in the film, is of her sitting on the phone with one of her children in her arms. Spottiswoode aggressively drives forth this image of her as a mother and a woman to allude to the fact that her death is intimately tied to her gender.

In the film, her death is not explicitly shown; the camera merely captures soldiers storming into her house and opening fire. One is ultimately spared the horrifying details of the reality of her death, "Another witness who passed an hour or so later found that her dressing gown had been thrown up over her upper body and that a beer bottle had been shoved into her vagina"[213] Even though one does not see this shocking imagery, due to how Uwilingiyimana is framed within the film, this reality is not outside of the film's realm of possibility.

Spottiswoode demonstrates how framing can suggest a number of things. The film also illustrates the precarious position that females occupied during the genocide. Particularly with regards to how sexual violence was not exclusively directed at Tutsi women.

This same framing is not present in *Shooting Dogs*, because Caton-Jones chooses to exclude sexual violence from the narrative. This exclusion erases a significant aspect of the Rwandan

[211] Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands with the Devil,* 2007.
[212] Ibid.
[213] Des Forges*, Leave None to tell the Story*, 150.

genocide. This chapter has already discussed the substantial role that sexual violence played with regards to the genocide; its omission is therefore, negligent on the part of the director. Caton-Jones's decision to not include sexual violence in the film, generates very one-dimensional Rwandan female characters, that are situated on the periphery.

The Rwandan genocide was a very different experience for women than it was for men, and in excluding a significant portion of that experience, the female characters in the film are labelled as unimportant. In the case of *Shooting Dogs*, this problem is even more glaring, due to the intense focus on the two fictional white male protagonists. This simultaneous elevation of white male and degradation of Rwandan female is disconcerting; especially considering the fact that the film advertises itself as an 'authentic representation' of the genocide. Caton-Jones makes the very simplistic equation of genocide equalling death, which is far from the truth, as Christopher Mullins writes:

> The events depicted clearly show that sexual violence was an organized aspect of the Hutu attempt to eliminate their Tutsi neighbors. Local leaders encouraged the use of rape to instill terror in the population, as a form of murder itself, and to urge their troops onward to violence. Many of these leaders led by example by being the first participant in gang rapes.[214]

The simplistic nature of Caton-Jones's equivalence obscures, not only sexual violence, but the complexity of the Rwandan genocide itself.

Hotel Rwanda situates itself in a precarious position with regards to its representation of both females and sexual violence. While sexual violence is mentioned in the film, the complete centralization of Rusesabagina as a character conceals the gendered experience of the genocide. Sexual violence is overtly revealed when Rusesabagina arrives at Rutaganda's compound to procure provisions. As Rusesabagina enters the compound, he stares at a large caged area in which women are being held captive. A number of the women are visibly shaking and almost all of them have crowded together to hide their nudity. The camera focuses on this horrific scene just long enough to make one uncomfortable.[215]

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[214] Christopher Mullins, ''He Would Kill Me With His Penis'': Genocidal Rape in Rwanda as a State Crime (*Critical Criminology* 17.1 (2009)), pp. 15-33, 23.
[215] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004.

As Rutaganda arrives to meet Rusesabagina, a woman is hauled roughly towards the 'cage', she is then slapped and her top is ripped straight off her back. Rutaganda steers Rusesabagina away from the scene, saying, "Tutsi prostitutes are witches."[216] The film accurately shows that women were not just being killed but being exposed to all kinds of ill-treatment, the nudity of the women is also a clear allusion to sexual violence. The problem with *Hotel Rwanda* lies with its inconsistencies. The film clearly tries to show something resembling sexual violence and yet it has no effect on the film's narrative. George creates two set pieces, one is the relative calm inside of the hotel and the other is the chaos outside of it.

The women inside the hotel, particularly Tatiana, are sheltered from any type of violence thanks to the protection of the hotel and therefore, Rusesabagina. Tatiana's only tangible fear is death because the narrative only allows that possibility for those in the hotel. Everyone in the hotel, apart from Rusesabagina, is essentially homogenous; gender ultimately has no place in the hotel. Once the women in the hotel are exposed to the possibility of being raped, the entire dynamic of the film changes. This dynamic is incongruous with the complete focus on Rusesabagina as saviour.

The possible reasoning behind these blunders has to do with the nature of the films themselves. Both films are what one could call 'mainstream feature films'. Mainstream films are generally designed to reach as wide an audience as possible; therefore, the almost complete exclusion of sexual violence from both narratives makes sense in this regard. Both films are trying to deliver very straightforward and simplistic messages. For *Hotel Rwanda,* it is delineating Rusesabagina as a Hero and for *Shooting Dogs,* it is the extreme consequence of Western Apathy. In both of these messages, sexual violence unfortunately, does not have a place.

Kinyarwanda shows how gender facilitated a specific type of violence. Emmanuel, one of the killers in the film is shown manning a roadblock. Through a quick flashback one is shown that he used to work for Jeanne's family before the genocide began. He is filmed watching her lecherously as she arrives home with her family and her Hutu boyfriend Patrique. He tells one of the killers manning the roadblock with him that he used to have a "half-cockroach" girlfriend. This leads to an argument around whether Jeanne was really his girlfriend.

[216] Ibid.

The short argument ends in this telling exchange when Emanuel says: "I think I should go pay her a visit one last time…Yes, kiss her for the last time". To which the other killer says: "You don't kiss a cockroach, you rape them." To which Emmanuel replies: "You're right."[217]

The above exchange is a clear indication of a specific type of sexual violence the genocide made possible. As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, *Kinyarwanda* emphasises the importance of class during the genocide. Class had a significant effect with regards to sexual violence. Tutsi women, and in particular *urban* Tutsi women, were seen as unattainable for the majority of the Hutu male population. However, with the onset of the genocide the very concept of class was shattered. Economic standing meant nothing in relation to 'ethnic identity'. Militia members took advantage of this change as Mukamana and Brysiewicz explain:

> To the militias, rape was a form of revenge against those women they would not have had access to in the past and thus it was also an act of revenge toward their entire community. Ingrid explained, "The men who raped me were dirty hooligans, a kind of men who under normal circumstances would not be able to propose to you [to have sex]."[218]

The exchange, involving Emmanuel, very clearly indicates how sexual violence had gained a sense of normalcy during the course of the genocide. Through the scene, Brown shows how one can be informed of a widespread problem through something as simple as an 'everyday' conversation. The ease with which the man mentions rape implies that the thought process behind it is not unique. It therefore suggests that sexual violence is not something sporadic but a quotidian practise. The film is able to succinctly inform viewers of the rampant nature of the sexual violence during the genocide.

The Day God Walked Away focuses on sexual violence through a much nuanced means. It is illustrated in a sequence of three scenes that more or less follow one another. The first scene involves Jacqueline and the man she is hiding in the forest with. They are lying in the dark of the night, next to the fire for warmth. The man slowly moves his hands across her body, before settling on her chest. Jacqueline opens her eyes and pulls herself away from his touch, with a look

[217] Brown, *Kinyarwanda,* 2011.
[218] Mukamana and Brysiewicz, *The Lived Experience of Genocide Rape Survivors in Rwanda*, 381.

of irritation. This first scene clearly tells one that she is not at all interested in a physical relationship with the man. However the second scene in the sequence changes that.[219]

Jacqueline and her male companion are being chased through forest and in desperation she jumps into a small muddy swamp to escape her pursuer. Her pursuer halts in front of her hiding place, waving his machete, and says to her: "You're pretty tricky. Knowing I won't get muddy. Too bad, you're cute. Before I cut you, we could've had fun." He watches her as she sinks deeper into the mud. He eventually holds out a branch to her and says: "Come on, grab it! Don't be afraid, I won't kill you. You earned it. Be nice to me and you can go".[220] Jacqueline's male companion eventually arrives to rescue her.

This scene directly alludes to two things; the first being the casual nature of sexual violence during the genocide, and the second, the crude and forced exchange of sex for protection. This latter point is important, because it has led to the social marginalization of many women in post-genocide Rwanda. Many returnees question what female survivors had to do to stay alive, as one female survivor comments, "It is a big problem to be known as a rape survivor in the community. They don't respect you, they isolate you, people said that we were no different from prostitutes because we accepted having sex with any man who wanted to have sex with us during the genocide."[221]

The last scene in the sequence directly relates to how the genocide disrupts normality. After their escape from their attackers, they are both visibly shaken. With tears in both their eyes, the man says: "I'll never get out of here."[222] It immediately then shifts to a scene of the two of them having sex in front of the fire, mirroring the first scene. There is an ambiguity to the scene. Jacqueline is clearly traumatised by her near death experience and therefore seeing the two of them together makes one feels somewhat uncomfortable. It is hard to accurately gauge the consent on the part of Jacqueline to the act, considering her current state of mind.

It is however also important that one does not solely view the sexual act between Jacqueline and the man as forced. To do this would be to deny the two of them a part of their humanity as Kerner

[219] Van Leuuw, *The Day God Walked Away,* 2009.
[220] Ibid.
[221] Mukamana and Brysiewicz, *The Lived Experience of Genocide Rape Survivors in Rwanda*, 382.
[222] Van Leuuw, *The Day God Walked Away,* 2009.

explains with regards to the Holocaust, "Denying sexuality is to deny the humanity of the Holocaust victim".[223]

Through this sequence of scenes, Van Leeuw displays the horror of genocide. Not only does he emphasise the sexual violence of the genocide, he also highlights the way in which genocide alters perception. When Jacqueline and her companion are having sex, we are unable to fully ascertain whether or not the act is consensual. Through this, sexual violence is condemned yet normalised.

The next three films differ from the previous three in that they attempt to visually represent rape. Each of the following films diverges somewhat in their approach to this representation. Due to the complexity involved with trying to represent this act, they should be viewed with a higher level of scrutiny. These films do not just allude to sexual violence but try to involve viewers directly in the suffering of the victims. As one will see, there are good and bad ways to approach this type of representation.

100 Days represents sexual violence against women very directly. This is epitomised by the Rwandan priest's rape of Josette. However, the first scene of sexual violence one views on screen is not Josette's, but a nameless girl who is forced into the priest's room. One is shown a shot of a small room, with the bed dominating the screen. What is also worth noting is the colour; the scene gains the same hue last seen during the killing of Baptiste's family. While the room is darkly lit, Hughes provides viewers with many shots of the pained expression on the girl's face as she struggles. One does not see the rape itself, however, Hughes gives one numerous signifiers to indicate what is about to happen. The sequence of the scene is as follows; the priest unbuckling and unzipping his pants; the girl being thrown roughly onto the bed; her struggling as she is physically held down. However, what is most jarring, is the constant creaking sound emanating from the bed.[224]

It is this constant noise that makes the viewer uncomfortable and adds to the overall atmosphere of the scene. While the scene itself is not easy to watch, the relentless and jarring sound makes it almost unbearable. It even seems as if Hughes wants to make one look away. The final shot in the

[223] Kerner, *Film and the Holocaust,* 71.
[224] Hughes, *100 Days,* 2001.

sequence lingers on this horrific scene from above, as if asking the viewer if they really want to see more. Michael Haneke discusses this notion of having viewers 'look away', "I am merely trying to provoke you to independence. Furthermore, you can walk out of the film. I have nothing against it…To that I say: the film worked, it spoiled the fun of the consumer of violence."[225] Haneke touches upon the much broader question of whether or not a film about genocide should be viewed as entertainment as well.

In the next scene, the priest takes Josette to a secluded bench and asks her, "What do you think? Can you be my wife?" She refuses and this causes the priest to become enraged, saying, "I saved your life and put myself in danger. They can only believe that your brother is not a rebel if they see that you are my wife…You think I care how beautiful you are? Go back if you want to. What have you Tutsi women got that is so damn precious?" He points to the room with the bed and walks away, letting her 'choose'. Josette follows him and enters the room. Although we do not see Josette during the scene of her rape, we are, once again, assaulted by the persistent sound of the bed. While this is happening the killing in the church begins.[226]

Hughes chooses to contrast the rape of the two women in their representations. While the first girl's scene is much more graphic and violent, we see almost none of Josette's ordeal. Hughes also focuses on this notion of Tutsi beauty and how there is still an obsession around it. The film delineates it even further by singling out Josette, whom the priest finds the more attractive out of the two Tutsi women.

By juxtaposing Josette's rape with the attack on the church, Hughes makes it clear that Josette was spared death thanks to the 'protection' of the priest. The singling out of Josette as special in comparison to the other girl is illustrated once again in a conversation between the two girls, "I'm going to die no matter what happens. Not like you and your priest. No one's allowed to touch you, so special".[227] This focus on Josette as being special is important because it draws attention to a particular situation that affected many Tutsi women during the genocide.

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[225] Asbjørn Grønstad and Henrik Gustafsson, *Ethics and Images of Pain* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 103.
[226] Hughes, *100 Days,* 2001.
[227] Ibid.

These situations were called ‘forced marriages’; the women would be locked away by their captors and regularly ‘visited’ by their ‘husbands’. They were essentially prisoners and yet at the same time, their status as ‘wife’ protected them from death. A Human Rights Watch report explains how dysfunctional these ‘marriages’ were:

> Many of the women who were held in these forced “marriages,” show enormous internal conflict when they describe the situation. On the one hand, they had no choice and in most cases despise the man whom they refer to as their “husband.” On the other hand, they also realize that without the protection of this very man (who in many cases murdered the rest of their family), they would most probably be dead today.[228]

It becomes even more horrifying when one hears of the experience of a woman forced into this situation:

> …You know…we call these men our husbands. But they were not a true love. I hated this man. Maybe later on you could even be killed by them. Before the war I had a fiancée…This happened to a lot of young girls-even school girls, around eighteen years old were kept like this. In my commune I know of three women. One of those women is still with her “husband.” People say that he didn’t kill anyone.[229]

The rape itself is not represented by Hughes. It remains as something unimaginable. In the previous chapter the accomplishment of representing physical violence relied heavily on how much context was given by the film, however, representation of sexual violence differs. It has less to do with context and more to do with how the act itself is conveyed and whether or not the rape is being employed solely as a narrative tool. What is also very important is how the film chooses to address the rape itself. Helen Yeates emphasises this in her discussion of *Shame* (1988). She explains how the film moves beyond rape as spectacle and chooses to focuses on how to redress sexual violence, “The film moves beyond the spectacle of sacrificial death of one rape victim to a nonviolent, community-based solution where women and the marginal men group together to overcome the masculinist forces of the *status quo.*”[230] Yeates expounds upon how a film is able to address sexual violence outside of the act itself.

Hughes makes the right decision by not recreating the rape. The rape of the two women is not presented as some shock spectacle but rather as a situation that is indicative of the position that

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[228] Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives,* 33-34.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Helen Yeates, A shameful spectacle (*Peace Review* 10.4 (1998)), pp. 553-557, 556.

many women found themselves in during the genocide. The film does not seek to trivialize the experience of these two women, it rather creates a representation that acknowledges its shortcomings.

In the film the priest is treated with impunity, which may leave one feeing displeased with the conclusion, however, Hughes discusses this pessimistic ending in an interview, "There is nothing good about genocide. Some filmmakers look for something that can end on a note of hope, a note of progression, a note of humanity. In the real story of the genocide, there is no hope."[231]

Rape as an act is unimaginable, but it is not inconceivable, as Mamdani aptly says with regard to the genocide itself: "We may agree that genocidal violence cannot be understood as rational; yet we need to understand it as thinkable."[232] Hughes does not try to rationalise the act of rape but rather makes it an action that was made into something thinkable due to the genocide.

Sometimes in April, takes a similar approach to *100 Days,* in making the choice not to show the act of rape itself. The main way in which *Sometimes in April* differs from *100 Days* is in its resolution. It does not seek to end the film in a conclusively happy way, such as *Hotel Rwanda*, but it does provide viewers with a way in which to address and redress the act of rape during the genocide. Even though it does not end with a message of hope, there is a hint of optimism at the end of the film. It suggests that sexual violence is no longer a 'lesser crime' and those guilty will be punished.

Augustin learns of the fate of his wife, Jeanne, from his brother Honoré, who is currently awaiting trial for his role in the genocide. Jeanne's ordeal is communicated in flashbacks, which are voiced through the memories of Honoré. Tanya Horeck calls attention to the significance of representing trauma through flashbacks, "Portraying rape via flashback demonstrates how trauma returns and imposes itself on the subject, but also self-consciously positions the cinema audience, calling attention to their role as spectators."[233] What is noteworthy about the flashbacks is that they are not Jeanne's but Honoré's. Therefore, there is a certain disconnect between the memories. One does not see the rape itself, because only Jeanne and those in the room, are witnesses to the act.

[231] Piotr Cieplak (Interviewer), Nick Hughes, Director of 100 Days (2004), in Kristi M. Wilson and Tomas F. Crowder-Taraborrelli (eds.), *Film and Genocide* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), 221.
[232] Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers,* 8.
[233] Tanya Horeck, *Public Rape: Representing Violation in Fiction and Film* (London: Routledge, 2004), 105.

Now that she is dead, the very nature of the flashbacks are distorted and therefore the violence remains unseen.

Honoré recalls how he digs Jeanne out of a pile of corpses and takes her to the Sainte Famille Church. We then see a bloodied Jeanne with her dress partially off, and men buckling up their pants, as we hear Honoré's voice in the background, "After a horrific night, they decided to kill all the women". Jean leans unsteadily against a wall and says, "Do you think I am afraid to die?" Jeanne pulls a grenade from one of the soldier's belts lying on a table; she holds it up threateningly and instructs the other woman in the room to escape. Jeanne pulls the pin on the grenade and the camera switches to a view of outside the building as the windows explode outwards.[234]

Jacqueline Ojiambo mentions how women who have been raped are often depicted as helpless.[235] Peck, however, depicts Jeanne as a strong female character. Jeanne does not allow her rape to define her: she remains undiminished even after losing her children and enduring this horrific experience. When she decides to use the grenade, she displays an extreme example of how to break this cycle of impunity. A strong contrast is created through the action of Jeanne using the grenade; on the one hand she is able to confront her assailants, but on the other hand, she is forced to give up her own life. Jeanne's predicament is depicted as hopeless, and yet she manages to find a way out, even though it is at the cost of her own life. This is a choice that was out of reach for many. There are many accounts of people paying killers to give them a quick death rather than being hacked to death with machetes. During the genocide, being able to choose one's death was a privilege. By giving viewers this horrible message, Peck displays how truly horrifying the genocide was.

Augustin is constantly haunted by not knowing the fate of his family. Through this, Peck draws attention to just how important it is for family members to know the fate of their loved ones. There is a need for a sense of closure, as Innocent Rwililiza points out:

> Even today, years later, when I catch sight in the distance of a silhouette that resembles her, it startles me. It is so draining to live with a false hope. I can now

[234] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[235] Jacqueline Ojiambo, Representing Violation in Film: A Study on Resilience in Judy Kibinge's Something Necessary (*Agenda* Vol. 31 No. 2 (2017)), pp. 1-9, 4.

> say that surviving with the memory of your wife and child, when you don't know how they were killed, when you have not seen them dead, and when you have not buried them, is what takes the most heart out of you.[236]

Peck brings this contradiction to the forefront. In post-genocide Rwanda, knowing the fate of one's family is a privilege when it should be a right. Augustin is given the opportunity that so many Rwandans are denied, and yet there is an immense pain that comes with this knowledge. Jeanne's rape and death is not an arbitrary narrative tool, or a device which is being employed to develop the character of Augustin. Jeanne's rape and suicide is significant in its own right.

The second representation of sexual violence in the film differs drastically to the gruesome experience of Jeanne. The second scene concerns a woman named Valentine who is in Arusha to give testimony as a 'secret witness' at the ICTR. Peck makes it very clear to viewers that what Valentine is doing takes a lot of courage. He shows how significant this testimony is when Valentine asks Augustin if he will be there to witness her testimony. We see by Augustin's reaction to her request just how momentous his inclusion is, "Yes, But you, you won't be able to see me" to which Valentine replies, "I will know that you're there".[237]

Valentine extends this invitation only after she finds out that he too is a survivor. There is a sense of kinship between survivors, as one survivor Cassius Niyonsaba explains, "When we children talk, someone may mention the genocide, so then each one starts to tell what he saw. That can take a long time. Now and then someone wants to change a detail, but usually we repeat the same memories to one another. Talking together clears away pain and sadness."[238] By displaying the sincerity of this connection, Peck shows viewers how hard it is for survivors to open up to those who have not lived through the genocide.

Representing sexual violence through public testimony is problematic both in reality and in film. According to Human Rights Watch, the lack of confidentiality is the main reason why many women are reluctant to testify about their rape.[239] Many women fear reprisal with regard to their testimonies from both perpetrators and their families. There is an even deeper fear of being

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[236] Hatzfeld and Coverdale, *Life Laid Bare,* 98.
[237] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[238] Hatzfeld and Coverdale, *Life Laid Bare*, 15.
[239] Human Rights Watch, *Shattered Lives,* 28.

stigmatised once people know they are a victim of rape, particularly since it would jeopardise any hope of marriage.

Tanya Horeck calls attention to another problem concerning the representation of sexual violence through testimony, "Although the rape is obviously told, rather than shown, during the course of a rape trial, several theorists argue that the retelling of a rape in the courtroom always conjures up a visual image of the rape."[240] Carol Smart goes even further when she talks about the experience of the woman giving testimony, "the woman in the dock is there in the flesh to feel her humiliation. The judges, the lawyers, the jury, and the public can gaze on her body and re-enact her violation in their imagination."[241] Both Horeck and Smart touch on an important point; being that even if the rape is not 'shown', viewers and those in the film watching unconsciously provide imagery to the words spoken. Horeck further elucidates upon the problem of re-traumatisation in having to retell and therefore relive the experience; Horeck calls this, 'second rape'.[242]

Pecks tries to address these issues in the film, by having the woman give private testimony without a public audience. The approach however is problematic because Peck shows us that there are still many other people in the room while she is giving testimony, namely the guards, translators, ICTR members and even the perpetrator, this inclusion gives validity to Smart's argument.

Valentine begins her testimony:

> He took my baby off my back and put it on the floor. He penetrated me. He kept me until he had me a second time. Later, I don't remember exactly…but the Interahamwes held us in another room. And they raped all the girls. A young man threw himself on me. When he was taking off his pants he told me there is no place for me now. That the government had abandoned us. After that, he did humiliating things to me. He didn't even care that I was a mother. I heard the young girls scream but I could not see them. When the second man was finished, a third one came…and he forced me to lie down again. He raped me. At that moment I just wanted to die. Then a fourth man came…and he took me…[243]

What is striking about the testimony is the vividness of it. Peck shows the horror of the sexual violence at the expense of Valentine. At one point, one of the Judges notices Valentine's distress

[240] Tanya Horeck, "They did worse than nothing": Rape and Spectatorship in The Accused (*Canadian Review of American Studies* 30.1 (2000)), pp. 1-21, 6.
[241] Carol Smart, *Feminism and the Power of the Law* (London: Routledge, 1989), 39.
[242] Horeck, "They did worse than nothing," 7.
[243] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.

and even says, "I'm sorry. But can you tell us what happened next?" Peck has tried to make the scene as authentic as possible as he himself says, "It's real trials and events, the reaction of the people. When in reality, she tells this story, people were crying in the tribunal…and this particular case, is the case to which the first time somebody was condemned because of rape, this is the case that established rape as part of a genocide."[244]

Peck emphasises how he is trying to show an authentic representation of a trial at the ICTR, by even referencing the Akayesu trial. The scene itself does not portray Valentine as weak but as a strong willed and courageous woman; at one point she even gives her testimony staring straight at 'Akayesu'. The main problem of the scene lies in this 'second rape'. As the viewers and those in the film listen to her testimony; we experience some of that pain. However, while we observe her pain, we are still separated from it due to our position as viewers. Valentine is therefore identified as a sacrifice for the purpose of the representation. The main question one needs to therefore ask is, 'was this necessary?' Does one need to witness Valentine relive this pain in front of not only the perpetrator but us viewers as well?

Devin Martens-Olzman discusses the link between viewer/reader and victim in representing trauma, "While there is no way to wholly represent trauma, even placing someone in the role of victim is important, and it creates a link between the reader and the victim through empathetic response and understanding, instead of guilt and anger".[245] Valentine's testimony, even while painful for her, allows the viewer to truly empathise with her. Therefore one can agree that the scene is a necessary inclusion.

Valentine is sharing her experience with the viewers on a very personal level. Peck touches on this point, when in the film one of the judges asks Valentine at the end of her testimony, "May I ask, why did you make what must have been a difficult decision…to come to Arusha and testify to this tribunal? To which Valentine replies, "I saw what this man did…and I felt responsible…to testify about this man's betrayal…of the people who I entrusted to him. And when a person leads assassins, he is also an assassin".[246] It is as if Valentine is addressing the viewers directly, thus

[244] Audio Commentary By Raoul Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[245] Devin Martens-Olzman, The Ethics of Representation: Rape, Genocide, Torture (*Emergence: A Journal of Undergraduate Literary Criticism and Creative Research* 5 (2014)), pp. 1-28, 6.
[246] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.

illustrating the importance of her testimony and implicitly the testimony of women who have undergone similar experiences. Even if it is painful for us to witness, we as viewers have the responsibility, to at least listen.

A Sunday in Kigali is very problematic in how it represents Gentille's rape and imprisonment by Modeste, Bernard's former cameraman and now a Hutu Power advocate. Piet Derfraeye writes briefly about the main problem of the fictional book that the film is based upon, "The novel has been widely critiqued -often negatively- about its graphic descriptions of violence and especially its remarkable sexualisation of this violence".[247] In the book Gentille's rape and imprisonment is described in her own words in a diary she has left behind. While in the film, Bernard goes to the house in which she was imprisoned and viewers are made to witness Gentille's ordeal as Bernard imagines her suffering.

The book's choice to represent Gentille's abuse through her own diary entries is an excellent one. Since allowing Gentille to describe her suffering in her own words is something vitally important. This method gives Gentille a way to vocalise her suffering without 'outside interference'; she is therefore, able to impart a sense of integrity to the retelling, that is absent from the filmic representation. In 1998, a literary project was launched called, 'Rwanda: écrire par devoir de mémoire' (The *Duty to Remember).*[248] The project was meant to create literary works around the genocide, by sending ten African writers to Kigali for two months. Among those writers was Chadian writer Koulsy Lamko, who wrote a book called, *La phalène des collines* (*The butterfly of the hills)* published in 2000 as a result of the project. The book uses a victim from the massacre at Nyamata Church, Theresa Mukandori, as the protagonist.

In the book, Theresa is so angered by her death that it results in her turning into a butterfly (Queen of the Middleworld) and becoming the book's narrator from beyond the grave.[249] This metamorphosis into butterfly is in direct reference to an item published in the March 1993 issue of Kangura that said, "A cockroach cannot give birth to a butterfly. A cockroach gives birth to

[247] Piet Defraeye, The Rwandan Genocide in Film, and a Sunday in Kigali: Watching with a Pierced Eye (*Imaginations ARCHIVES* 4.1 (2016)), pp. 82-105, 95.
[248] Nicki Hitchcott, Between Remembering and Forgetting: (In)Visible Rwanda in Gilbert Gatore's Le Passé devant soi (*Research in African Literatures* 44.2 (2013)), pp. 76-90, 79.
[249] Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda,* 133.

another cockroach".[250] The reason why Lamko's book is mentioned is because it operates in very much the same way as Courtemanche's novel, by giving a voice to those who can longer share their story. Daugh Roth illustrates just how effective this method can be:

> In Lamko's novel the Queen of the middleworld narrates her rape and killing over several pages. She uses the first-person narrative, which generates a disturbing intimacy for the readers and multiplies vivid metaphors to render her suffering palpable to readers' imagination…By allowing the Queen to narrate vividly and in great detail from her own perspective what she has endured during her long rape and agony, Lamko gives her enunciative power to harass and respond posthumously to her killer as she counter-objectifies him at the very moment he reduces her to sexual object…As she has auto-proclaimed herself the sole authorized narrator of her story, the Queen enunciatively emancipates herself from the position of passive victim as she comes back to life as an uncompromising narrator who heckles her torturer and questions our will to knowledge.[251]

Courtemanche captures Gentille's suffering in vivid detail. By framing her suffering within her diary entries, Courtemanche effectively switches from third person narrator to first person. The main problem in Courtemanche's narrative is how Gentille is portrayed in her final diary entry, "I might as well run out into the sun and die from one machete slash. In a few minutes I'm going to leave this house with this workbook and Eluard, freer than I ever thought I'd be, because now, Bernard, I'm already dead."[252] What we see here is a woman that has been 'broken' by her sexual abuse. It was mentioned earlier how rape is used as a narrative tool to turn a strong and independent woman into one that is weak and vulnerable. The problem of this last diary entry lies in the fact that Gentille is never portrayed as a strong character. In the film it is even more pronounced, with Gentille relying heavily on Bernard. At one point in the film, she even says: "Promise me something…Don't let them rape and butcher me".[253]

Defraeye elucidates upon the possible reason for Gentille's insubstantial characterisation in the film, "it does not have the same indignant tone as the novel, mostly because the film's narrative is focused on the reconstruction of the love-story between the two characters".[254] Due to this focus on the love story, there is a more intense focus on Bernard, and therefore, Gentille merely serves

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[250] Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror,* 23.
[251] Dauge-Roth, *Writing and Filming the Genocide of the Tutsis in Rwanda,* 140-141
[252] Courtemanche *A Sunday at the pool in Kigali,* 247.
[253] Favreau, *A Sunday in Kigali,* 2006.
[254] Defraeye, The Rwandan Genocide in Film, and a Sunday in Kigali, 93.

as a foil to his suffering. The way in which Gentille's abuse is framed within the film gives evidence to this argument.

Of the three films, Favreau is the only director who tries to re-enact the rape itself. Favreau uses different techniques to mitigate the visual violence, such as the use of shadows in the beginning of the sequence so that viewers only see their silhouettes. While these scenes are playing out, the rough jerks of the characters shadowy outlines are shown and Gentille's high-pitched and terrifying screams are heard; these are strongly contrasted with the close-ups on Bernard's face, which is scrunched up in pain.[255]

Favreau also uses natural lighting to darken the room and somewhat obscure their bodies. As the re-enactment is happening, one is shown an image of Bernard's shoes as he bangs them against the floor in frustration. Gentille's abuse continues to be gratuitously shown. The first scene ends on a shot of Bernard in the darkened room, crouching despondently in the corner. The next scene uses the same lighting techniques to mitigate the act of abuse while still switching to images of Bernard's discomfort.[256]

The last scene shows that Favreau has almost completely disregarded obfuscation, with the violence reaching its peak. Modeste is holding Gentille down on the floor as he says, "Think you're better, but you're nothing. Flesh for the hacking". He then breaks a glass bottle and begins cutting her with the broken bottle between her legs and on her face. The sequence of scenes then ends with a shot of Bernard on the floor, leaning against a wall in the shadows as we hear the voice of Gentille's father telling Bernard, "Promise me one thing. Take her away, far, far away from here. Promise me. Promise…far away".[257]

In the book an entire chapter is dedicated to Gentille's individual experience of her torment. And yet in the film, Bernard is intimately tied to her suffering. To try to recreate something that is unimaginable is already problematic but the constant switching between Gentille's rape and images of Bernard in pain trivializes her brutalisation. Favreau chooses not to have Gentille's abuse stand on its own but rather uses the sexual violence directed against her to create torment

[255] Favreau, *A Sunday in Kigali,* 2006.
[256] Ibid.
[257] Ibid.

within Bernard. When Favreau does this he relegates Gentille's abuse to merely shock spectacle. This is no longer solely Gentille's abuse but now one shared with Bernard, a person who was not even present. In the entire film Gentille is never filmed alone, she is always in Bernard's presence. She is then even robbed of her own experience. Within the setting of the film, it is as if Gentille was raped merely so one could see a reaction elicited from Bernard.

When sexual violence becomes the norm, one begins to understand the horror of genocide. Both *Kinyarwanda* and *The Day God Walked Away* in particular successfully highlight this understanding. Through this, the films are able to stress how vulnerable women were during the genocide. The casual nature by which the killers discuss sexual violence gives one insight into the danger faced by women. It is this normalcy in association with sexual violence that is so shocking. It creates an atmosphere of danger, in which safety is almost an impossibility.

Of the three films that try to represent the act of rape itself, the one that does the worst job of it is Favreau. *100 days* and *Sometimes in April* very astutely choose to leave the act of rape as something 'unrepresentable'. Both of these films also create strong female characters who are able to stand up for themselves. Just because the medium of film gives filmmakers the ability to show things visually, does not mean that they should immediately try to recreate things that we as individuals find hard to imagine. What separates the representations of sexual violence in this chapter from the physical violence in the previous chapter is the *frequency* of it.

Violence and death are themes that are present in films across all genres. However, the direct attempts to represent sexual violence against women on screen are miniscule in comparison. Therefore, it is important that when filmmakers attempt to represent this theme they do it 'correctly'. Ojiambo explains how film can be used as a tool to create social awareness around issues such as, "the social cost to women, the injustice and impunity for rape in conflict".[258] Ojiambo highlights one of the main themes of this paper, how films can be seen as educational tools as opposed to being viewed solely as entertainment.

While this really applies to all the films, the topic of sexual violence is significant as it is estimated that "One in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence from their

[258] Ojiambo,Representing violation in film, 8-9.

partner, while 7% will be assaulted at some point in their lives by a non-partner". [259] Genocide is something that happens rarely when compared to sexual violence. This is why it is important that sexual violence on screen is executed with care and sensitivity. This care and sensitivity will allow these films to be seen as resources for social awareness rather than just shock spectacles.

[259] Boseley, Sarah. "One in three women have experienced physical or sexual violence from partner." The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2014/nov/21/one-in-three-women-physical-sexual-violence-partner-lancet (Date Accessed 9 May 2018).

CHAPTER 4

FRAMING AFRICA AS HOPELESS

One of the major motifs in all of the films, with the exception of *Munyurangabo* and *Kinyarwanda,* is the evacuation. The main problem that arises from some of these representations is the undercurrent of Afro-pessimism. Western intervention is framed as the only solution to the genocide and that without it Rwanda is doomed. This framing is nothing new and is built upon long-held stereotypes and erroneous beliefs around Africa.

The way in which these films differ is how they choose to situate their scenes of evacuation. For example, while some of the films portray the abandonment more symbolically, to comment on the apathetic international community, other films show the very real consequences of this desertion. Take for example *Shooting Dogs,* which is based on the massacre at the École Technique Officielle (ETO). In the film, once the UNAMIR forces depart from the ETO, the *génocidaires* immediately attack those left behind.

To better understand the representations of the various evacuations in the films, it is important to look at a few of the salient points with regard to the evacuation itself. The speedy evacuation of foreign nationals by predominantly Western nations alludes to how seriously they viewed the violence in Rwanda. Take for example the United States, "By midday, on April 7, barely 24 hours after the plane crash, the United States decided to evacuate its nationals and close down the embassy."[260] The worst part of the whole evacuation was the changes made to the Rules of Engagement (ROE) that had been set by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DKPO) up until that point. The DKPO contacted Dallaire on April 9th in a cable with instructions relating to the impeding evacuation, "You should make every effort not to compromise your impartiality or to act beyond your mandate. But you may exercise your discretion to do *[sic]* should this be essential for the evacuation of foreign nationals."[261]

[260] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 169.
[261] Michael N. Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda* (USA: Cornell University Press, 2002), 100.

The UN had up to that point made it clear to Dallaire that UNAMIR was an impartial force, yet now he was being told that he could use force if it meant protecting foreign nationals. Another component of the evacuation was the closing down of the embassies. This meant abandoning the many Tutsi who worked as staff for the various embassies, "When we got ready to evacuate, I went out and told [them] that we weren't going to be there any longer; and when we left, the United States flag would come down, and they were going to have to make their own decisions about what to do."[262] UNAMIR's scarce resources were stretched to breaking point. Yet they were still made to travel all over Rwanda, with their easily distinguishable cars and uniforms to help escort foreign nationals to safety.

Rwandans were forced to watch as over 4000 foreign soldiers traversed the Rwandan landscape, plucking expatriates to safety while leaving them to die. The message of abandonment was received by both the victims and the perpetrators of the genocide. The most disheartening aspect of the whole evacuation was that during this period there were enough foreign forces in Rwanda to theoretically stop the genocide as Grünfeld and Huijboom argue, "In all of our interviews, both with the military leaders and the political leaders and civil servants involved in the decision-making in this second week of April 1994, everybody agreed that the evacuation forces could have stopped the genocide, but it was never discussed."[263]

The evacuation scene in *Shooting Dogs* is one of the few things that the film gets right. The film shows soldiers and vehicles arriving at the ETO flying the French flag. Rachel then informs both Joe and the viewers of the situation, "They are only taking the whites". Joe selflessly says to the French officer in charge of the evacuation that he will rather donate his place to a Rwandan and the officer's response is, "No, no Rwandans!"[264] What the French officer is saying would be true, if not for the fact that the French in reality evacuated a number of Hutu extremists, including Habyarimana's wife. As Michael Barnett points out: "As the French escorted home their citizens, they also found room for various members of the *akazu*, and even the embassy dog, but apparently no room for the Tutsis who worked in the embassy".[265] Furthermore, in this particular case, a number of Rwandan clergy at the ETO were evacuated as well.

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[262] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 171.
[263] Ibid, 177.
[264] Caton-Jones, *Shooting Dogs,* 2005.
[265] Barnett, *Eyewitness to a Genocide,* 100.

However, when Rachel says that they are only taking whites, she is close to the truth. Therefore, the exclusion of the evacuation of the Rwandan clergy is understandable. The reason for this is because the scene is symbolic of the whole nature of evacuation itself. The clear distinction that the film makes between Rwandans and expatriates explicitly informs viewers of the guilt of the International community. We even see a scene of a UNAMIR soldier carefully carrying a dog into the truck as Rwandans are pushed back.

The evacuation organised by the French departed the ETO at 11:00 am, on the 11th April, while the UN contingent left the ETO at 13:45 pm, which would explain why the two events are separated in the film.[266] Capitain Charles Delon, who is playing the real life Belgian Lieutenant Leamire, informs Father Christopher and Joe that the UN forces will soon depart, "I have orders to withdraw to the airport". The next scene then shows UNAMIR officers packing; the prominent imagery of this scene involves the stowing away of their weapons. It emphasises how they will be leaving those left behind defenceless.

The next scene shows a Rwandan man coming up to Delon and asking him to shoot him and those seeking shelter before they leave, "We politely request that before you leave us that your soldiers use your guns to kill us. We do not wish to be killed by machete. The bullets will kill us all quickly and there will much less pain", Delon refuses.[267] This was an unfortunate reality for many Rwandan, as one survivor Frida Umuhoza explains, "In my village, to be shot you had to pay Rwf5,000, but we were too poor at that time to pay for *(our)* own death".[268] This exchange informs viewers of two things. Firstly, that in abandoning them, UNAMIR consigns them to certain death. And secondly, it forces viewers to visualise the violent fate that awaits the roughly 2,000 Rwandans at the ETO. Even though Delon makes the decision expected of a UN officer, within the context of the film it points to the further callous actions of the West.

The Rwandans begin physically blocking the cars to stop them from leaving. To get them to clear the way, the UNAMIR officers fire their guns into the air. It is the first time in the film that they have used their guns and they have chosen to use them against those that they should be

[266] Tripodi, When Peacekeepers Fail Thousands are Going to Die, 232.
[267] Caton-Jones, *Shooting Dogs,* 2005.
[268] Tumwebaze, Peter. "To be shot, you had to pay Rwf5000, survivor Umuhoza testifies at UN." The New Times. http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/198945 (Date Accessed 11 May 2018)

protecting. Angelique Numukobwa a survivor of the massacre at the ETO recalls UNAMIR leaving and the immediate effect of their departure, "When the refugees realized what was happening, they rushed in front of the white painted vehicles. Belgian soldiers fired in the air and forced their way out of the ETO. Immediately, the militia entered the school and killed several people."[269]

In the film, the events closely mirror the above account. As soon as viewers see that the UN trucks are out of sight, men with machetes and other rudimentary tools begin advancing on the ETO. Even though film itself is, without a doubt problematic, the representation of the evacuation demonstrates the ease with which any film is able to portray Western apathy. The truly sad thing about all these scenes is how much of it actually corresponds to the lived reality of what occurred at the ETO.

The main problem with the film is less obvious. It has to do with how Africa is represented and this is intimately tied to the film's two *white* protagonists. Evans and Glenn discuss this point and a number of other problems that go along with it:

> Critics have noted the resulting limitations: the dependence on white protagonists that continue to situate African characters on the periphery; the tendency to approach Africa with a totalizing gaze in order to generalize about regional or national problems; a propensity to dehistoricize (and thus eternalize) events; the recourse to western psychological and familial models and plots (particularly with upbeat endings involving escape from Africa).[270]

This outlook on Africa is best personified in the character Marie. Marie is a student at the ETO and it is thanks to the heroics of Father Christopher that Marie is saved. Father Christopher smuggles out a few schoolchildren in a truck and in the process loses his life. This fictional sacrifice, once again positions a white protagonist as saviour. He is positioned as the only hope these few individuals have of surviving. As problematic as this event is, it is the ending of the film that truly paints Africa as hopeless.

Marie has now moved to England. Her character's conclusion has moved entirely out of Africa. The film is essentially stating that there is no longer a life for her in Africa. This Afro-pessimistic view of Africa runs throughout many of the films. It may very well be inadvertent, but this

[269] Tripodi, When Peacekeepers Fail Thousands are Going to Die, 233.
[270] Evans and Glenn, TIA- This is Africa, 15.

framing of Africa as helpless without Western interference, is counter-productive to the perceived aim of many of the films, as Caton-Jones states, "to put the audience in the situation of what it felt like to be there".[271] This aim to place viewers in the position of participants is disturbing, because viewers are directed to empathise not with Rwandans, but the white protagonists.

This is even more apparent when Marie's story does not end without the inclusion of Joe. When she meets Joe in England, she is merely a stand in for Joe's guilt. She has no function other than serving as Joe's moral compass, as Cieplak states:

> The only secondary African character who is relatively well developed, and thus survives, is Marie. However, her existence within the narrative is not entirely independent. She acts as a reminder of Joe's moral conundrum - to stay or to leave – which is confirmed by her appearance, in the school in Surrey, where *Shooting Dogs*, bizarrely ends.[272]

While the scene of the evacuation itself is well done, the overall representation of Africa and Africans only serves to reinforce existing misconceptions and stereotypes.

The evacuation scene in *100 Days* is not based upon one incident but is an amalgamation of various events that happened. Take for example the scene in which a group of Tutsi school children are locked up in a room and burned to death. This incident actually happened in Burundi, eight months prior to the genocide, Hughes comments on this discrepancy, "There were many events from Rwanda that I could have used to portray the horror of the genocide…The reason I chose the burning was that the event involved the same ethnic groups and they were Tutsi kids. I felt completely justified in using it and it was something we could do".[273] It is debatable how appropriate it is to use this scene in the film. But what it does display is a push by Hughes to cover a wide variety of angles in addressing the genocide, as he says, "The film tells several stories and deals with many issues. It's very broad in trying to describe the players in the genocide".[274]

The scene of the evacuation is an example of how Hughes combines a number of separate events and merges them together to create a coherent signifier of Western abandonment. The scene

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[271] Cieplak, *The Rwandan genocide and the bestiality of representation in 100 Days (2001) and Shooting Dogs (2005)*, 55.
[272] Ibid, 56.
[273] Cieplak, Nick Hughes, 225.
[274] Ibid, 222.

begins with a conversation over radio between Captain Claude, the UNAMIR officer in charge of the contingent located at Gitesi commune, and his superior in Kigali:

> This is Captain Claude speaking. There has been a massacre at the stadium 20km from here. The dead must number in the thousands. If I leave tomorrow, the Tutsis at the church will be killed. I'm certain they will all be killed as soon as we leave. As you can see it is difficult for me to leave immediately[275].

To which his superior replies, "I understand your position, but the UN Security Council has voted all but a token force to leave. You must withdraw from the village. That is final. Out." Expatriates are then loaded onto waiting trucks. These trucks then arrive at the church, to pick up the UNAMIR soldiers stationed there. The Rwandans begin to understand what is going on and swarm the trucks. UNAMIR soldiers begin firing in the air to stop them.[276]

The final part of the scene in which the soldiers fire their guns into the air to flee, is very similar to the scene in *Shooting Dogs,* and it would not be surprising if the scene took some inspiration from the events at the ETO. While the visuals of the evacuation, composed by Hughes are very well presented, it is the conversation between Captain Claude and his superior that draws the most attention. Hughes makes it very clear to viewers through this exchange that the departure of UNAMIR from Gitesi Commune will mean death for the Tutsi, thus informing viewers of the devastating effect of the reduction in the size of UNAMIR.

Hughes in actuality is combining two separate events; the evacuations that took place between the 8th and the 15th of April and the ratification of resolution 912 that came into effect on the evening of the 21st of April.[277] While the two events are chronologically separate, they are intimately and closely linked through their shared symbolism of the West's abandonment of Rwanda. By combining these two events into one horrifying episode, Hughes puts more weight behind the indifferent actions of the International community.

Hughes precludes the film from presenting Africa as a completely hopeless place through the inclusion of two things. The first is the incorporation of Rwandan protagonists and the second is the involvement of the RPF. By having Rwandan protagonists, Hughes is able to show viewers characters that they can relate to, and therefore they are not 'othered', as one previously saw in

[275] Hughes, *100 Days,* 2001.
[276] Ibid.
[277] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 215.

Shooting Dogs. Having African characters in the roles usually filled by white protagonists is instrumental in changing perceptions of Africa. Back in 1985, Marilyn Kern-Foxworth wrote about this very issue with regard to Americans and their perceptions of Africa in relation to *Tarzan*:

> After exposure of Americans to *Tarzan* many erroneous concepts pertinent to Africa and its people were developed. To date, programs that depict Africa favorably are almost non-existent. And without exposure to media that dispel the myths promulgated by *Tarzan*, many Americans, both black and white, are left with remote ideas of what to expect or find on the African continent.[278]

The inclusion of the RPF highlights the fact that Africans are able to solve their own problems and it is not a place without any recourse to hope.

The Day God Walked Away takes a very different approach to the evacuation compared to the two previous films. Van Leeuw gives viewers an intimate look at the situation that many Tutsi employees experienced after their expatriate 'benefactors' had fled. He has tried to create a film that shows the horrors of the daily life of someone living in constant fear and paranoia. The scene of the evacuation is in this sense also an experience. It is trying to show viewers that the abandonment of Rwandans was not a monolithic action but was the combined result of many smaller decisions and actions. What Van Leeuw shows further is that Jacqueline's abandonment was not a unique experience; it was an event that was happening all over Rwanda.

By framing the fact that Jacqueline was being abandoned by a happy white family, a mom, a dad and two lovely children, Van Leeuw makes viewers complicit in this betrayal. This is not some massive organisation that is leaving Rwandans to fend for themselves; this is an 'ordinary' family, which has made the conscious decision to take care of itself above all else. But there is an ambiguity to the betrayal. The expatriate mother, Karin, who explains to Jacqueline with tears in her eyes that they are leaving, is not an evil character but neither is she innocent. This is the very contradiction that viewers must grapple with. The film implores viewers to question what their own reaction to the situation would have been.

Van Leeuw perfectly delineates the differing meaning of 'safety' for expatriates and Rwandans. For Jacqueline her 'safety' provided by the fleeing family is an attic, while for the expatriate

[278] Marilyn Kern-Foxworth, The Effect of Advertising Stimuli on American Perception of Africa: A Descriptive Analysis (*Journal of Black Studies* 16.2 (1985)), pp. 155-168, 157.

family it is a safe escort to the airport and then a flight back home. By putting these scenes side by side it makes it glaringly obvious that even though this family may shed tears for Jacqueline, they are still abandoning her.

The film furthermore also looks at the international response of protecting the wellbeing of expatriates. Once the family is settled in the car and ready to leave, a Rwandan man points a gun on Karin. At the very same moment, a UNAMIR soldier immediately points his rifle at the man, ready to shoot.[279] It is a clear indictment in the difference in how far the International community was willing to go to protect their citizens in comparison to Rwandans.

Van Leeuw is able to address the undercurrent of Afro-pessimism through the characters themselves. Jacqueline and the man she hides in the forest with are not portrayed as helpless characters. They are presented as strong individuals; there is even a scene in which Jacqueline's companion kills one of their attackers. Even when Jacqueline is abandoned she shows remarkable strength.

Her characterisation is complex and illustrates to viewers a representation that is at odds with the stereotypical depictions of Africans; particularly African women during times of conflict. In an interview in the late 1990s Malian actress Maimouna Hélène Diarra comments on the importance of the image of African women in cinema, "They see that we are showing and exposing problems that actually exist. They are beginning to realize the true value of African women in cinema".[280] Having strong, nuanced African characters indicates to viewers that Africa is not a lost cause.

The film describes the evacuation and the abandonment at large in a decidedly more intimate way in comparison to the other films. It is not abandonment by a particular organisation or collective that can be condemned outright. It is a rejection of a sense of humanity by individuals who mirror the target audience of the film. Furthermore, by making a genuine attempt at depicting Jacqueline as a 'real' person, this abandonment is made even more severe.

The evacuation sequence in *Hotel Rwanda* serves a dual purpose. Like the other films it symbolises the International community's abandonment of Rwanda but it also emphasises the

[279] Van Leeuw, *The Day God Walked Away,* 2009.
[280] Beti Ellerson, *Sisters of the Screen: Women of Africa on Film, Video and Television* (Eritrea: Africa World Press Inc, 2000), 78.

heroics of Rusesabagina. With the evacuation of the expatriates and the withdrawal from the hotel of UNAMIR, Rusesabagina is framed within the film as the last bastion of protection for those residing at the Hotel. Both of these points must be given attention because they are very closely linked with one another.

In the beginning of the scene everyone in the hotel believes that the soldiers that are arriving are an intervention force to stop the violence. Colonel Oliver, who is modelled on Dallaire, goes out to meet the arriving soldiers. Oliver is visibly upset due to this meeting. He eventually throws his blue beret down in frustration and storms back inside the hotel.

Rusesabagina follows him inside the hotel to find out what is wrong, Oliver explains, "We think you're dirt Paul…The West, all the superpowers, everything you believe in Paul. They think you're dirt. They think you're dung, you're worthless…You're black, you're not even a nigger, you're an African."[281] The film clearly shows one that the International community is not willing to help Rwandans. George makes the comparison between an 'African' and a 'nigger' to emphasise this alienation. The use of the word 'nigger' also makes clear that North Americans are the target audience.

George makes this abandonment even clearer in the next scene in which Rusesabagina informs his wife of what he has learnt from Oliver, "We have been abandoned…All the whites are leaving, the French, the Italians, even the UN Belgian soldiers. All of them…Colonel Oliver says he has 300 UN peacekeepers for the whole country, but the most he can spare for the hotel is four men, and they are not allowed to shoot."[282] The film evidently also chooses to combine the two events of the evacuation and resolution 912.

The day of the evacuation begins with rain and a radio broadcast: "A United Nations source reports that the US and British representatives on the Security Council will lobby for the removal of all UN peacekeepers throughout Rwanda".[283] The broadcast, therefore, frames the evacuation as only the start of the abandonment. A black British cameraman is almost stopped from getting on the bus; it is only once he shows his British passport that he is allowed on. This seemingly

[281] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 2004.
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.

subtle interaction, once again stresses the view that the International community has towards Africans. It is towards the end of the scene that George begins to fall into the Hollywood trap of representation, in favouring dramatization over history.

We see a large crowd of Rwandans running towards the bus as the rain pounds down on them, at the head of the group are nuns, children and a white priest. They are met by a soldier who tells the priest, "No, Rwandans. Foreign nationals only. Sorry father, those were the orders". To which the priests replies, "But you can't leave the children behind".[284] George continues to drive forth this image of abandonment and yet seeks to make a counterpoint. He provides viewers with white characters who argue with the soldiers due to the discrimination they have witnessed. The scene merely serves as a way for Western audiences to assuage any guilt they might feel about their inaction during the Rwandan genocide. As if to say, Look at this, not everyone was guilty, we tried.

This scene in which George tries to create sympathetic white characters is unfortunately not a onetime occurrence. Take for example, the earlier scene in the film, in which Rusesabagina is having trouble running the hotel, since the staff will not listen to him. He telephones the head of Sabena and the conversation between the two is striking. The head of Sabena first tells Paul that if the situation gets any worse the hotel will have to close. The next scene then shows a fax being sent through from Sabena, informing the staff that Paul is in charge.[285] It is true that Rusesabagina did have contact with Sabena in real-life as he has himself said in his autobiography, "I got on the phone to the Sabena Corporation in Brussels to clarify that I had their support. I then asked them to fax to me a letter naming me the interim manager of the Milles Collines until further notice".[286] The problem lies in creating a sole white character to represent Sabena.

George uses the head of Sabena to take all control away from Rusesabagina as a character. As an African character he is made to stand in stark contrast to his white superior. Rusesabagina is only given control of the hotel thanks to the help of the white character, who is not even in the country. Furthermore, George makes it clear that this same white character has the power to close the hotel, which has been framed as the only place of safety. The head of Sabena is portrayed as a

[284] Ibid.
[285] Ibid.
[286] Rusesabagina and Zoellner, *An ordinary Man*, 103.

paternalistic figure to Rusesabagina. In 1999, Kelly J. Madison wrote about the "Anti-Racist-White-Hero" and how the creation of such a character was merely a way to solidify an identity of white supremacy and paternalism in a "legitimation crisis":

> These paternalistic white supremacist representations of blackness and whiteness construct a revisionist narrative of struggles for African peoples' equality in which the "black children" could not have made it without the aid of the "white father." This "White Man's burden" theme of paternalistic white supremacy is an especially insidious form of racist discourse because its "positive" facets - a sense of responsibility, compassion and aid on the part of the white protagonist(s) – tend to obscure its racist, supremacist underpinnings, inoculating it against critique.[287]

The evacuation also problematically elevates Rusesabagina to sole protector of the hotel. Many have questioned not only the portrayal of Rusesabagina in the film but his role in protecting those at the hotel in general. Take for example, Romeo Dallaire's opinion of Rusesabagina', "It seems the filmmakers downplayed the eight UN observers who protected people in the hotel. They did a lot of the saving. The manager was there, and I was aware of him, but that's it. I remember he was helpful."[288]

The film portrays the hotel as an edifice without protection, but as Dallaire stated earlier this is untrue, as the Hotel itself was designated a UN protected zone:

> UN protection has been provided for sites in the city where terrified Rwandan Tutsi has sought sanctuary – including in churches and schools. The site that afforded the most protection was the five star Hotel des Mille Collines, located in the zone occupied by the deadly Hutu Power forces. It was designated a protected area with military observers providing a permanent UN presence and where the blue UN flag had flown for as long as the genocide lasted.[289]

In his autobiography Rusesabagina tries to downplay the role of the UN in protecting the hotel, while emphasising his role in organising protection, "We had five policemen standing outside thanks to my new friend, Commander Habyarimana. As fragile as this protection was, it was still much better than what we got from the UN, which amounted to just about nothing."[290] What we see is an effort by both Rusesabagina and the film to minimize the action of others to aggrandize

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[287] Kelly J. Madison, Legitimation crisis and containment: The "anti-racist-white-hero" film (*Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 16.4 (1991)), pp. 399-416, 413.
[288] Adhikari, Hotel Rwanda, 298.
[289] Edouard Kayihura and Kerry Zukus, *Inside The Hotel Rwanda: The Surprising Story…And why it matters today* (USA: Benbella Books, 2014), xviii.
[290] Rusesabagina and Zoellner, *An ordinary Man*, 103.

the actions of the film's protagonist. Anyone with knowledge of the Rwandan genocide would know that there has been an exaggeration of Rusesabagina's role.

Despite his and the film's contention that he is a 'saviour', his actual role during the genocide remains murky. What makes it even more complicated is that the two main books about Rusesabagina's portrayal in *Hotel Rwanda* are written by those close to Paul Kagame. Rusesabagina has been a vocal opponent of Kagame's rule, which has become increasingly more authoritarian.[291]

Rusesabagina in real life was probably not as heroic as Don Cheadle's portrayal, but that does not mean he didn't do anything. Paul's role can best be described in the words of one survivor from the hotel, Odette Nyiramilimo, who would later go on to be a Senator in Kagame's government, "Many people want me to say Paul is not a hero, so I say, 'Okay, he's not a hero,' But he helped me. Because of him, I'm here."[292]

In *A Sunday in Kigali*, the evacuation scene serves, not only as an indictment of Western apathy, but also as a catalyst for the separation of Gentille and Bernard. The entrance of the hotel has been blocked by UNAMIR soldiers and they are only letting through expatriates. The cordon of soldiers is tight and they aggressively hold back black bodies. Amidst the chaos, the visual contrast of white skin as it slips through the mass of dark bodies is striking. As Bernard squeezes through, holding Gentille's hand, he is stopped by a UN peacekeeper, "No Rwandan can leave". To which Bernard replies showing his passport, "She's Canadian, like me. She's my wife. She's Canadian!" Still the soldier does not budge. In reality, Gentille does not have a Canadian passport since they have only had a religious wedding ceremony. Raphael has a word with the UN soldier and they are eventually let onto the truck. Raphael is blocked from getting on.[293]

On the way to the airport, the truck suddenly stops. Due to the fact that the sides of the truck are covered by tarpaulin curtains, both passenger and viewer experience the same ignorance of what

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[291] Burke, James. "Paul Kagame re-elected president with 99% of vote in Rwanda election." The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/aug/05/paul-kagame-secures-third-term-in-rwanda-presidential-election (Date Accessed 13 May 2018)
[292] Waldorf, Revisiting Hotel Rwanda, 117.
[293] Favreau, *A Sunday in Kigali,* 2006.

is going on outside. The *Interahamwe* begin pulling passengers out of the truck. Gentille and Bernard protest but she is eventually pulled away from the other passengers.[294]

As previously stated, Gentille who is Hutu, conforms to the stereotypical prototype of a Tutsi woman, which is why she is treated as such throughout the film. The evacuation is made even worse, once we realise what becomes of Gentille due to this separation from Bernard. Not only is Gentille denied safety due to her nationality but she becomes a victim of violence due to her falsely perceived Tutsi identity.

Gentille's problematic portrayal is noticeably highlighted during the evacuation scene. She is entirely reliant on Bernard to survive, to the point where she is only allowed onto the truck thanks to her relationship with him. Gentille's characterization is the formulaic depiction of the 'helpless African' while Bernard conforms to the "Anti-Racist-White-Hero" character as previously outlined by Madison. While this problem is present throughout this film, it is in the evacuation scene that it is sharply emphasised.

As Gentille is pulled away from the truck, she moves further and further away from the camera. Once Bernard is knocked unconscious she disappears completely from the frame. The film displays how Gentille's existence is completely reliant on Bernard. As well executed as the scene of evacuation is, it unfortunately highlights the problem of "the overreliance on white focalizers and narrators."[295]

The last two films, *Sometimes in April* and *Shake Hands with the Devil* focus on the more logistical side of the evacuation. One sees more of the planning that went into the withdrawal. In this way the films seek to show how the abandonment of Rwanda was organised by people who were not there to witness the consequences of their actions.

In *Shake Hands with the Devil,* the evacuation scene itself is quite brief. It begins with a call from Maurice Baril, head of the military division of the DKPO during the genocide. Baril tells Dallaire,

[294] Ibid.
[295] Evans and Glenn, TIA- This is Africa, 32.

"The French are going to be landing a military force in Kigali in forty five minutes…they will be followed by Belgium. Listen, Romeo, they're coming only to evacuate expatriates, that's all".[296]

The scene then switches to Dallaire meeting with the French officer in charge, Colonel Poncet. Dallaire says to Poncet, "My observers saw you unloading ammunition that was handed to the Rwandan army". Poncet denies this saying, "Your observer was mistaken. We are only here to evacuate the whites". Viewers are then shown Agathe Kanziga Habyarimana as she is helped onto the plane by French soldiers. In the film Dallaire then glances at the former president's widow and replies, "And some good friends of France, Who are directly responsible for what's happening." To Which Poncet replies, "Who we evacuate is none of your business, General", as we see Rwandan men in suits boarding the plane.[297]

Spottiswoode is clear in reflecting not only Western desertion but France's complicity in the Genocide as well. France was well entrenched within the Rwandan military structure, providing not only arms, but also training to the Rwandan army, "A French military co-operation team, that was openly acknowledged to be in Rwanda, is thought to have included not the twenty personnel officially claimed but of forty seven. These people were attached to key units in the army and in the genderarmie as "advisers" or "technical assistants."[298]

Gerard Prunier explains further just how deeply involved the French were in maintaining the Habyarimana Regime:

> French involvement in the situation was not only at the level of arms delivery, but went right down to the level of operations on the ground. The French army was in fact in complete control of counterinsurgency operations and Lieut. – Colonel Chollet of the French military mission had been caught in the public spotlight when the press got hold of a leaked Rwandese government letter giving him overall control of operations.[299]

This was one of the reasons that when the embassies closed, the French left behind a pile of shredded paper so large that it filled an entire room.[300] When all this is taken into consideration, it begs the question as to why France would go so far out of their way to help a genocidal

[296] Spottiswoode, *Shake Hands With the Devil,* 2007.
[297] Ibid.
[298] Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder,* 119.
[299] Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 149.
[300] Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 186-187.

government. Prunier believes that a large part of French support for Rwanda had to do with what the RPF represented. The RPF was an Anglophone force as many of their core members grew up in Uganda. Rwanda under Habyarimana belonged to the Francophone world. In June 1990, Habyarimana even attended the Franco-African summit in La Baule.[301] Habyarimana was very aware of French anxieties in losing Rwanda as a Francophone nation, as Prunier writes, "Habyarimana, held a major trump-card – the French fear of an 'Anglo-Saxon' erosion of their position on the African continent."[302]

Spottiswoode is able to balance the overshadowing presence of a white protagonist through two methods; firstly, through the inclusion of the RPF and Kagame and the secondly, through the presence of the genocidaires during the evacuation. The RPF and Kagame represent a force of disciplined, well organised and intelligent soldiers, at odds with most representations of African forces during conflict. Prunier emphasises this by touching on the composition of the RPF, "almost all of its soldiers had gone to primary school, around half had attended secondary school and nearly 20% had reached university, making it probably the best educated guerrilla force the world had ever seen."[303]

The inclusion of the genocidaires at the airport during the evacuation shows viewers an image of Africans outside of a role of subservience. This is most apparent when Habyarimana's widow is boarding the plane. She is dressed extravagantly, wearing flashy sunglasses and carrying a little dog in her arms. Walking behind her is a white French soldier carrying her bag. This reversal of master and servant role reveals to viewers an image of Africans rarely shown.

Spottiswoode's use of the evacuation to make this connection is well executed. It informs viewers not only of Western abandonment but of complicity. The reason why so many filmmakers including Spottiswoode, choose to focus on French complicity, is due to the wholly transparent nature of their involvement in the genocide. Their involvement however was not unique, as many nations were supplying Rwanda with arms, even when it was clear that massive human rights abuses were taking place. For example, while Boutros Boutros-Ghali was deputy foreign minister for Egypt he was in charge of "facilitating an arms deal in 1990, which resulted in $26m (£18m)

[301] Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 89.
[302] Ibid, 99.
[303] Ibid, 117.

of mortar bombs, rocket launchers, grenades and ammunition being flown from Cairo to Rwanda."[304] It is easy to focus on the obvious but it is much harder for films to show the more narrowly focused aspects of complicity without coming across as too didactic. The inclusion of French complicity in the film is imperative because it allows Spottiswoode to subvert the image of the helpless African.

Sometimes in April's main target audience is North Americans, which is why the film oscillates between Rwanda and America. America played a big role in reducing the power and mandate of UNAMIR. Many have argued that the reason for America's negative attitude towards UNAMIR was the events in Somalia in 1994, as Grünfeld and Huijboom write, "After Somalia, the Republican Party wanted the United States to get less involved in the peace-keeping missions of the United States". [305]

Take for example, even the use of the word 'genocide'. If what was happening in Rwanda was formally identified as genocide, then the Security Council would most probably have been compelled to act. Peck touches on this by including the archival footage of Christine Shelly's now infamous press conference on June 10th 1994. A conference in which she refused to use the word genocide, "We have every reason to believe that acts of genocide have occurred" To which a reporter asks Shelly, How many acts of genocide does it take to make a genocide?, To which Shelly replies, "That's just not a question that I'm in a position to answer".[306] Peck chooses to not include the more damning evidence of Shelly's conference, when she is asked whether or not she has been given a directive not to use the word genocide in isolation. It is her answer to this question replete with stumbling words and a tone of desperation that is damning:

> I have guidance which – which - to which I- which I try to use as best as I can. I'm not- I have- there are formulations that we are using that we are trying to be consistent in our use of. I don't have an absolute categorical prescription against something, but I have definitions. I have a phraseology which has been carefully examine and arrived at to-[307]

[304] Buchanan, Elsa. "Boutros Boutros-Ghali's most-difficult hour: How Rwanda's genocide haunted former UN secretary-general." (International Business Times) ibtimes.co.uk. https://www.ibtimes.co.uk/boutros-boutros-ghalis-most-difficult-hour-how-rwandas-genocide-haunted-former-un-1544241 (accessed September 2nd, 2018)
[305] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 142
[306] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[307] George, *Hotel Rwanda,* 88.

In the film the evacuation scene itself is quite short. Prior to the evacuation scene, Prudence Bushnell gives a press conference. The main focus of the press conference is about the safety of US citizens. Bushnell gives little indication of the nature of the violence and rather frames the fighting as a war between the Rwandan army and the RPF. Xavier and Augustin's abandonment by the French in the next scene is emphasised by the earlier framing of the importance of American expatriates over Rwandans.

In the film, two white UN trucks are waiting outside the Saint-Exupery French School. As expatriates begin getting onto the trucks, Rwandans are held back, stopping Augustin and Xavier from boarding. Suddenly a French soldier screams, "Stay back" and fires a spray of gunfire into the air. Augustin and Xavier get back into their car, now loaded with other Rwandans hoping for safe refuge, and begin following the UN convoy. As the convoy leaves we see men with machetes and clubs begin emerging from the bushes to converge on the Rwandans left behind, their intentions clear.[308]

The convoy is then stopped at a roadblock, Xavier and Augustin try to convince the men at the roadblock that they are part of the convoy. While Xavier looks at the French officer pleadingly, the man in charge of the roadblock asks the French officer, "Are these people with you?" To which the officer replies, "Our convoy is the jeeps and the trucks" he then turns to look at Xavier and says, "I'm sorry, I have orders".[309] The consequences of the French officer's short reply will result in Xavier's death. Peck frames the film in such a way that the scenes of Western abandonment have immediate consequences.

Adhikari finds the frequent switching back and forth between Rwanda and America unnecessary, as he says, "The frequent cut-aways to discussions amongst Washington bureaucrats and Bushnell's futile attempts to persuade the US government to intervene are repetitious, belaboured and detract from the immediacy of the main story".[310] To some degree Adhikari is correct. However, one must also take into consideration that Peck has always been very upfront in his desire to inform viewers, and the scenes in Washington serve this very purpose. Each scene gives viewers more information, without being seen as incongruous to the rest of the film.

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[308] Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[309] Ibid.
[310] Adhikari, Hotel Rwanda, 296.

Take for example, the scene in Washington where there is a discussion taking place regarding the possibility of blocking RTLM. The act of blocking RTLM is ultimately deemed too expensive and a violation against freedom of speech. This reasoning may seem ridiculous to viewers, especially after they have seen how damaging RTLM has been. Yet, these were two very real reasons why the US government refused to block RTLM broadcasts:

> There are three main reasons why the United States Government chose not to jam Rwandese radio broadcasts, as it clearly had the power to do. First, it would have been practically very difficult and potentially very expensive. Second, in the aftermath of the perceived debacle in Somalia in which eighteen U.S. servicemen were killed, intervention in obscure African countries, apparently for little direct national benefit, was expected to be politically unpopular. The third reason concerned international law.[311]

It is through this method that Peck is able to balance the narrative without it becoming too instructive. It is also in this way that Peck is able to effectively use archival footage. Peck uses an American setting to keep American viewers interested, while at the same time throwing in important information about the genocide. Particularly around America's reluctance to help an African country when they had ample means to do so.

Peck is clear that if he cannot educate audiences through his movies then there is no point making them.[312] Peck was very direct with regards to the type of movie he wanted to make, "I was able to set my own conditions, namely that I required that we cast men and women from Rwanda as protagonists, that the story be told from the perspectives of the people of Rwanda, that the film be shot in Rwanda, all of which ensured that it would not be an American film."[313]

Peck here makes the distinction between making an 'American' film and making a film for an American audience. It is this distinction that has allowed Peck to populate his film with Rwandan protagonists. By having Rwandan characters that are diverse and complex, viewers, and particularly American viewers, can understand the manufactured image of Africa seen in most American films. In a study of 126 college students in 1985, Kern-Foxworth found that, "The respondents also confirmed an assumption that most of the knowledge gained about Africa was

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[311] Jamie Frederic Metzl, Rwandan Genocide and the International Law of Radio Jamming (*American Journal of International Law*, Vol. 91, (1997)), pp. 628-651, 629.
[312] Sepinwall, *History is Too Important to Leave to Hollywood,* 16.
[313] Barlet and Peck (Translated by Sophie Saint-Just), *Lessons from the Cinema of Raoul Peck*, 253.

through television, as evidenced by the fact that 62, or 49.2% stated that this was their primary source for obtaining information about Africa."[314]

The evacuation scene in Peck's film strongly hints at the very real repercussions of Western apathy, while at the same time highlighting the complicity of the International Community due to their abandonment of Rwanda. The abandonment of Augustin and so many others Rwandans is made even more devastating thanks to the film's achievement in crafting well-structured African protagonists.

During the genocide there was a very strong correlation between the presence of foreigners in Rwanda and the level of violence during the genocide. The Interim government in charge of the genocide remained very conscious of the International community. Take for example, when Dr Casimir Bizimungu, Minister of Health, spoke of clearing away dead bodies, "before whites come and photograph them".[315] Once the evacuation took place and UNAMIR was reduced to a token force, the International community essentially gave the *génocidaires* the go ahead to commit slaughter unabated.

The majority of the massacres during the genocide took place during the month of April. The interim government became increasingly worried about international scrutiny and took a new approach to the killings, called 'pacification'.[316] This did not mean that the killings stopped but many killers were instructed to be more discreet. Those in the military were concerned about the more 'conventional' war with the RPF and were worried about an arms embargo.[317] During visits from UN dignitaries, the areas in which they formally visited were devoid of violence. Killings in these areas essentially ceased when they visited on the 11th, 15th and 23rd of May.[318]

Many of the actors directly involved would formally apologise to Rwanda years later for failing to intervene in the genocide. In Kigali, in April 7th 2004, Belgian Prime Minister, Guy Verhofstadt would go on to say, "We failed because rather than staying to assume our responsibility, we preferred to ignore the horror and the atrocity. We failed in our most elementary duty, the duty to

[314] Kern-Foxworth, The Effect of Advertising Stimuli on American Perception of Africa, 163.
[315] Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder*, 190.
[316] Des Forges*, Leave None to tell the Story*,219.
[317] Ibid, 224.
[318] Ndahiro and Rutazibwa, *Hotel Rwanda,* 27.

intervene and the duty of fraternity."[319]This is just one of a number of formal apologies that ranged from, the African Union (AU), the European Union (EU), the United States and the UN.

All these apologies however will never erase the indelible imagery of foreign withdrawal from Rwanda. The evacuation of expatriates and the reduction of UNAMIR will remain a glaring blot of guilt for the International community. What makes these actions truly reprehensible is the fact that there were real consequences to this desertion. The films draw attention to these real consequences and show viewers how damaging the decisions made by people in the safety of distant offices and conference rooms can be. Even after more than two decades, it is still baffling to see such blatant indifference represented on screen.

The imagery of saving white bodies at the expense of black lives in not a novel depiction. However, having a representation of Africa and Africans that goes against atavistic stereotypes, makes this abandonment more acute. It is mainly through the inclusion of strong, independent and nuanced Rwandan characters, that the films are able to counteract the views associated with Afro-pessimism.

[319] Grünfeld and Huijboom, *The Failure to prevent Genocide in Rwanda,* 232.

CONCLUSION

Trouilott writes that, "From the mid-1950s to the late 1960s, Americans learned more about the history of colonial America and the American West from movies and television than from scholarly books".[320] This is shocking considering the content of the type of colonial movies that were released during that time period. What it does reflect, however, is the continued fascination that we have with visual storytelling. While that is not to say that we have lost interest in books, it certainly shows that our interest in films and television has not waned.

Many aspects of the Rwandan genocide continue to be a subject of contention for numerous academics, who remain divided on key factors such as the influence of RTLM and who shot down Habyarimana's plane. A film will not magically provide one with the answers to these dilemmas, but it will make these things accessible. Sitting down and reading about the Rwandan genocide is a somewhat overwhelming task. The genocide is made up of events and statistics so horrific that it seems unreal. Films are able to bridge the gap between fact and fiction. While the number 800,000 is still unimaginable, seeing individual characters who are believably portrayed helps makes that number thinkable. The obvious downside with regards to the medium of film, is how directors choose to frame and use the information of the genocide within the film's narrative.

Many genocide films have come under severe criticism for having too free a hand with historical facts. A prime example of this is *Schindler's list*. When the film was released, there was widespread criticism as to how Spielberg had given the Hollywood treatment to such a sensitive subject. As filmmaker Michael Haneke commented:

> I don't want to judge the works of other colleagues in interviews. But taking "Schindler's List" as the most famous example, there's a scene in that film when we don't know if there's gas or water coming out in the showers in the camp. You can only do something like that with a naive audience like in the United States. It's not an appropriate use of the form. Spielberg meant well – but it was dumb. It's very difficult in German cinema because of the guilt that's still present. It often drifts off into a sentimentality that's not appropriate for the subject.[321]

[320] Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1995), 21.
[321] Calhoun, Dave. "Michael Haneke discusses 'The White Ribbon'." *TimeOut London,* https://www.timeout.com/london/film/michael-haneke-discusses-the-white-ribbon-1 (date accessed 7 April 2018)

The very idea that a film could have such a strong impact on one's perception of the Holocaust is notable. Because it illustrates how these films inadvertently locate themselves in positions of importance with regard to the subject they seek to represent. It, therefore, demonstrates the value of these films, especially with regards to how they are able to elicit an emphatic response from viewers and critics.

Jean Hatzfeld has written a trilogy of books that deals with the experiences of the survivors and perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide. The books are deeply haunting due to the fact that they include first-hand accounts of survivors. Take for example, the killings in Kayumba forest in the district of Nyamata. Tutsis were running around the dense forest trying to escape the swings of the killers' machetes and living off the water that dripped down from leaves. It is something that is hard for those who haven't lived through it to even conceptualise. There were twenty survivors left standing in Kayumba forest once the genocide had ended, there were six thousand before the killing began. [322] While Hatzfeld does a fine job in attempting to describe this killing field in his book:

> The Kayumba Forest is a sparse one, with growths of thorny shrubs and stunted eucalyptus trees whose roots crawl and tangle up with one another in their struggle to penetrate the flinty red dirt. On any ordinary day, the cowherds and animals they drive up there- not so much to let them graze, since the brushwood is mostly indigestible, as to give them some shade- are the only creatures around, except for the eagles soaring far overhead in infinite circles.[323]

It is, however, only once one has watched a film such as *100 days* or *The Day God Walked Away* that one is able to get a better understanding of how truly horrifying it was. Both films contain many shots of the visual landscape of Rwanda, and Van Leeuw in particular includes extensive footage of forest scenery, which helps one understand just how terrible the conditions were. This is not something that can be fully conveyed through written discourse no matter how well described, as Robert Rosenstone explains, "Film may lack the ability to provide deep psychological insight, or extensive descriptions of particular intellectual or political milieus, but it can suggest with terrifying immediacy how the past looked, and how people moved, felt spoke and acted - in time".[324]

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[322] Jean Hatzfeld, *The Strategy of Antelopes,* 42.
[323] Ibid, 38.
[324] Robert Rosenstone, *History on Film/ Film on History* (2nd Edition) (New York: Routledge, 2013), 108.

Representing genocide on screen is a challenging endeavour, especially when one is trying to express the complex aspects of the Rwandan genocide. The sexual violence, killing and death of the genocide continue to be topics that are consistently, and frustratingly, difficult to impart to viewers. Film has the ability to convey these challenging aspects of the genocide, without resorting to an 'exact' representation.

The Day God Walked Away is an exemplary example of how one is able to express violence through a combination of sound and tightly controlled visuals. The look of horror and confusion on Jacqueline's face, as she hears these horrific noises from her hiding place, is far more affecting, than the very confrontational physical violence we witness in Peck's film. That is not to say that Peck's or the other directors' choice in representing physical violence is 'wrong', it is merely showcasing the ability of film to display diverse representations of physical violence.

When individuals watch films they become personally involved with them. They end up acquiring memories of events they have not lived through; Alison Landsberg named this phenomena 'prosthetic memory'.[325] While we do certainly visualise images when we read written discourse, films provide us with specific images. The images we envision when we read written pieces of discourse are images that are built upon our experiences as individuals. Whereas when we watch a film we have no control over which images are fed to us. The visuals that we consume during the period of film viewing are very carefully chosen and constructed.

The reason why this distinction is so important is because there is a collective experience to watching a film that is absent from consuming written historical discourse. When we read a piece of historical discourse, the chances are that we do so from the safe parameters of our own life, which causes us to distance ourselves from the events described. However, when we are watching a film we tend to identify with the characters on screen and how they are situated within the plot, as Rosenstone extrapolates, "They are what help to create the feeling that we are not just viewing history, but actually living through events in the past, experiencing (or so we think, at least momentarily) what others felt in times of war, revolution, and social, cultural, and political change".[326]

[325] Lenn Engelen, Back to the Future, Ahead to the Past. Film and history: A Status Quaestionis (*Rethinking History* 11.4 (2007)), pp. 555-563, 562
[326] Rosenstone, *History on Film/ Film on History,* 39.

Throughout the thesis, there have been numerous examples, highlighting the West's view of the Rwandan genocide. It was seen as some tribal atavistic conflict, and this was reflected, in both the response and the media coverage of the genocide. Being able to identify with the people on screen is important because it humanises the conflict. Sontag writes: "Our failure is one of imagination, of empathy."[327] But to empathise one must first humanise. It is easy to feel unaffected when one views conflict in distant places, because it seems unrelated to oneself. Africa, in particular, seems to be a topic of emotional dissonance for the West. The main reason for this is the lack of relatable narratives involving Africans. Africans are so often associated with images of suffering and poverty that this linkage becomes expected. Films have the ability to create a humanistic appeal to conflict, particularly African conflict.

A number of the films have tried to counteract this negative view of Africa, not only through the inclusion of Rwandan protagonists, but through showing that problems can be solved internally. This is most aptly demonstrated in the framing of the RPF, who are portrayed as a disciplined force, which is at odds with the stereotypical portrayal of African armed forces. Some of the films are very problematic in this regard. *Shooting Dogs*, in particular, stands out as a film that is uninterested in portraying Rwanda as a country which is capable of progressing, not only through its choice of fictional protagonists, but in its inability to remain objective in its condemnation of the West. That is not to say that the film is without merit, since the very fact that a film has been made about the Rwandan genocide is noteworthy. This same understanding should be applied to all the films. Producing feature films about the Rwandan genocide creates awareness around the event and that in itself is valuable.

Christian Gudehus, Stewart Anderson and David Keller did a reception study with forty one participants regarding the film *Hotel Rwanda*. It was to try to understand how participants interpreted and remembered the film and the responses are enlightening, especially when linked to the point made above.[328] One participant, a twenty-four-old French teacher, when asked about her thoughts on the film, answered, "I just felt like they were real people. They didn't seem, like,

[327] Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others,* 7.
[328] Christian Gudehus, Stewart Anderson and David Keller, Understanding Hotel Rwanda: A Reception study (*Memory studies* 3.4 (2010)), pp. 344-363.

stupid. I mean, they just seemed like, ok, this is real life".[329] There is a certain connection that one can have with a film that one cannot make when reading a piece of written historical discourse.

One of the main criticisms levelled at genocide films, is that they are not only historically inaccurate, but that they tend to omit some event, person or fact that critics believe to be important. However in terms of practicality, it is nonsensical to expect a more or less two hour film to explain and represent a historical event in its entirety. Take for example, the Human Rights Watch report spearheaded by Alison Des Forges, the report is massive and exhausting in its investigation of the Rwandan genocide and yet it still does not 'cover' the whole of the genocide.[330] It would, therefore, be unfair to expect a film to achieve a superior result. A film does not strive to capture a historical event in its entirely: it rather seeks to merely reflect the major themes of an event, in order to convey to viewers a memorable and impressionable experience.

As one saw in the very first chapter, contextualisation is vitally important. This contextualisation lays the framework for the narrative to take shape. Too little context means that the violence of the genocide becomes meaningless. Out of all the films, the two films that stand out are *Sometimes in April* and *Munyurangabo.* Peck provides the most comprehensive introduction to the history of Rwanda and the genocide; this therefore makes the violence of the genocide accessible to viewers. *Munyurangabo,* stands out for its lack of context, which ultimately proves appropriate for its post-genocide setting and its sensitive approach to 'ethnicity'. The rest of the films contextualise with varying degrees of success.

Kinyarwanda's approach to context is indicative of many of the films; it gets an important thing such as the date of the genocide wrong but at the same time touches on unique topics unexplored in other films. Many of the films fall into this bracket, of getting some things right, but other things wrong. This quandary ultimately reveals a larger problem; whether films can actually be damaging to ones understanding of the genocide. While there certainly is an argument for it, it is important that one acknowledges that it is irrational to rely solely on films for knowledge, and if one is to does so, it is not the fault of the director.

[329] Ibid, 358.
[330] Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story.*

The criticism of historical inaccuracy in films is a contentious issue. Brent Toplin is of the belief that manipulation is necessary when it comes to dramatization, and goes even further, in turning the spotlight on practises within the field of historiography,

> Furthermore, moviemakers are not the only ones who manipulate historical evidence. In different ways, those who speak and write about history also exercise degrees of interpretative license. Teachers and scholars are selective in the way they privilege facts in their narratives, and they draw conclusions in partisan ways.[331]

Toplin draws attention to the fact that bias is not something that is restricted to any one field but is something that is alive and well in every discipline. Let us take the photograph as an example; particularly photographs that appear in newspapers. We inadvertently tend to link this type of photograph with 'fact'. It is perceived as something that is outside of the realm of manipulation when included together with the news. However, the photograph is biased by its very nature. For whatever is included within the frame of the photograph means that there are numerous things that have been excluded. Bias is not a unique property of the genocide film. However, it seems that critics are particularly hard on historical films, especially when these films deal with a significant a subject as genocide.

Many of the directors of the films are guilty of this manipulation, of placing the importance on one aspect over the other. Nick Hughes is even guilty of including an event in his film that actually occurred in Burundi in 1993. This manipulation, however, should not detract one from the value of the film as a whole. One first needs to acknowledge the limitation of film as a medium to understand why this manipulation is necessary. The Rwandan genocide is not something that can easily be disassembled. A film cannot devote pages, and even chapters, to explain the history and politics of Rwanda. It rather focuses on creating something to which viewers can relate; an experience which should hopefully create accessibility around understanding the genocide.

The point one is left to ponder is, how do we examine a genocide film? How is a genocide film defined? A genocide film is above all else a film. It will never be a substitute for reading a good book on the subject. Therefore, it is important that these films are judged accordingly. Films and written discourse operate on two different planes; the one literal and the other metaphorical. Films

[331] Toplin, *Reel History,* 2.

are able to use symbols and visual language to enable viewers to understand concepts that may take authors much longer to unpack. A prime example of this is the film *Sometimes in April*. As was mentioned earlier there is a stereotype of how a Hutu man is supposed to look, "short and thick-set with a big head, a jovial expression, a wide nose and enormous lips..."[332] Peck, however, decides to immediately challenge this stereotype by casting six foot three actor Idris Elba to play the protagonist, a Hutu.[333]

No one really wants to watch a 'history book converted verbatim to film'. While as great as it would be to include as many facts as possible in a film, a film has conventionally been created to be enjoyed. A balance needs to be achieved, whereby the filmmaker, creates a film with which viewers can connect. Therefore, the film needs to not be too didactic and play like an expository documentary. While at the same time it should not be too dramatic so as to eclipse the event it is trying to portray as Toplin explains:

> Moviemakers who attempt to pack a lot of historical information into their productions incur considerable risk. Fact-laden dramas can confuse and tire audiences, and cinematic historians who lose their audiences in a labyrinth of detail and complexity may have difficulty raising funds for future projects.[334]

All nine feature films are flawed in some way; since there is no such thing as a perfect film. Even more so with regard to genocide films, but each film does possess something, or even a number of things of value. They have some redeeming qualities which complement the existing written historical discourse around the Rwandan genocide, and add rather than detract from the canon of work.

Whilst this thesis has achieved what it has set out to do, there is still room for improvement. Particularly, with regard to how individuals would react to these films. I believe a reception study should be the next step in order to ascertain how people perceive and respond to the various aspects of the films. I am particularly interested in how Rwandans would react to these films, especially since these films have been targeted at a Western audience. There are definitely concerns around re-traumatisation but I believe that Rwandans would be the most appropriate

[332] Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis,* 6.
[333] Raoul Peck, *Sometimes in April,* 2005.
[334] Toplin, *Reel History*, 18.

audience for a reception study because the topic is one that is salient to them. This would mean that their responses to the films would likely differ from those of a ‘foreign’ audience.

This thesis has shown that even with the faults that the films possess, they are not without value. By looking at the how the films represent certain characteristics of the Rwandan genocide, one is able to appreciate the genre of the ‘genocide film’. A genocide film is able to engage with viewers in a way that is out of reach for many academic books on the subject. And it is for this very reason that they should be deemed valuable. They are able to turn a horrific event into an experience with which viewers can empathise and therefore relate to.

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