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Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Background of the Genocide	4
2.1	Pre-colonial Rwanda	5
2.2	Colonial Rwanda	7
2.2.1	The Revolution of 1959	10
2.3	Post-colonial Rwanda.....	11
2.3.1	Political Developments in Rwanda and Burundi.....	11
2.3.2	The First and Second Republic in Rwanda.....	12
2.4	From Civil War to Genocide	14
2.4.1	RPF Invasion in 1990.....	14
2.4.2	Reaction of the Government and Extremist Hutu.....	16
2.4.3	The Arusha Peace Accords	20
2.5	The Death of Habyarimana and the Beginning of the Genocide	23
3	The Genocide and its Representation in Literature	25
3.1	Physical and Psychological Violence.....	28
3.1.1	Rape in <i>A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali</i>	31
3.1.2	Brutality and Trauma in <i>Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You</i>	38
3.2	The World Stood By	50
3.3	Living in the Aftermath.....	66
3.3.1	Forgiveness and Reconciliation in <i>Left to Tell</i>	67
3.3.2	Commemoration in <i>Murambi, the Book of Bones</i>	74
4	Conclusion.....	84
5	Bibliography.....	86
6	Appendix	90

1 Introduction

The Rwandan Genocide of 1994 “was one of the most gruesome massacres of civilians since the Holocaust during the Second World War” (Bah 253). After the Holocaust of the Jews, the United Nations swore to never let another genocide happen again. However, while between 800,000 and 1 million Rwandans were slaughtered within 100 days, the rest of the world stood by. Journalists, novelists and survivors have been working on the reprocessing of the genocide and have published novels in order to raise awareness by addressing a great variety of themes.

As the historical background is mentioned by all writers and is crucial for understanding the origins of the genocide, an overview of Rwanda’s history and some relevant aspects of Burundi’s past are provided in the second chapter. Rwanda’s transformation from a Tutsi-monarchy into a German and then Belgian colony, and finally into a Hutu Republic was influenced by a number of complex events. Before European colonizers arrived, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa lived together peacefully; ruled by a mwami - a Tutsi king. However, under Belgian rule, the terms ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ were ‘racialized’ and politicized. Far-reaching administrative reforms fundamentally changed Rwanda’s society, since Tutsi were favored and Hutu suppressed. Consequently, Hutu were disadvantaged in all areas of life, which led to serious tensions. Nevertheless, in 1959 Rwandans wanted independence from Belgium, and Hutu began to fight against oppression. The hostility between Hutu and Tutsi led to killings and reprisals. However, Hutu won the first elections and Rwanda was declared a republic in 1962. In the First Republic, the roles of Hutu and Tutsi were reversed: Now Tutsi were suppressed and excluded from all important political and economic positions. This led to attacks from Tutsi exiles on Hutu, causing reprisal massacres of Tutsi. In 1973 General Juvenal Habyarimana led a group of army officers who had planned to overthrow the government. In the Second Republic, Habyarimana was more moderate than his predecessor, and his aim was the reconciliation of Hutu and Tutsi. After the RPF invasion in October 1990, led by Tutsi exiles, Habyarimana had to fight with serious domestic and foreign-policy problems that forced him to end his single-party regime. Hutu extremists disliked the

president's moderate course and feared reconciliation with the Tutsi rebels and a subsequent Tutsi government. Therefore, extensive anti-Tutsi propaganda was spread and numerous militias were formed. The implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords of 1993 between the Rwandan government and the RPF was interrupted by the assassination of president Habyarimana on 6 April 1994 and the following genocide of Tutsi.

The purpose of this thesis is to analyze how the Rwandan Genocide is represented in novels. Although each narrative addresses a variety of themes and focuses on different aspects of the genocide, three prevailing themes can be detected: The physical and psychological violence carried out by the perpetrators, the inaction of the United Nations, and living in the aftermath of the genocide. These themes are presented in chapter 3 and analyzed in the following novels: *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* by Gil Courtemanche, *Murambi*, *The Book of Bones* by Boubacar Boris Diop, *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza, and *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You* by Hanna Jansen.

The first important theme is 'Physical and Psychological Violence'. At the beginning of this chapter an examination of how such violence could have been possible in Rwanda is provided. Then, the novel *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* is analyzed in regard to the extreme violence committed by perpetrators. Courtemanche portrays how brutally the extremists proceeded, therefore Georgina's rape and death at a roadblock, and Gentile's abduction and sexual enslavement are examined. The second narrative addressing violence is *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You*, which is the story of eight-year-old Jeanne who loses her family in the genocide and is deeply traumatized by having witnessed the brutal death of her mother and brother. Thus, the violent scenes are described and Jeanne's trauma is compared to trauma theory.

The second crucial theme to be found in novels of the Rwandan Genocide is the inaction of the United Nations. The passivity of the UN is criticized in each of the selected novels. Therefore, the historical background of the UN's involvement is portrayed and the narratives are analyzed accordingly. While in *Left to Tell* and *Over*

a Thousand Hills I Walk With You the non-intervention of the UN is questioned on a personal level, in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* and *Murambi*, *The Book of Bones* the UN's role is criticized on a moral level.

In the third and final theme of this thesis the focus is on the aftermath of the genocide. At the beginning of this chapter, information about post-genocidal Rwanda is presented. The novel *Left to Tell* is about the survivor Immaculée whose family is killed in the genocide. However, due to her complete faith in God, she is able to forgive the perpetrators and is convinced that Rwanda can heal when all inhabitants open their hearts to God and learn to forgive. Therefore, the notions of forgiveness and reconciliation are analyzed in this novel. Finally, in *Murambi*, *The Book of Bones* the commemoration of the Rwandan Genocide in form of memorials is described. Diop addresses the display of human remains, and thus offers readers critical input in regard to national remembrance.

2 Background of the Genocide

This chapter is dedicated to the historical background of the Rwandan Genocide in order to portray the circumstances that led to the killings in 1994. As the Rwandan history is complex, the main focus of this chapter lies on the developments that created the conditions for the genocide. The history of Rwanda is closely intertwined with that of Burundi. The pre-colonial and colonial period of both countries was shaped by similar circumstances and particularly in the post-colonial era events in one country triggered actions in the other. Prunier (198) describes Rwanda and Burundi as “the two opposite ends of a political seesaw. Their parallel – and at times common – past histories, their comparable social structures, their constant and almost obsessive mutual scrutiny, fated them to be natural mirrors of each other’s hopes, woes and transformations.” Therefore, past events in the history of Burundi are mentioned as well.

Rwanda lies in Central Africa and is a small, landlocked country with numerous mountains; therefore it is often referred to as ‘the Land of a Thousand Hills’. Its neighboring countries are the Democratic Republic of the Congo (back then Zaire), Tanzania, Burundi, and Uganda. Around 8 million inhabitants make Rwanda one of the most densely populated countries in the world. 84 percent of the population are Hutu, almost 15 percent Tutsi and 1 percent Twa (Bah 255). Twa are pygmies who were either hunter-gatherers in forests or served on the court of the king (Prunier 5). The roles of Hutu and Tutsi in society were more complex: In search of their origins and the increasing tensions between them, a variety of theories have emerged. Some scholars are convinced that Twa are the “original inhabitants” of today’s Rwanda and that Hutu and Tutsi migrated at later points (Bah 255). Therefore, Hutu, Tutsi and Twa descend from different peoples and thus are of distinct ethnicities. This view was adopted by the colonists. However, other scholars are of the opinion that the terms Hutu and Tutsi only refer to a difference in social status within one community (Mamdani 42). Regardless of their origins, Hutu and Tutsi spoke the same Bantu language, Kinyarwanda, and they shared the same religious and philosophical beliefs as well as cultural practices (Des Forges 31).

2.1 Pre-colonial Rwanda

Until today, opinions about the origins of Hutu and Tutsi and their supposed differences are divergent. While Tutsi, especially RPF leaders, state that there are no differences except for social status, Hutu, in particular extremists, advocate the view that there are also biological factors that distinguish them (Bah 257).

The “no-difference”-hypothesis suggests that Hutu and Tutsi derive from the same people and their differences in phenotype, that is physical appearance, can be traced back to their positions in society and the related lifestyle and diet (Mamdani 43, 45). In contrast to that, the “difference”-hypothesis advocates that Hutu and Tutsi came from different regions. These more recent studies rather focus on the genotype, that is blood factors, than on the phenotype. Two studies propose that Hutu and Tutsi do not share the same ancestors as considerable differences in the presence of the sickle cell trait and the digestion of lactose between Hutu and Tutsi were found. These findings buttressed the theory that Hutu and Tutsi in fact derive from different peoples of distinct regions (Mamdani 45-46). A fact which is historically recognized is that a great number of pastoralists immigrated to what is now known as Rwanda in the fifteenth century. Based on the theory that Tutsi originate from other parts of Africa, the difference in appearance of Hutu and Tutsi can be explained by their adaptation to different climates (Mamdani 48, 50). As Mamdani (57) points out, the theories about the origins and distinctions of both groups should be seen as complementary rather than separate, since in isolation they provide an incomplete picture of Rwanda’s history. Moreover, he (59) emphasizes an important fact: “There has not been one single and constant definition of Hutu and Tutsi through Rwandan history. Rather, the definitions have shifted as a consequence of every major change in the institutional framework of the Rwandan state.”

Irrespective of their origins, before the arrival of the first European colonial powers at the end of the nineteenth century, Hutu and Tutsi had long lived together in a complex and highly organized “social and political hierarchy” (Bah 258). There existed a number of institutions, most importantly: family, lineage and clan. There were eighteen major clans in Rwanda, consisting of various lineages. A lineage was

either Hutu or Tutsi, comprised around five generations and could be traced back to one ancestor. Typically, one clan included Hutu as well as Tutsi lineages (Mamdani 53). In this respect, the client-patron relationship needs to be mentioned: The powerful and wealthy person, in most cases Tutsi, offered protection in exchange for cattle (Mamdani 65). At the top of this system was the mwami (king), “who lived at the center of a large court and was treated like a divine being. The nature of his power was sacred rather than profane” (Prunier 9). The mwami appointed chiefs, sub-chiefs and leaders for local administration (Bah 258). The power and wealth of Rwanda’s rulers was measured by the number of their cattle, their military control, and rituals (Des Forges 32). Through these court rituals, “important Hutu lineages were incorporated into the court as ritualists [...] [they] set the rules of governance, but without themselves governing” (Mamdani 63). All kings, army commanders and the vast majority of chiefs were Tutsi (Mamdani 69).

A consequence of the patron-client relationship was the emergence of an economic system based on two groups: pastoralists (cattle owners), who mostly were Tutsi, and agriculturalists (farmers), who primarily were Hutu (Des Forges 32). Mamdani (51) points out that for a long time most inhabitants of Rwanda owned cattle and tended fields; thus, “[a]gricultural and pastoral activities were hardly exclusive.” For him “[t]he economic community was less a natural than a historical artifact, less a biological predisposition than a political creation.” Nevertheless, as Des Forges (32) states, it seems that the term ‘Tutsi’ had become established for a person who owns cattle but was later used for the entire group of elites. In contrast to that, the word ‘Hutu’ was equated with “subordinate or follower”, and consequently was used for “the mass of ordinary people.” However, these were not fixed categories because Hutu could become Tutsi if they owned enough cattle (Straus 20). Precisely this fact, the possibility for Hutu to reach “Tutsi status” prevented hatred between Tutsi and Hutu in the pre-colonial era (Mamdani 70).

As the majority of Rwandans married within their occupational group it could be argued that “over generations pastoralists came to look more like other pastoralists and cultivators like other cultivators” (Des Forges 33). Nevertheless, intermarriage existed and became common after the 1959 revolution, which led to the Tutsi’s loss

of power (Des Forges 33). In Rwanda and Burundi people identify either as Hutu or Tutsi. Despite mixed marriages, there exist no hybrids. After marriage, “the wife takes on the identity of the husband” and children receive their social affiliation through “patrilineal descent”. This means that if the father is Hutu and the mother Tutsi, the children are considered as Hutu (Mamdani 53). Although Tutsi women changed their social identity after marrying Hutu men, they were killed as Tutsi during the genocide in 1994 (Mamdani 290). As a consequence of intermarriage it was impossible to differentiate between Hutu and Tutsi just by their looks. However, when the first European colonists arrived in Rwanda, the terms ‘Tutsi’ for pastoralists, who are the “power-holders”, and ‘Hutu’ for agriculturalists, who are the “subjects”, had been widely established (Des Forges 32-33). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the administrative chiefs, mostly Tutsi, rose to the governing elite of the country and thought of themselves as superior to “ordinary people” (Des Forges 32).

For a long time, only Tutsi had active roles in the military. However, in the mid-eighteenth century, the military system was reorganized and became “the real source of Rwanda’s growing strength in the region” (Mamdani 67). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, all male Rwandans - whether Hutu, Tutsi or Twa - were included in the army (Mamdani 67).

2.2 Colonial Rwanda

Regardless of the origins of the terms ‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’, it was the colonial powers that changed their meaning and related them to race (Straus 20-21). The colonists did not only turn Hutu and Tutsi into “political identities” but into “polarized” ones (Mamdani 59).

At the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 the African continent was distributed among European powers. The kingdoms Burundi and Rwanda fell under German rule in 1897. The German colonial power indirectly influenced the Rwandan state by supporting the existing mwami system (Bah 258). Although German colonists hardly changed political or administrative institutions, their support of the Tutsi king unsettled the existing system and marked the beginning of tensions between Hutu

and Tutsi. Towards the end of World War I Germany had to transfer all of its colonies to other countries in order to fulfill the postwar peace settlement. Belgium, which had already been the colonial power of Belgian Congo, also gained Rwanda and Burundi in 1916 (Bah 259).

The Belgian colonial power did not change the political system of Rwanda within the first few years in power (Bah 259). While Rwandans believed that the mwami was chosen on spiritual grounds, colonists saw a racial motivation behind the election of the king. In their point of view the existence of an organized state on the African continent was only possible if the rulers derived from somewhere else (Mamdani 80). According to colonial anthropologists, explorers and missionaries, Hutu and Tutsi strongly differed in their genotype and phenotype (Mamdani 43). In this respect, the “Hamitic Hypothesis” was advocated: While this theory regarded Tutsi as descendants of Caucasian Hamites, Hutu were seen as indigenous Bantu people (Straus 20-21). Tutsi were considered as more intelligent than Hutu, which was explained by the racist theory that Tutsi could have been related to Europeans (Bah 257). Thus, the terms “‘Hutu’ and ‘Tutsi’ were constructed as political identities by the colonial state, Hutu as indigenous and Tutsi as alien” (Mamdani 34). In general, Tutsi were portrayed as “tall, thin and narrow-featured” and Hutu were described as “shorter, stronger, and with broader features” (Des Forges 33). The third group of inhabitants, the Twa, were considered as “small, chunky, muscular, and very hairy [...] With a monkey-like flat face and a huge nose, he is quite similar to the apes” (Rumiya qtd. in Prunier 6). These descriptions demonstrate the racist and de-humanizing thinking of the colonists. As Twa only made up around 1 percent of the population, research of their role during the genocide is limited (Des Forges 33-34). Furthermore, they were mostly neglected in the colonial anthropologists’ studies; the focus was on Hutu and Tutsi (Mamdani 44).

The colonial power considered Tutsi to be a “‘superior’ ‘race’ of ‘natural-born rulers” (Straus 20). “European race thinking [...] became the basis for allocating power in the colonial system.” Consequently, the colonists introduced race as the essential “determinant of power” or subordination (Straus 21). The once fluid terms of Hutu and Tutsi became institutionalized and politicized categories (Straus 22). The

classification of the Rwandan population in Hutu, Tutsi or Twa was based on their supposed phenotype and their possession of cattle (Bah 262). It was this categorization of Rwandans that formed the basis of the tensions between Hutu and Tutsi. Although some people could have been identified as Hutu or Tutsi based on their physical appearance as described by colonists, the majority of Rwandans had features of Hutu as well as Tutsi due to intermarriage (Mamdani 54).

In relation to the Hamitic Hypothesis a far-reaching administrative reform was implemented in Rwanda between 1926 and 1936 (Mamdani 34). All state institutions were reorganized and the Hamitic Hypothesis was put into practice in form of Tutsi supremacy and Hutu oppression (Mamdani 88). Moreover, Belgium limited the power of the mwami, and was therefore actively involved in the administration of the country. Apart from the colonial state, the Catholic Church was an additional institution that promoted the difference between Hutu and Tutsi (Bah 260). As the king and the court held on to their traditional religion and could not be persuaded to adopt Christianity at first, the colonial state dismissed Rwandan chiefs if they refused to convert (Mamdani 92). Consequently, the Tutsi elite realized that conversion to Christianity was the only possibility to be part of a new Rwanda and prevent marginalization. By then, the Catholic Church had control over the educational system and favored Tutsi as they were considered to be the more intelligent ethnicity and therefore better suited for administrative posts. Thus, Hutu were disadvantaged in all areas of life and were faced with serious difficulties in receiving post-secondary education or finding employment. Moreover, the Belgian policy expanded the forced labor system, which was not only characterized by the obligation of every "able-bodied member of society" to participate, but also humiliation and abuse. As a consequence numerous Rwandans fled to Uganda, a British colony (Bah 260-261).

However, the introduction of identity cards by the Belgian colonial administration in 1933 had the most fatal consequences (Bah 261). As Mamdani (99) points out: "*In colonial Rwanda, there were no ethnic groups, only races.*" The Hamitic Hypothesis was applied by means of measuring height and features of the Rwandan population. According to the classification, a person was declared as Hutu, Tutsi or Twa. This official allocation was the last step of the transformation of the once fluid terms Hutu

and Tutsi into fixed categories: On the one hand, Hutu, the “indigenous and inferior” agriculturalists; and on the other hand, Tutsi, the “alien, but [...] superior” pastoralists. As a result Hutu could no longer rise to the status of Tutsi nor could Tutsi fall to the status of Hutu (Bah 261-262). Moreover, there were no Hutu chiefs left; these positions were exclusively held by Tutsi (Mamdani 100). All these circumstances led to serious conflicts between Hutu and Tutsi.

2.2.1 The Revolution of 1959

After World War II the situation in Rwanda began to change and tensions between Hutu and Tutsi but also between Rwandans and the colonists heightened. One condition that led to the increase of tensions was that the Tutsi wanted to be independent from Belgium. Thus, Belgium, which until then had supported the Tutsi, felt betrayed (Bah 263). In addition, the Hutu openly criticized their suppression and the monopoly of Tutsi in politics, economy and society (Mamdani 116). A further factor was that the newly established United Nations administered Rwanda as part of the trusteeship system (Des Forges 38). Considering the situation of all Rwandan inhabitants, the UN pressured Belgium to put an end to the Hutu-Tutsi inequality (Straus 21). As a consequence, the Belgian colonists helped the emergence of a new “Hutu counter-elite” (Bah 263). Hutu revolutionaries proclaimed the revolution as national, democratic and above all enabling social justice (Mamdani 133). Until 1959 various political parties, that were either predominantly Hutu or Tutsi, were established. However, the most important ones were UNAR (Union National Rwandaise), which was a royalist Tutsi party and PARMEHUTU (Party of the Movement and of Hutu Emancipation) (Bah 264). The result was a rivalry between “Hutu [...] nationalism from below” and “Tutsi nationalism from above” (Mamdani 117). While Tutsi consciousness had long been one of power, Hutu consciousness had been one of lack of power before World War II and turned into a consciousness of struggle for power in the 1950s (Mamdani 117).

Due to the hostility between the parties, the political situation in Rwanda was critical. Eventually, a Hutu sub-chief was attacked by radical Tutsi, causing a wave of violence with reprisal killings on both sides (Des Forges 38-39). Subsequently,

thousands of Rwandans, most of them Tutsi, fled to neighboring countries, now known as Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (Bah 264). After these events, the Belgians supported the Hutu and half of the Tutsi chiefs were replaced by Hutu. With the assistance of a great number of local Hutu authorities, the PARMEHUTU won the elections held in 1960. Furthermore, the majority of Rwandans wanted to end monarchy (Des Forges 39). Consequently, the Tutsi monarchy was abolished and Rwanda was officially declared a republic on 1 July 1962. Moreover, an African armed force, mainly consisting of Hutu, was established (Bah 265). As Straus (21-22) points out: “race thinking that had once hardened identity categories and benefited the Tutsi minority now gave rise to ethnic nationalism [...] Rwanda’s new Hutu leaders claimed independence in the name of the previously-oppressed Hutu majority. Democracy meant Hutu rule.” Mamdani (103) explains the decolonization-process as a “social movement that empowered the majority constructed as indigenous against the minority constructed as alien.” Therefore, the Revolution of 1959 strengthened the “political identities [of Hutu and Tutsi] created by colonialism” (Mamdani 104). One clearly positive aspect of the revolution, however, was the abolition of forced labor (Mamdani 134).

2.3 Post-colonial Rwanda

2.3.1 Political Developments in Rwanda and Burundi

After the revolution the political developments in Rwanda and Burundi differed. In Burundi a Tutsi dominated political system emerged due to the massacres in Rwanda between 1959 and 1963, whereas Rwanda became a Hutu-dominated republic (Prunier 198). At first Burundi seemed to be determined to reconcile Hutu and Tutsi, which is also reflected in the result of the first elections in 1961 – “a landslide victory for a joint Hutu and Tutsi party”, led by a Tutsi mwami. However, after the Hutu prime-minister Pierre Ngendandumwe was murdered by a Tutsi soldier in January 1965, the following election would have resulted in a Hutu majority and was thus disregarded by the mwami. Subsequent to an attempted coup the king went into exile and left his son in charge. Nevertheless, he was dethroned by the new prime-minister Michel Micombero, and Burundi was declared a republic which, in

contrast to Rwanda, was clearly dominated by Tutsi. The following decades were characterized by ruthless Tutsi power and discrimination against Hutu (Gascoigne on Historyworld.net).

2.3.2 The First and Second Republic in Rwanda

From 1959 onwards, the relation between Hutu and Tutsi continued to deteriorate. After Rwanda had gained independence from Belgium in 1962, the first president, Grégoire Kayibanda, who had been the Hutu leader of the revolution, discriminated against Tutsi (Mamdani 127). In contrast to the colonial period, the roles of Hutu and Tutsi were now reversed. The independent Rwandan government was led by Hutu, and Tutsi were excluded from almost all political positions as they were considered as foreigners. While their alien origin was the reason they were favored by the colonists, in the First Republic, Tutsi were now considered as “politically illegitimate” for the exact same reason (Mamdani 134). Although Tutsi were regarded as members of the society, they were denied any form of political participation because their ‘race’ was regarded as foreign, and thus had no right to partake in politics (Mamdani 138). Kayibanda was an extremist and during his regime various anti-Tutsi massacres took place (Straus 23). Thus, Tutsi refugees, living in neighboring countries, believed that the only possibility to regain power was by means of military force. Therefore, they formed guerrilla-groups, which were immediately referred to as “inyenzi” (cockroaches), a term that was later used by extremist Hutu to dehumanize the entire Tutsi population (Bah 265). These guerrillas began to attack Rwanda from exile in 1961 (Des Forges 39). However, their actions provoked anti-Tutsi reprisals administered by the Hutu government. Consequently, numerous Tutsi intellectuals and leaders were killed; however, a great number of innocent civilians were slaughtered as well (Bah 265). Des Forges (40) estimates that by the late 1960s around 20,000 Tutsi had been murdered and over 300,000 had had to flee abroad.

In Burundi the worst massacre took place in April and May 1972 and was directed at the educated Hutu class (Gascoigne on HistoryWorld.net). After an attempted uprising around 200,000 Hutu were slaughtered by the predominantly Tutsi army. This incident influenced the political development in Rwanda (Mamdani 137). In July

1973 General Juvenal Habyarimana led a group of army officers to overthrow Kayibanda. Habyarimana, who was Hutu, ruled from 1973 until 1994 and was more moderate than his predecessor as he wanted to prevent large-scale massacres like that of Burundi in the future. Violence against Tutsi was kept at bay and there were no massacres for almost two decades; however, Tutsi representation in politics and military continued to be very low (Bah 266). Moreover, the “national goal” of the Second Republic was “justice and reconciliation”. Therefore, there was “a shift in the political identity of the Tutsi from a race to an ethnic group [...] *indigenous* to Rwanda” (Mamdani 138). The implementation of justice included the redistribution of school seats according to “ethnic affiliation”. Consequently, Hutu should “receive over 85 percent of the places, the Tutsi *between* 10 and 15 percent, and the Twa 1 percent” (Mamdani 139). This form of redistribution demonstrates that Habyarimana’s politics continued to separate Hutu and Tutsi and even favored Hutu as the disproportionate number of school places shows. However, numerous extremist Hutu contested the shift of Tutsi-identity from race to ethnicity and considered the regime as “pro-Tutsi” (Mamdani 149). Therefore, ethnic enmities continued, particularly because Habyarimana formed the MRND (National Revolutionary Movement for Development) and established a one-party state by banning all other parties in 1975. This means that legislative, executive and judicial powers were subject to the president (Mamdani 143). A further crucial change took place in form of a communal reform, which divided Rwanda into “ten *préfectures*, and these into 143 *communes* of about 30,000 persons. Each commune comprised eight *collines* (hills), with each hill divided into *secteurs*, and each sector into two *cellules*” (Mamdani 144). Communes can be considered as the “essential building blocks of the administration”, which were led by burgomasters, who had taken over the role of former Tutsi-chiefs. They were subordinate to prefects but had “more immediate and pervasive power over the ordinary people than did his superiors” (Des Forges 41). Both authorities were assigned from above and were not elected by the inhabitants. This highly organized administration was a key component for the execution of the genocide in 1994 (Mamdani 144). Due to the continuation of the use of identity cards, local authorities knew exactly which people were Hutu and Tutsi and where they lived (Des Forges 42).

The political situation remained stable until the late 1980s (Bah 266). However, due to the following circumstances Habyarimana's government was weakened: Firstly, a plummet of international coffee prices caused an economic crisis. Secondly, a drought led to severe food shortage in 1989. Thirdly, an increase in "corruption and favoritism on the part of Habyarimana" and people close to him discontented the population (Des Forges 467). In addition to these internal problems, there was also pressure from outside as neighboring countries felt that Rwandan refugees immensely contributed to the political instability of their own countries (Bah 267). Due to these conditions Habyarimana was forced to consider reforms and agreed to a multi-party system in Rwanda in September 1990 (Des Forges 47).

2.4 From Civil War to Genocide

2.4.1 RPF Invasion in 1990

By the late 1980s approximately 600,000 Rwandans lived in exile in neighboring countries. Apart from Tanzania where refugees were integrated into the local population, most Tutsi refugees lived isolated as social outcasts (Des Forges 48). The Tutsi exiles indeed had an impact on politics in Uganda, where they had gained influence in the National Resistance Army (NRA). Due to their help the Ugandan NRA was able to overthrow Obote's regime in 1986 (Bah 267). Consequently, Habyarimana felt threatened by the Tutsi refugees and continued to exclude them from his policy of reconciliation between Hutu and Tutsi. Inviting the Tutsi exiles back to Rwanda would have meant that they "were as much a part of the Rwandan political community as were the Hutu", which the regime did not want to admit (Mamdani 155). Therefore, Rwandan politics denied the refugees their ethnic home and in this sense made them orphans. Although they were from the region, they did not belong to a particular country and were "ethnic strangers everywhere" (Mamdani 156).

Due to their assistance in Obote's overthrow, numerous refugees had gained experiences in the military. Therefore, they planned to return to their home country and formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) and its military unit, the Rwandan

Patriotic Army (RPA) (Bah 267-268). Although international negotiations about the reintegration of the refugees into Rwanda had started, the RPF chose to return “on its own terms” (Des Forges 48). They did not only want to return home but to reach a democratization of the country (Des Forges 48). On 1 October 1990, shortly after Habyarimana had agreed to political reforms, RPF soldiers invaded Rwanda in the north and headed towards the capital Kigali; thus unleashing civil war (Prunier 93). The RPF was equipped with heavy machine-guns and their attack caught the Rwandan government by surprise. However, the RPF was then confronted with 5,200 well- trained soldiers of the Rwandan military, the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR). By then, the majority of FAR soldiers was Hutu and provided with heavy artillery. Furthermore, the Rwandan military received assistance from France, Belgium and Zaire in order to “preserve the status quo and their established economic interests in Rwanda” (Bah 268). On the second day of the invasion the RPF leader Major General Rwigyema was killed (Prunier 93-94) and the FAR started a massive counterattack, which led to heavy losses among the RPF. Major Paul Kagame, whose family had fled Rwanda during the Revolution of 1959, returned from his military training in the United States and took over Rwigyema’s position. Kagame was a “trained military strategist” and thus knew that a retreat was essential for the continuity of the RPF. Therefore, the front reassembled in the northwestern mountains of Rwanda (Bah 268). Kagame regrouped the RPF and strengthened the leadership (Prunier 115). After the invasion of October 1990, the front continued to carry out small guerrilla raids in the north of Rwanda (Des Forges 60). Nevertheless, the RPF was confronted with a severe problem: the lack of support of Tutsi civilians (Bah 268). The RPF attack terrified Hutu and Tutsi equally as Tutsi were reminded of the reprisal killings of the early 1960s and Hutu recalled the slaughter of thousands of innocent Hutu by the Tutsi army in Burundi in the years 1972, 1988 and 1991. Consequently, Tutsi as well as Hutu feared similar killings by the RPF (Des Forges 65). This made it easy for Habyarimana to unite the population against the “infiltrators” (Des Forges 49).

2.4.2 Reaction of the Government and Extremist Hutu

The political situation after the RPF invasion was unstable. In the night between October 4 and 5 heavy firing was heard in the city of Kigali for several hours. However, the attack was faked by Habyarimana's regime in order to receive the above mentioned international support and to legitimize massive arrests (Des Forges 49-50). Nevertheless, the targets of the arrests were not RPF supporters but educated Tutsi and moderate Hutu. The leading party "saw spies everywhere", causing an atmosphere of insecurity (Prunier 108-109). When the FAR soldiers and their international assistance drove back the RPF, they killed between 500 and 1,000 Tutsi civilians (Des Forges 50).

The actions of the RPF provoked extremist Hutu whose hatred of Tutsi had already been fueled due to a massacre of around 20,000 Hutu civilians in the northern provinces of Burundi in 1988 (Gascoigne on Historyworld.net). As a consequence, the extremists founded the hate radio station *Radio-Télévision Libres des Mille Collines* (RTLM) and the magazine *Kangura*. For the organizers of the genocide anti-Tutsi propaganda was an essential means of influencing people. As Des Forges (31) points out, they "skillfully exploited misconceptions about who the Tutsi were, where they had come from, and what they had done in the past." In this way, "they fueled the fear and hatred that made genocide imaginable." Straus (22) states that "loyal military units, government spokesmen, militias, and radio broadcasts [...] spread the message of violence."

2.4.2.1 Propaganda

In order to contribute greater credibility to their messages, propagandists used the "accusation in a mirror"-technique, which has been commonly used to incite genocide. Using this technique, extremists first "created" an event, like the fake attack on Kigali, and then accused their enemies (RPF) of having committed it. After the invasion, this technique was also used to accuse their intended victims (Tutsi) of planning anti-Hutu massacres, which caused reprisal killings of Tutsi 'in advance' (Des Forges 66). From 1990 on and throughout the genocide, this technique was used to provoke violence and killings (Des Forges 76). Central to the propaganda

was the portrayal of the Hutu as “innocent victim[s]” and the Tutsi as evil perpetrators (Des Forges 81).

Kangura

The newspaper *Kanguara* was founded in 1990 right after the invasion of the RPF soldiers, and published until shortly before the genocide started in April 1994. Freyer (RwandaFile.com) states that *Kangura* portrayed “the RPF and the Tutsi ethnic group [in general] as equivalent and inseparable, politicizing Rwandan history to match its own agenda, and inciting and irritating ethnic tensions in an already unstable country”. The best known article of this magazine is “The Ten Commandments of the Hutu”, published after the RPF invasion of Rwanda (Bah 269). In this article propagandists claimed that Tutsi were traitors, and that their only aim was the supremacy of their ethnic group. Therefore, Hutu should avoid all contacts with Tutsi; otherwise they would be regarded as traitors as well. Furthermore, it was claimed that Tutsi were dishonest people and less conscientious than Hutu. Consequently, all strategic positions in politics, administration, economy and military should have been entrusted to Hutu alone. In addition to that, Tutsi should have been excluded from education as far as possible. Moreover, the dissemination of anti-Tutsi propaganda was encouraged and Hutu should not have felt any pity for them (Kangura No 6, RwandaFile.com). In February 1991, the authors of *Kangura* even asserted that Tutsi were planning the extermination of all Hutu in order to instill fear (Des Forges 78). Des Forges (83) states that propagandists focused on the portrayal of Tutsi as “overwhelming threat to Hutu – to their lives and to their very existence as a people, as well as to their freedom and material well-being”. Once this clear picture of a dangerous enemy was established, it was easy for propagandists to argue that it was the right and duty of Hutu to “defend themselves, their country, and the revolution”.

RTLM

The Radio-Télévision Libre des Milles Collines (RTLM), which means Free Radio and Television of the Thousand Hills, played a crucial role during the genocide. This radio station broadcasted from 8 July 1993 to 31 July 1994 and was not only responsible for disseminating hate propaganda but also proclaimed that Tutsi had to be

exterminated. It announced the location of Tutsi and actively encouraged Hutu to go there and kill them (R.T.L.M. Transcripts, RwandaFile.com). Furthermore, extremists emphasized the fundamental difference between Hutu and Tutsi by referring to the Hamitic Hypothesis. Thus, they claimed that Tutsi had no right to live in Rwanda. Moreover, they portrayed the RPF and Tutsi in general as being one and the same. The term *inyenzi*, once used for the guerrillas in the 1960s, was now used for the entire Tutsi population (Des Forges 72, 74). During the genocide, the radio was the only medium of information for Rwandans. After RTLM had taken over the national radio station Radio Rwanda, all Rwandans could listen to was anti-Tutsi propaganda, which excessively used the “accusation in a mirror”-technique (Des Forges 70-71). As Bah (269) puts it, “Repeated messages of this kind led to a supercharged atmosphere that [...] boiled over in 1994.”

In addition, in September and October 1992 the local authorities were given orders to create lists of people who had left Rwanda secretly. These lists were for “the purpose of security” as they were supposed to reveal supporters of the RPF (Des Forges 99). These lists only contained a few names, however, they rapidly grew and comprised of around 1,500 names towards the end of February 1994 (Prunier 222).

2.4.2.2 Formation of Militia and Massacres

Apart from disseminating anti-Tutsi propaganda, Hutu extremists began to organize and train civil defense militias in order to prepare them to fight against Tutsi. The militia youth wing of the MRND became known as the *Interahamwe* (“Those who work closely together and who are united”). So as to be able to fight, the *Interahamwe* was equipped with various weapons (Bah 269). The youth group of the CDR was the *Impuzamugambi* (“Those with a single Purpose”), who often backed up the *Interahamwe* (Des Forges 56). Based on the political tensions and intensive propaganda, the *Interahamwe* participated in a new wave of Tutsi-massacres between 1990 and 1993. In March 1992 false information was spread that Tutsi planned to kill Hutu, in particular Hutu politicians, in the Bugesera region (Des Forges 87, 89). This led to one of the most horrendous ‘reprisal’ massacres, where around 300 Tutsi were brutally killed by the *Interahamwe* (Bah 270). After the massacre in

Bugesera, over 400 alleged perpetrators were arrested; however, soon afterwards they were released without trial (Prunier 137). The implementation of massacres during civil war was thoroughly planned as there was close cooperation between the military, the *Interahamwe* and local Hutu authorities (Bah 270). Ordinary people were goaded into the participation in the massacres by the local authorities of the cell, sector and commune, who spread anti-Tutsi propaganda (Des Forges 89). The local authorities received the order to carry out the massacres either from the Ministry of the Interior or from the prefect. Over time the killings were increasingly committed by militias; however, peasants continued to be involved as well (Prunier 138, 139). In this respect it has to be mentioned that “Rwandese political tradition, going back to the Banyiginya kingdom through the German and Belgian colonial periods, is one of systematic, centralised and unconditional obedience to authority” (Prunier 141). As the majority of inhabitants were illiterate, they believed the authorities’ every word. They were promised the land and cattle of the killed Tutsi, which was an enticing offer for poor inhabitants (Prunier 142). These patterns of collaboration between various institutions and hierarchies of administration were typical during the genocide (Prunier 137).

When authorities were confronted with reports of killings they either denied them or asserted that Hutu were only protecting themselves against Tutsi attacks. Furthermore, they knew that foreigners always believed explanations about “ancient, tribal hatred”, the “‘tribal’ nature of the killings” and the authorities’ inability to “control the outburst of spontaneous, popular rage” (Des Forges 91).

Beside the *Interahamwe* and the *Impuzamugambi*, there was another “civilian-military” organization, called *Zero Network*. “This death squad, according to several testimonies, had taken part in the Bugesera massacres of March 1992 and planned various political killings. It was made up of a mixture of off-duty soldiers and MRND militiamen who were given weapons by the army” (Prunier 168). One of the numerous prominent members was Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, cabinet director of the Defence Ministry, who later coordinated the genocide. It is likely that already during the negotiations in 1992 ideas of large-scale killings were exchanged by the extremists in order to put an end to the power struggle (Prunier 168,169). Therefore,

it can be assumed that “[b]y late 1992, the protagonists in the future genocide had all found their places as shadowy counterparts of the official institutions. The FAR had its secret society [the *Amasasu* (‘bullets’)], the extremist parties their militia, the secret service its killer squads” (Prunier 169). However, so far, they did not go beyond small-scale massacres and hoped that they would achieve a power-shift in that way. Nevertheless, they still needed to win over the “Hutu peasant masses” in order to seriously consider genocide (Prunier 169-170).

2.4.3 The Arusha Peace Accords

Rwandan people call the period between the signing of the Arusha Peace Accords and the beginning of the genocide “the time of hesitation and uncertainty” as it was shaped by tensions, violence and political pressure (Prunier 210).

During the course of the civil war Habyarimana’s authority was weakened. As he had promised a multi-party state, various opposition parties emerged and their goal was to put an end to the one-party regime (Mamdani 154). The most important of these fifteen parties were the MDR (Democratic Republican Movement), the PSD (Social Democratic Party), the PL (Liberal Party) and the PDC (Democratic Christian Party), which all consisted of Tutsi and moderate Hutu (Des Forges 52). Furthermore, the MRND modified its name by adding “democracy” to fit the political demands and was then called MRNDD (National Revolutionary Movement for Development and Democracy) (Mamdani 154). Soon afterwards, extremist Hutu established the CDR (Coalition for the Defense of the Republic) (Des Forges 52). Although the democratization process was officially legalized, in practice any political change was blocked by Habyarimana (Prunier 135). Violence and massacres were commonly used by the regime in order to prevent further democratization (Prunier 143). Particularly in extremist circles, the use of violence was considered as “‘normal’ in the pursuit of political ends” (Des Forges 58).

In addition to these domestic problems, international pressure intensified: After the end of the cold war and communism in Europe, Western countries demanded the end of Rwanda’s single-party system. In 1991 president Habyarimana yielded

international pressure and “formed a coalition government with the political opposition” (Straus 24). Consequently, the Habyarimana government, the democratic opposition and the RPF started peace negotiations, and a ceasefire agreement was signed in Arusha, Tanzania, in July 1992 (Prunier 150). In January 1993 it was agreed on a Broad Based Transitional Government, consisting of the president’s MRNDD, the RPF, and the four opposition parties MDR, which was the main opposition party, PSD, PL and PDC (Prunier 173).

As members of the extremist party CDR and of the MRNDD’s right wing defied the idea of the RPF becoming part of Rwanda and Tutsi gaining more power, they organized violent demonstrations and killed around 300 people. As a reaction to that, the RPF broke the cease-fire and launched a counter-attack. For the first time the RPF committed atrocities itself as some soldiers not only killed people who had been involved in previous massacres, but also their wives and children (Prunier 173-175). However, while anti-Tutsi massacres had always been considered as ‘side-effects’ of restoring peace in Rwanda, the French regarded the RPF attack as “unprovoked aggression” and provided the FAR with a “massive quantity of ammunition” (Prunier 176). In addition, extremists began to reject Habyarimana for his moderate course and probably already considered the assassination of the president in early 1993 (Prunier 182). Nevertheless, for the moment a renewed cease-fire was agreed upon on 20 February 1993 (Prunier 177). By June the regime had accepted the holding of democratic elections (Bah 270). Finally, the Arusha Peace Accords were signed on 4 August 1993 and contained precise plans for the future of Rwanda: a continuation of the initial cease-fire agreement, a Broad Based Transitional Government, the repatriation of refugees and the integration of RPF soldiers into the Rwandese military (Prunier 192-193). Nevertheless, “all the participants in the ceremony were aware of the extreme fragility of the document” (Prunier 191). A severe problem was that “[n]obody seemed to have had any idea of how it would work in practice” (Prunier 193).

In order to observe the realization of the Arusha Accords, the United Nations established the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) (Prunier 195). This peacekeeping force, led by General Roméo Dallaire, began on 5 October

1993 and lasted until March 1996 (www.un.org). The task seemed to be clear: “It was classic peacekeeping, the provision of a neutral buffer between two enemies” (Melvern 1). However, in Rwanda the political parties started to question the peace treaty soon after it had been signed. The assassination of the Burundian president Melchior Ndadaye contributed to the deterioration of this already tense atmosphere (Prunier 197). As he was the first Hutu president in Burundi, Hutu peasants were infuriated. However, instead of calming them, local authorities encouraged Hutu to retaliate directly on local Tutsi civilians. Finally, the Tutsi-controlled army intervened. Nevertheless, the pogroms against Tutsi and the killings of Hutu led to roughly 50,000 deaths. While around 150,000 Tutsi fled to army-controlled towns, an estimated 300,000 Hutu fled to neighboring countries, most of them to Rwanda. All of these circumstances affected the future of Rwanda (Prunier 199). Extremist Hutu interpreted the events as cunning plans of Tutsi to keep the power and were convinced that the time for an ‘ethnic cleansing’ was ripe. A “torrent of propaganda” was poured out by RTLM, where old themes like “majority democracy” and “Tutsi feudalism enslavement” were mixed with “ambiguous ‘calls to action’” (Prunier 200). A grossly misrepresented situation was slowly turned into a calculated political agenda of genocide. Extremists used the fear caused by the assassination of the Burundian president to persuade the Rwandan Hutu of the seriousness of the ‘Tutsi-problem’. Therefore, a ‘call to action’, which meant killing, started to spread throughout the entire country (Prunier 200-201). Killings of RPF supporters and Tutsi civilians were the consequences. During this unstable time, the implementation of the Arusha Accords began (Prunier 203). However, due to discrepancies between political parties and related riots, the realization of the treaty seemed impossible in a country shaped by civil war-like turmoil (Prunier 206). Moreover, the power transfer from Habyarimana to the new government was postponed time and again (Prunier 208).

2.5 The Death of Habyarimana and the Beginning of the Genocide

On 6 April 1994, the Rwandan president and the provisional president of Burundi, Cyprien Ntaryamira, shared a plane from the ongoing Arusha peace talks back to Rwanda and Burundi (Prunier 211). However, shortly before the landing at Kigali airport, their plane was shot down, killing both presidents (Bah 271). The death of the Rwandan president cleared the path for the genocide. Various theories exist about the assassination of Habyarimana. The two most prominent ones blame either the RPF or Hutu extremists. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that it was the RPF because neither was the Masaka Hill, from where the missiles had been fired, under RPF hands at that time (Prunier 217), nor was it in the front's political interest to kill the president during the realization of the Arusha Accords. Furthermore, the RPF would have been militarily prepared, if it had killed Habyarimana. However, it was only on 8 April - two days after the president's assassination - that the RPF decided to fight (Prunier 220-221). Therefore, it seems more likely that Habyarimana was killed by extremists who had been unsatisfied with his moderate course for years (Prunier 219). Due to the implementation of the Arusha Accords they feared total loss of power and Tutsi domination (Prunier 221). Moreover, RTLM immediately blamed the RPF (Bah 271), and an increase in excessive anti-Tutsi propaganda fueled the hatred of Hutu. In addition to the already circulating rumors of a planned Hutu-genocide, propagandists spread the message that Tutsi "had prepared pits to serve as mass graves for the Hutu" (Des Forges 78). Furthermore, Hutu were urged to avenge Habyarimana's death at all costs and the killings of Tutsi were carried out with such speed and efficiency that they had to have been carefully planned in advance. Only minutes after the plane-crash, heavy-weapon fire could be heard throughout Kigali (Melvern 135). "News of Habyarimana's death spread like wildfire" (Bah 271): Within less than one hour after the plane had been shot down, the Interahamwe had built roadblocks throughout the country. During earlier massacres Tutsi had been impeded from leaving their home area as well, however, this time they had to present their identity cards at the roadblocks. While these cards "had once served to guarantee privilege to Tutsi", they were later used to "discriminate against them" and finally became a death sentence during the genocide (Des Forges 40).

Furthermore, soldiers were searching houses according to death-lists they had received days before the genocide started. Thus, they acted in “coordinated and systematic ways in order to catch their intended victims” (Prunier 223-224). At first, politicians who opposed the regime or endangered the extremists’ plans, were targeted. Among the first victims was Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana, who temporarily would have been the head of the state (Laegreid 235, Melvern 136). She had been shot in her house, shortly before ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers, who were guarding her, were beaten and killed as they were accused of having murdered the president (Melvern 142). Moreover, almost the entire leadership of the PSD was annihilated (Prunier 230). However, apart from liberal and democratic politicians, ordinary Tutsi were slaughtered, simply because they were Tutsi, which automatically made them supporters of the RPF. After the majority of moderate politicians had been killed, the extremists targeted further opponents, like critical journalists, human rights activists but also priests and nuns (Prunier 231, Laegreid 235). The killers were ruthless and it was hardly possible for Tutsi to find a place to hide. Thousands of Tutsi tried to find refuge in public buildings, particularly in schools and stadiums. However, not even places of sanctuaries such as churches or hospitals stopped the extremists from killing (Melvern 6). While the Catholic Church had praised the Tutsi as “supreme humans” at the beginning of the twentieth century, “the same Church would turn into a prime site for the slaughter of Tutsi in 1994” (Mamdani 88).

In the night of 7 April, Colonel Bagosora established an interim government, which supported his plans of the Tutsi extermination (Prunier 232). Consequently, prefects who were known for their opposition to the killings were replaced, and the majority of them was killed (Mamdani 218). Soon the extremists gained complete power over Rwanda and “everything went ahead with the precision of a well-rehearsed drill” (Prunier 224).

3 The Genocide and its Representation in Literature

This chapter is introduced by a short definition of genocide and an overview of the narratives to be analyzed. The main focus, however, lies on the representation of the Rwandan Genocide in novels, and the four narratives discussed are dissected in relation to the most dominant themes of the genocide in literature. A particular emphasis is placed on rape and the brutality the perpetrators resorted to. Furthermore, the traumatization of people due to experiencing such events are examined. In addition, a crucial aspect is the role of the Western countries, above all the inaction of the United Nations. Finally, the aftermath on a personal and societal level is analyzed.

In general, genocide can be defined as “the deliberate and systematic extermination of a national, racial, political, or cultural group” (Dictionary.com). In the case of Rwanda this victimized group was the Tutsi population. Key elements of a genocide are effective propaganda to stigmatize the victims and the certainty of no outside interference (Melvern 252). Straus (2) points out that genocide is a “massively complex social phenomenon” as people resort to violence “of a character and level that is rare.” They lose “the normal respect of human life [...] [and] come to see fellow citizens, neighbors, friends, loved ones, and even children as ‘enemies’ who must be killed.” Prunier (142) states that there is a “total dehumanization of the Evil Other and the absolute legitimization of Authority.” Decades of Hutu suppression during colonial rule and years of intensive anti-Tutsi propaganda had led to deeply rooted mistrust and hostility between Hutu and Tutsi. As a result, Hutu extremists were determined to exterminate the Tutsi minority in Rwanda.

While the Rwandan Genocide has been thoroughly researched and a vast amount of secondary literature has been published, there only exist few novels dealing with the genocide. In these narratives “the unspeakable – and often [...] unspoken – reality of the mass murder is subject to creative intervention, artistic interpretation and cultural representation” (Forsdick 34). Often survivors of horrible events need to bear witness to the atrocities they have experienced. Thereby, they transform their “traumatic memory” into “narrative memory” in order to “com[e] to terms with [...] [their] past”

(Mengel, Borzaga, and Orantes vii). However, this does not seem to have been the case for the majority of Rwandan genocide-survivors. Instead of writing about their experiences, they drew a veil of silence over the events. Only two Tutsi who lived through the massacres translated their traumatic memory into narrative form. Eric Irvuzumugabe wrote *My Father, Maker of the Trees* and Immaculée Ilibagiza is the author of *Left to Tell* and *Led by Faith*. The writer Sindiwe Magona, who suffered under the apartheid regime in South Africa points out the importance of autobiographies:

Biography will flesh out the bare bones of history. History books and the study of history are fantastic, but they don't go into detail. Whole classes of people are put together as: "This happened to these people," and you don't ever get to know what that meant to these people, who they were in their ordinary lives. I think biographies then give face, give flesh, give blood and heart and soul to whatever period of history you are studying. (Mengel, Borzaga, and Orantes 32)

Ilibagiza and Irvuzumugabe describe how they managed to survive and how their experiences affected their lives. Despite witnessing horrific events, both are able to believe in forgiveness and reconciliation because of their faith in God. Particularly in *Left to Tell* the harsh contrast between Immaculée's ordinary, happy life before the genocide and her grief due to the loss of her family during the genocide, as well as her unshakeable belief in God, is evident. Therefore, *Left to Tell* is analyzed more closely in this thesis.

Another novel about a genocide survivor, Jeanne, is *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You*, written by Hanna Jansen. As Jeanne was a child when the genocide took place, she was even less able to comprehend why Tutsi were being killed than Immaculée and Eric. After the genocide Jeanne was left with deep mistrust in Hutu and people in general. As the experiences of a child offer interesting insights into the genocide, this narrative is examined in more detail below.

Apart from these four novels, all other narratives about the Rwandan Genocide were written by journalists and novelists who came to Rwanda after the genocide in order to unravel the history behind the massacres and bear witness to the atrocities

committed. Genocide and massacres in general awaken journalistic interest. While initial reports often tend to oversimplify events and even blame the victims, journalists feel the need to “uncover a more objective truth” (Forsdick 35). Therefore, narratives based on journalistic research can contribute to the reprocessing and commemoration of genocide as they help to break the silence that surrounds genocide (Forsdick 37). For this thesis *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* by Gil Courtemanche, a Canadian novelist and journalist, and *Murambi, the Book of Bones* by Boubacar Boris Diop, a Senegalese novelist, journalist and screenwriter, were chosen. Both narratives provide various crucial aspects of the genocide and especially focus on the passivity of the UN.

All novels that transform real experiences into fiction engage the readers more with the victims’ stories than mere facts (den Toonder 105). Mann (343) refers to Susan Sontag when pointing out that based on modern media exposure people have become dulled towards images of horrific events. Violence and trauma in one country are forgotten by the time atrocities committed in another country are reported. In this regard, Sontag mentions a phenomenon called “compassion fatigue”, which almost equals boredom towards victims of injustice. Due to the flood of information people are confronted with nowadays, they are unable to reprocess all the world’s tragedies (Mann 344). Therefore, novels are of particular importance as they affect readers due to the personal presentation of topics.

Novels about the Rwandan Genocide, regardless of the history of the author, address a great number of important themes, provide some historical background to the genocide and portray the physical and psychological violence victims had to endure. As mentioned above, the extreme violence with which the militias, in particular the Interahamwe, and the Presidential Guard raped, tortured and killed is exemplified. Furthermore, people were traumatized by the constant fear for their lives, loss of loved ones and experiences of violence. Moreover, most novels address the aftermath of the genocide on a personal and/or societal level. However, what all narratives have in common are questions concerned with “How?” and “Why?": How did it come so far that Tutsi were brutally murdered by former friends and neighbors? How was such ruthlessness possible? Why did the government let that happen and

even encouraged the slaughters? Why did the Western countries not intervene? Why did the United Nations look the other way while thousands of people were killed every day? Some of these fundamental questions can be answered by analyzing the historical background. Nevertheless, genocide is a complex phenomenon that can never be fully understood as in the aftermath people are unable to comprehend how such atrocities could have been committed. Consequently, the authors of the novels do not intend to provide “the one true history” of the genocide but rather present aspects of this multi-perspective phenomenon. In the following, the most prominent themes in narratives about the Rwandan genocide are presented. Although each novel would offer a great number of aspects to be analyzed, only one theme per book is examined in more detail. Moreover, all four narratives are additionally examined in relation to the inaction of the rest of the world.

3.1 Physical and Psychological Violence

Above it has been pointed out that the propagandists’ aim was to foster fear and hate in order to polarize Hutu and Tutsi. However, fear alone does not turn ordinary people into ruthless murderers. Although group emotions can polarize attitudes, structural or material opportunities are crucial factors of whether these emotions are expressed as violence (McDoom 121). In 1994, the genocide offered poor Rwandans the possibility to enrich themselves by joining the extremist forces (Prunier 231). Furthermore, it was the democratization-process and the assassination of president Habyarimana that created the “macrostructural opportunity for violence” (McDoom 123). Consequently, this opportunity was used by extremists in order to take over power (McDoom 123).

The influence of fear on violent behavior can be analyzed from various perspectives. There are rationalist theories, affective theories and symbolic politics theories that can be applied to the Rwandan Genocide. First, fear can be considered as rational because ethnic violence is based on strategic calculations. Rationalist theories emphasize the importance of careful considerations and plans of the elite calculations. When the power of the ruling class is threatened, they contemplate whether an engagement in ethnic violence is necessary in order to remain in the

powerful position. This is what happened in Rwanda: Hutu extremists did not plan to exterminate the Tutsi population right from the start. However, the ongoing peace negotiations, which suggested a multi-party system, were perceived as a threat to Hutu. Therefore, they tried to prevent the establishment of a moderate or Tutsi-government by disseminating anti-Tutsi propaganda, thus spreading fear. When they realized that these measures were not sufficient, they decided on military actions so as to eliminate the threat before its realization. However, in order to eradicate all Tutsi, the extremists were dependent on the participation of the Hutu population. The extremists counted on the commitment of ordinary Hutu who would fear the consequences from the extremists but also the uncertainty of a possible Tutsi government (McDoom 124-125). The extremists made it clear that Hutu only had two options: either kill or get killed. Anyone who refused to join in the slaughters was murdered; therefore, a great number of Hutu unwillingly participated in the genocide (Mamdani 219).

In contrast to that, affective theories are concerned with emotional responses to threats. Fear strongly influences the perception of a person, and can therefore produce an “extreme reaction to threat” (Horowitz qtd. in McDoom 125). One such extreme reaction can be an overwhelming fear of extinction (McDoom 125). Although the ordinary Hutu population considered the continuation of the Hutu government as the better option, they did not arrive at this decision on purely rational thoughts; they were influenced by the propaganda. Thus, emotions and rationality cannot be considered as opposites, but coexisting and interacting factors that affect individual judgment and decisions (McDoom 128).

In symbolic politics theory emotional and materialist aspects of ethnic conflict are combined (McDoom 125). “Psychocultural narratives” symbolize the relation between past and present threats. Therefore, they have considerable power over emotions and can substantially influence ethnic conflicts (Marc Ross qtd. in McDoom 125-126). Ethnic differences can easily be activated and negatively connotated, particularly due to propaganda. As mentioned above, it was easy for extremists to emphasize the (partly) constructed differences between Hutu and Tutsi. Although they most likely have different origins, Hutu and Tutsi began to consider themselves as distinct

ethnicities under Belgian rule. Moreover, this past period of Hutu suppression and Tutsi superiority was often linked to the advancing power of the RPF in the present. Thus, the front was portrayed as an immediate threat to Hutu-power and the existence of Hutu in general. These psychocultural narratives further divided Hutu and Tutsi and at the same time strengthened group identification (McDoom 130).

As can be seen in the analysis of these theories, fear plays an essential role in ethnic conflicts, and can be the cause and/or consequence. In every society feelings of fear, resentment or hatred emerge between different groups. However, they are usually only expressed as violence, when changes in structural or material opportunities have occurred (Mc Doom 127). As extremists promised Hutu that they could seize the belongings of dead Tutsi, they offered a strong incentive - the material opportunity - in a country shaped by high unemployment and poverty. Consequently, individual Hutu identified with the ingroup of the conflict (Hutu) so as to improve their chances of receiving resources (Sherif qtd. in Mc Doom 130). Perpetrators, interviewed by Jean Hatzfeld a few years after the genocide, state that the materialist incentives drove them into a frenzy of killing and looting. After having murdered Tutsi, they took everything they could find from the bodies and houses of their victims and struggled over their land. One perpetrator is convinced that Hutu would have killed each other, had the RPF not taken over Rwanda (Hatzfeld, *Machete Season* 82-87).

A crucial element in ethnic conflicts is intergroup bias which includes ingroup (Hutu) positivity and outgroup (Tutsi) negativity. While ingroup positivity is characterized by aspects such as pride, loyalty, and perceived superiority, outgroup negativity is shaped by stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice. Increased anxiety can on the one hand increase ingroup cohesion - a feeling of comradeship and hostility towards the outgroup – and on the other hand lead to outgroup homogenization, which is the generalization of negative attributes of one outgroup member (RPF) to the entire ethnic outgroup (all Tutsi). Consequently, all Tutsi were considered as a threat (McDoom 131).

However, ethnicity was not the sole reason for the outbreak of the genocide; non-ethnic factors like intragroup coercion, coercion by the state and Rwandans' culture

of obedience to authority also played an essential part (McDoom 136-137). Moreover, participants of the genocide could also be differentiated: On the one side there were Rwandans who took part in the slaughters out of fear (Straus qtd. in McDoom 134), which was “as much of an incentive as was the prevailing propaganda” (Mullins 723). On the other side, however, there were people who seemed to enjoy raping, torturing and slaughtering their victims. In the following two novels the viciousness of some perpetrators is portrayed and analyzed. Thus, these theories of the origin of such levels of violence need to be kept in mind.

3.1.1 Rape in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*

In the novel *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali*, Courtemanche (preface) states that his book is more than a narrative; “it is also a chronicle and eyewitness report”. Therefore, it can be seen as a testimony that gives voice to the numerous victims unable to write their stories (den Toonder 105). Furthermore, all of Courtemanche’s characters are based on real people and in most cases he used their actual names. Therefore, his fictionalized text based on facts arouses the interest of readers. In addition, due to the perception of events through the eyes of the protagonists, the story is more engaging than reading these facts in a newspaper. The words and actions of the characters summarize and symbolize his observations as a journalist in Rwanda. Courtemanche addresses a great variety of important topics, reaching from the historical background and various social problems to the brutal details of the genocide. An analysis of the novel demonstrates that Courtemanche concentrates on the role of Western countries, in particular on the inaction of the United Nations during the genocide, and the excessive violence employed by the Interahamwe who tortured, raped and mutilated their victims before killing them. Nevertheless, some of the victims, believed to be dead, survived. In *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* various rape scenes are depicted. First, the rape of Georgina is analyzed. This is followed by a detailed examination of Gentile’s ordeal.

In military conflicts, rape has often been used as weapon of war and seems to be an integral part of military campaigns in combat zones (Mullins 719). It is “a form of torture and control motivated by racism, hatred, and gender” (Lyons 110). During the

Rwandan Genocide, rape was encouraged by those in power (Mullins 722); consequently, thousands of Rwandans were raped (Des Forges 215). Therefore, rape had a 'deeper significance' than the immediate fulfillment of sexual desire. It was rather a "tool of terror and of population elimination", and is thus defined as "genocidal rape" by Mullins (721). This form of rape did not just generate fear among Tutsi but also humiliated them (Mullins 721-722). Furthermore, it is part of the annihilation of a culture since the women's position in society is completely undermined (Lyons 100). In Rwanda, women traditionally are responsible for "family and cultural reproduction" (Mukamana and Brysiewicz 379). Numerous rape victims were impregnated by their perpetrators and due to patrilineal parentage, the babies were Hutu. Consequently, rape contributed to the elimination of the Tutsi population (Mullins 722). Thousands of women were victims of gang-rapes and mutilations, which left them traumatized (Lyons 111).

After the genocide, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was established by the UN (Lyons 104). Mullins (720) analyzed testimonies of rape victims given to the ICTR, and in addition to genocidal rape he identified two other forms of rape that had occurred: opportunistic assaults, which played a minor role, and sexual enslavement. Mullins (726) points out that in contrast to genocidal rapes, the motivation behind opportunistic assaults is sexual desire. The third type of rape, sexual enslavement, describes incidents, in which women were held captive and were repeatedly raped over a longer period of time, in most cases by militiamen (Mullins 727). There were only some women who testified against their perpetrators; the majority of victims of sexual assault did not tell their family members, as rape was considered so shameful that women were often shunned by their relatives and became social outcasts (Mullins 722). Herman (28) points out that women who reported a rape usually were either further humiliated or not even believed.

At the outbreak of the genocide, Cyprien, a Hutu, is on his way home, when he is stopped by soldiers at a roadblock. The militiamen have been raping Cyprien's wife Georgina.

We've tried everything but nothing works. Your wife has no pleasure. [...] She can't be normal. We've had her two at a time, one by the front, the other by the back door. And we did it hard. Big bangs with big cocks, then we used a stick. Nothing, just crying and horrible screaming, even insults, not one bit of pleasure to thank us for finding her so beautiful and appetizing. (Courtemanche 96)

In this passage the phenomenon of gang rape as well as aspects of genocidal rape are exemplified. Leaders often urged their troops to gang rape women. In this respect, the importance of peer pressure and group conformity needs to be pointed out: Even if men were reluctant to abuse women, seeing fellow soldiers committing such violent acts could 'normalize' atrocities and pressure individuals into participation. Consequently, the involvement in such acts was encouraged and served as bonding exercise between group members (Mullins 731).

The elements of genocidal rape are evident as the primary objective of the militiamen is to humiliate Georgina. After they had gang-raped her, they raped her with a stick. Incidents like these were not uncommon during the Rwandan Genocide: A woman testified to the ICTR that she had first been raped with a police man's gun before three men raped her. Afterwards, a branch of a tree was rammed into her vagina. In another testimony, a woman told the tribunal she had witnessed how five women were raped by militiamen and then pointed sticks were thrust into their vaginas (Mullins 728, 729).

During the Rwandan Genocide, women were often raped in front of their family and community members, which emphasized the powerlessness of the victimized group (Mukamana and Brysiewicz 381, Mullins 722). It demonstrated to Tutsi men that they were no longer able to keep their women safe from harm (Lyons 100). Although Georgina is not raped in front of her husband, the perpetrators tell Cyprien what they have done to his wife. Afterwards, they force him to "show [them] what a man's got to do to make [his] wife come" (Courtemanche 96). Consequently, Cyprien is forced to rape Georgina but tries to be gentle with her. However, as this does not entertain the militiamen enough, they simply kill Cyprien.

The policeman, furious, pulled down his pants and lay on her. He gave an initial thrust and then a lot more as if trying to ram all the way through her. Georgina expressed neither pain nor pleasure. Not a sound, just staring with eyes empty and already lifeless. The policeman got up in disgust. They executed the woman without enthusiasm. (Courtemanche 97)

Here, the ruthlessness and viciousness of rapists is portrayed. The militiaman brutally rapes Georgina and it seems that his only aim is to hurt her. The sentence “The policeman got up in disgust” is of particular interest. After being gang raped several times and having witnessed the death of her husband, Georgina knows that she is going to die too, and thus, she does not have any strength left to fight. As she gives the impression that she is already dead, her perpetrator is “disgusted”. He has enjoyed Georgina’s ordeal before, however, now that she does not respond to pain anymore, the militiaman appears to have lost interest in torturing her. This is a good example of the sadistic character of some of the perpetrators.

A further aspect that is pointed out in this passage is how the perpetrators perceived the world in extremes: Either you were with them or against them. As Cyprien and Georgina were moderate Hutu and had Tutsi and white acquaintances, they were ‘enemies’ in the eyes of the extremists. Therefore, they suffered the same fate as thousands of Tutsi.

Another woman who gets raped in *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* is Gentile, who has been taken in by a sergeant of the presidential guard and is now “shut up in a little room in Sergeant Modeste’s house” (Courtemanche 241). Gentile is a victim of sexual enslavement as she is kept in order to be raped. While she is imprisoned, Gentile writes a journal about her suffering. This first person narration makes her account even more captivating.

He wanted to protect me, he said. A Tutsi woman in his section had been raped by ten of his soldiers. Then they did even worse. Her anus was perforated with a big stick, her nipples were cut off. Modeste doesn’t want that to happen to me, that’s why he’s keeping me here although his wife is jealous and is making trouble for him. But to thank him I could be nice, I could be gentle. He doesn’t even know that’s my name. I don’t want to be raped, I don’t

want to be hurt. I opened my legs. He didn't even want me to undress. He entered me without a word and did his business. (Courtemanche 242)

Gentille is terrified by Modeste's description of the gang-rape of a Tutsi woman; in particular because she has heard a similar story before. Thus, Gentille consents to 'having sex' with him because she knows that he rapes her with or without her permission. Gentille does not put up resistance as she wants to prevent the additional pain of beatings. Furthermore, Gentille wants to please Modeste because she believes to be safer in his house than outside; she needs to stay hidden in order to survive. However, she soon realizes that she was not safe there at all.

His wife came. [...] She's very jealous. I want to steal her husband, she told me, and she won't let me do it. Her two brothers came with her. They hurt me. When they had finished with me I was bleeding from everywhere. [...] Modeste came in the night to have me. He saw the blood and left without saying anything. One rape less. He must have thought I had my period. (Courtemanche 243)

This section is another portrayal of the extreme violence perpetrators employed. During the genocide women were raped so brutally that the majority of the victims died due to the extent of their injuries. Moreover, the deeply rooted hate Hutu felt for Tutsi is demonstrated: It is Modeste's wife who instructs her brothers to rape Gentille. The wife does not consider Gentille as a woman or fellow human being who needs protection. After years of extensive propaganda in which Tutsi were dehumanized, Modeste's wife only sees an enemy Tutsi that has no right to live.

I'm only two dirty, stinking little holes they keep trying to make bigger. For them I do not have eyes, or breasts, or thighs. I do not possess cheeks or ears. And I am certain they do not even feel pleasure. They empty themselves, relieve themselves the way one urinates. [...] I'm not human any more. I have no name and even less soul. I'm a thing [...] I'm a vagina. I'm a hole. (Courtemanche 244)

Due to the constant sexual abuse, Gentille realizes that her perpetrators do not see her as the beautiful woman she is but rather as a thing, a hole, "which is pure absence, non-being" (den Toonder 118). This view becomes even more evident in

the following section, in which Modeste enters the room with family members and friends:

They don't want to look, they want to get inside. The first was enormous and completely drunk. He picked me up with one arm and laid me on the little table so my legs dangled and he could stay standing, without ever leaning on me. "They're dirty, the Tutsis, they have to be washed." And he stuck his beer bottle in my vagina. That caused a big burst of laughter. I stopped counting at ten. I watched Modeste watching. None of them pulled down their pants, nobody touched me, but all of them looked at me while they banged away and forced and ejaculated. [...] I'm tired and now I'm sure I'm going to die. (Courtemanche 246)

In this passage, elements of genocidal rape are evident. Mullins (726) points out that sometimes it also occurred that opportunistic and genocidal elements of rape overlapped. However, although Gentile provides a sexual opportunity for Modeste's acquaintances, their primary aim is not to satisfy their sexual desires but to humiliate and hurt her, for instance by raping Gentile with a beer bottle.

Even though the opportunity for rape existed, it needs to be analyzed why perpetrators resorted to such extreme brutality. First of all, this extent of sexual violence was enabled by the dehumanization-propaganda against Tutsi, in which they were repeatedly referred to as "cockroaches" (Mullins 732). Second, the "masculine nature" of genocidal rape has to be explored as well: "Long periods of poverty and social inequity often produce a crisis within masculinity" (Mullins 732). Tutsi women were generally considered as particularly beautiful, however, they were also said to look down on and reject Hutu men (Des Forges 215). Therefore, Hutu men were now instructed to "'take' what had been historically 'denied' them" (Mullins 731). Mullins (732) states that raping women was "a way to reclaim masculine dominance and empowerment lost to unemployment [...] and other social forces beyond individual control (and comprehension)" (Mullins 731). Third, the frequent orders of military and militia leaders to rape motivated the perpetrators to resort to even more excessive violence. Finally, Tutsi, who were in the process of being exterminated, were humiliated like that in order to rob them of all their remaining dignity. This means that in addition to the extermination of an entire people, rape should have contributed to the destruction of the Tutsi's memory (Mullins 731-732).

After the gang rape, Gentile leaves Modeste's house and stops before a roadblock.

Gentile no longer had the beauty that had driven men wild with desire ten days earlier. She was only a mass of bruises and swelling now. The two militiamen who came to look reacted with distaste. The younger, who could not have been more than sixteen, bent down and tore her shirtdress, then ripped off her bra. Only her breasts had been spared. They stood up, pointed and firm, like an accusation and a contradiction. The boy gave two quick strokes with his machete and Gentile's breasts opened like red pomegranates. The militiamen dragged the young woman to the side of the road and left her there. (Courtemanche 248)

Des Forges (216) states that various killers physically or psychologically tortured their victims before they killed them or left them to die. Therefore, numerous women were sexually mutilated; most often their breasts were cut off (Mullins 723). The militiamen leave Gentile in extreme pain rather than to kill her quickly with one machete blow as they want to ensure that her final moments are horrible (Mullins 732). Although at first it seems that Gentile has died, at the end of the novel it turns out that she has survived since she was found and treated by a doctor. When her husband Bernard Valcourt, a Canadian journalist, finally finds her, she refuses to come home with him.

I'm not the Gentile you loved and that you think you still love. Bernard, I'm not a woman anymore. Don't you smell the sickness? Bernard, I don't have breasts any more. My skin's dry and tight like an old drum. I can only see with one eye. I probably have AIDS, Bernard. My mouth is full of sores that keep me from eating sometimes, and when I can eat, my stomach won't hold anything. [...] Do you understand what they've done to me? I'm not human any more. I'm a body that's decomposing, an ugly thing I don't want you to see. If I left with you I'd be even sadder than I am now because I'd see in your eyes as you look away that what you really love is your memory of me. Bernard, please, please, if you love me, go away. Go now and leave the country. I'm dead. (Courtemanche 257)

This passage demonstrates how genocide-rape survivors had to suffer in the aftermath. Gentile, like a great number of other victims, is ill. Although it is not clear whether she is blind on one eye as a result of beatings or due to an infection after the mutilation, it is very likely that she has AIDS now, which would also explain the sores in her mouth. As thousands of women were raped during the genocide, the rise of HIV/AIDS infections was exceptionally high. Infected women often explained that

they did not have a future since they expected to die soon (Mukamana and Brysiewicz 383). This is the reason why Gentile describes herself as a “decomposing body”; in her eyes she is already dead. Gentile is not the same woman she was before the genocide. She underwent a physical and psychological transformation. As she has been deprived of her breasts, Gentile does not feel like a woman anymore. Furthermore, due to being treated as a non-human thing by Modeste and the other rapists she does not even feel human anymore. She has lost her identity due to these events and knows that she is not the beautiful woman, Bernard fell in love with, anymore. Being near him and seeing the sadness in his eyes would be a constant reminder of what she has lost.

3.1.2 Brutality and Trauma in *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You*

Hanna Jansen is the adoptive mother of Jeanne, who has survived the Rwandan Genocide. In the novel *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You*, Jansen tells Jeanne’s story of survival. Jeanne has lost her entire family in the genocide and had to witness how her mother Florence and brother Jando were brutally murdered. Since the origins of the extent of brutality have been pointed out in the historical background and chapter 3.1, there is no detailed examination of violence in this narrative. However, the passages of the brutal killings of Jeanne’s relatives need to be presented in order to provide insights into the events that led to her traumatization. Before an analysis of Jeanne’s trauma is possible, a brief examination of the form of narration and the theoretical background of concepts of trauma are provided.

Jansen uses two forms of narration: In the main story about Jeanne’s survival during the genocide there is third person narration. Meyer (67) points out that the insights of an omniscient narrator into characters can merge into the view of characters. As in *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* the narrator refers to the character’s perspective – only Jeanne’s thoughts and feelings are provided - a “figural narrative situation” is approached (Meyer 67). This part of the story is written in the past. In contrast to that, the readers also get a glimpse into Jeanne’s new life with her adoptive family at the beginning of each chapter. These passages are written in the present, and first person narration from Jansen’s point of view is used. In

contemporary African Anglophone Literature, the child narrator has become an important voice of accounting for reality. A child can be seen as “the socially, and often culturally, blank slate, the uncontaminated potential in a context that is often loaded” (Mann 337). Furthermore, the use of the child narrator makes narratives compelling because the child’s vulnerability is laid bare. Witnessing atrocities has led to the corruption of the child’s innocence, and represents the loss of innocence of an entire continent that has been affected by colonialism (Mann 337-338). Mann (346) emphasizes that the child narrator’s loss of innocence “strengthens the child’s voice, and reinforces its power to highlight injustice, as the loss of childhood innocence implies a traumatic experience and a breach of justice all of its own.” Although Jeanne is not the narrator of the main story of the novel, *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* is based on her experiences and the readers have to see the events “through the eyes and heart of the child protagonist” (Mann 344). The book is captivating because readers are confronted with Jeanne’s vulnerability, the suffering of a child whose world has fallen apart due to the loss of her family in the Rwandan Genocide. Jeanne’s loss of innocence can be regarded as the microcosm of Rwanda’s loss of innocence in general. Although there have been massacres before, the genocide showed unprecedented dimensions of violence and numbers of victims.

Today, the study of trauma is an established and well-researched field; consequently, there exist various definitions and interpretations of the concept of trauma. Freud is regarded as a “founding figure in the history of the conceptualization of trauma” (Leys 18). He defined trauma as “deferred action”, which means that trauma consists of the “relationship between two events or experiences” (Leys 20). There is the traumatizing event itself, and then, at a later moment another event or experience triggers the traumatic memory. According to Freud, “traumatic memory is inherently unstable” (Leys 20). Based on Freud’s theories, Caruth (4) interprets trauma as

the wound of the mind – the breach in the mind’s experience of time, self, and the world – [which] is not, like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that [...] is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.

Furthermore, Herman (33) states that the ordinary system of control, connection and meaning is overwhelmed due to the traumatic event. In account of the unexpectedness of the traumatic experience, there is a damage of the semantic order of the victim. Therefore, trauma can be regarded as the “shattering of the mind and of comprehension” (Gagiano in Mengel, Borzaga, and Orantes 197). A traumatized person has feelings of intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, and threat of annihilation (Herman 33).

Another important aspect of trauma is post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), “the result of a failure of time to heal all wounds” (Van der Kolk and McFarlane 7). Allen (4) points out that a crucial aspect of trauma is the “intrusion of the past into the present”. The reaction to the traumatic experience continues, although the traumatic event itself has ended. In general, PTSD is a “disorder of memory” and the basic idea is that due to the terror experienced in a certain event, the mind is “split or dissociated” (Leys 2). Based on the destruction of ordinary mechanisms of consciousness, the traumatized person is unable to notice the psychological wound (Leys 2). Allen (169) states that a psychiatric disorder is evident when social and occupational functioning is impaired due to the severity of the trauma. The diagnosis is based on a number of symptoms that co-occur in a syndrome. Three typical groups of symptoms are hyperarousal, re-experiencing and avoidance and numbing (Allen 169-170). Hyperarousal means that the traumatized person is in a state of constant alert (Allen 172-173). As this aspect of PTSD does not occur in *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You*, it is not analyzed in more detail in this thesis. However, re-experiencing the trauma, in form of intrusive memories, and avoidance and numbing are examined more closely in this chapter.

There are different causes for trauma, like natural disasters, technological disasters and criminal violence (Allen 5-6). If the traumatic experience takes place once, it can be referred to as an event (“Single-Blow Trauma”). Afterwards, the affected person can name the specific day on which he or she has been traumatized. However, if a person experiences several traumatic events over a prolonged period of time, it is more appropriate to refer to trauma as condition (“Repeated Trauma”) (Allen 6). Although single-blow events can lead to serious traumatization, the most severe

psychiatric disorders are based on prolonged and repeated traumatic experiences (Allen 6). Allen (7) points out important aspects of the emergence of repeated trauma:

Much trauma occurs on a massive scale in wars [...] the traumatic experiences [...] are not only repeated; they are multiple. While your own life is at stake, you are liable to witness violence, death, and mayhem on a large scale. You may suffer repeated losses. You live with many privations, far from home.

In the case of war, people may experience a variety of horrifying events. Furthermore, they live in constant fear for their own lives. Therefore, it might be impossible for them to pin down the exact event that traumatized them. Although Jeanne could name two events that definitely affected her, - witnessing how her mother and brother were brutally murdered – a number of further experiences contributed to her traumatization as well. However, Jeanne may not even be aware of them. Thus, Allen's definition is suitable for Jeanne's situation in specific, but is also accurate for the Rwandan Genocide, which started out as a civil war, in general. Moreover, it can be applied to colonialism, where the notion of trauma as condition is evident as well. Belgian colonists fundamentally changed the administrative and social system of Rwanda, which led to the suppression of the Hutu population. They experienced inequality and mistreatment as part of their everyday lives, which traumatized them. Nevertheless, it would have been difficult for them to pin down a specific event as cause for their trauma.

In order to analyze Jeanne's trauma, the violent events that led to her traumatization have to be portrayed first because the study of psychological trauma is inextricably linked to bearing witness to atrocious events (Herman 7). Immediately after the death of Habyarimana, Tutsi were killed right where they were found by Hutu extremists. In addition, on 7 April 1994 groups of perpetrators started to organize large-scale slaughters in public places, such as churches, schools, hospitals and government offices, where Tutsi and moderate Hutu had found refuge during past massacres (Des Forges 209). Officials betrayed Tutsi by promising them protection if they would stay at certain places, only to let them be slaughtered by soldiers and militiamen

afterwards (Des Forges 219). In *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* Jeanne - eight years old - and her family find shelter in the community center right after the beginning of the genocide. However, after a few days, the Interahamwe arrives and forces all refugees into the building. They plan to throw grenades into the crowd but just before they start, Jeanne manages to escape and runs for her life.

Jeanne reached the end of the hedge and now looked back at the plaza, where innumerable people lay bleeding on the ground. Others fled in zigzags toward a house. Or tried to escape into the bordering shrubbery. Until shots struck them down. Until someone caught them and simply clubbed them down. And then she saw her mother. Florence was lying only a few yards away, at the feet of some soldiers and Interahamwe, who were striking at her. Clubs and machetes rained down on her body. Feet were kicking at her. Over and over again. Obeying an impulse, Jeanne was about to bend over the hedge and run to her mother, but a soldier was coming toward her and blocked her way. Jeanne spurted away. Looking back for a last, breathless moment, she saw Florence raise her head as though she wanted to stand up. The club blows followed the movement, and they did not miss their target. Jeanne ran on. Ran for her life. (Jansen 183)

Her mother's brutal death is the first of a number of traumatizing events Jeanne has to experience. Jeanne runs into her brother Jando and together they find shelter in a small room in the backyard of the community center. However, they are discovered by Interahamwe soldiers and brought to the plaza in front of the community center.

[Jeanne] saw that two men were dragging Jando across the yard, while others behind him were hitting him with clubs and kicking at him. He must already have been beaten inside and injured, for he could hardly stand on his legs. His eyes half closed, his head bent on one side, he hung between his tormentors. They beat him through the gate. He made not a sound, as if he were already unconscious. But Jeanne caught a look full of agony. [...] she saw a farmer walking across the plaza [...] he quickly lifted his long-handled field hoe and drove its point into the back of Jando's head. Jando collapsed. He lay there and moved no more. But still the blows rained down on him. (Jansen 207-209)

It has been estimated that nine out of ten children who have survived the genocide, witnessed the violent death of a person close to them and experienced extreme forms of brutality (Dallaire 478, Melvern 247). Two of those children were Jean de Dieu and Marie-Ange who were rescued by two workers with Médecins Sans

Frontières (MSF). When the MSF-workers arrived at the spot of the massacre, they were confronted with a horrible scene. In the middle of a group of militias:

Jean de Dieu, eleven, was curled up, a ball of flesh and blood, [...] Marie-Ange, aged nine, was propped up against a tree trunk ... her legs apart, and she was covered in excrement, sperm and blood ... in her mouth was a penis, cut with a machete, that of her father [...] in a ditch with stinking water were four bodies, cut up, piled up, their parents and older brothers. (Melvern 207)

During the Rwandan Genocide Tutsi men often had to experience how their wives and daughters were raped. There were also isolated incidents where fathers were forced to rape their daughters (Mullins 722). The report of the MSF-workers suggests that Marie-Ange's father had been forced to assault his daughter before he was brutally murdered. Afterwards the girl was most likely raped by the militias, while her brother was beaten. Thus, both children had to endure unimaginable abuse and had to witness the barbaric murders of their family members. Although, especially Marie-Ange was deeply traumatized, she and her brother found the will to live (Melvern 208).

After Jando's death, Jeanne meets Chantal, a former student of Florence, and her sister Carine. Together they fight for their survival and after a long and strenuous journey, they are finally taken in by RPF soldiers. As Jeanne, Chantal and Carine have lice, they need to leave their old clothes behind, which is particularly painful for Jeanne.

Only unwillingly had she been separated from her own clothes. She'd especially not wanted to surrender Jando's sweatshirt. (Jansen 305)

She missed her clothes, especially Jando's sweatshirt, badly. They had been the last things that connected her with her earlier life. Now she was nobody's child. Herself a stranger, for she possessed nothing more that belonged to her. And she felt more alone than she ever had been in her life. (Jansen 309)

In relation to these two sections, "attachment theory" needs to be considered. The basis of our sense of safety and security is attachment, which begins in infancy. Whenever people feel alone, endangered or unprotected, the foundations of

attachment might be shaken (Allen 36). A crucial aspect of attachment theory is the “secure base”, which, in general, is provided by parents. A person knows that he or she is always able to return to his or her parents’ home and can be sure to be welcomed and comforted there (Allen 37). However, Jeanne has lost her entire family to the genocide and her house has been destroyed. Therefore, she has been robbed of her security base. Jando’s sweatshirt was the last thing Jeanne possessed of her family, the last thing that reminded her of her former life and provided her with a feeling of safety. Without the sweatshirt, Jeanne is more aware of her loss than ever. Allen (45) states that “[a]ny traumatic experience can shatter the secure base and rock the foundations of basic trust”. Therefore, it does not come as a surprise that Jeanne has created a profound distrust in Hutu, and people in general, after experiencing the brutal murders of her relatives. This distrust is demonstrated in more detail in several passages below. Shortly after Jeanne has had to give up Jando’s sweatshirt, she sees a girl wearing Jeanne’s poncho from her old home.

Jeanne was utterly beside herself. She pulled on the poncho with all her might, trying to pull it over the girl’s shoulders and over her head. The girl resisted, scratching, kicking, and hitting her. Jeanne hit back, weeping, her hands striking everywhere, in a blind rage that could no longer be checked. [...] “That’s my cape! You’re thieves. You looted our house!” “We didn’t steal anything! We served ourselves like everyone else. There was no one there it belonged to.” “You’re thieves, thieves, thieves...!” Jeanne howled. (Jansen 320-321)

Jeanne’s reaction can be explained via the concept of intrusion, which is a typical form of PTSD. Van der Kolk and McFarlane (9) point out that there are different forms of intrusion, such as nightmares and flashbacks, but also intense emotions, like rage. For Jeanne, the poncho represents the loss of her family; just as Hutu extremists have taken the lives of Florence and Jando, this ordinary Hutu girl has taken what seems to have been Jeanne’s poncho. Therefore, this incident triggers Jeanne’s traumatic memory, and her reaction is based on her overwhelmed and disorganized self-defense system. “Traumatic events produce profound and lasting changes in physiological arousal, emotion, cognition, and memory” (Herman 34). Anger and aggression are common symptoms of traumatized people, who often have serious problems with their strong feelings of anger and how to express them (Allen

53-54). Due to painful experiences, emotions get raised to “unmanageable levels”; as a result, “a healthy anger response [can turn] into destructive experience and behavior” (Allen 55). When Jeanne sees that girl wearing what she believes to be her poncho, she is reminded of what she has lost and what has been taken from her. Thus, for Jeanne the poncho is an extreme provocation and her “anger reaches a level of intensity (blind rage) that is unmanageable” (Allen 55). Some days after this incident, a young RPF soldier leads Jeanne to a place, where the best “marie-angélas” (fruits) are available. However, they stop right in front of Jeanne’s old family house that has been looted and burned.

“No!” She was already running. Away! Just away! She fled. Followed by Jando’s cheerful voice. “You wait, I’ll soon catch you!” Ten paces lead. Her eyes were blind with tears. “Dédé¹! Just wait! Where are you going?” James [...] caught up with her and [...] held her fast. She tore herself loose. “Dédé, what’s the matter?” James sounded frightened. “What’s happened?” She ran on. Didn’t want to see him. Hated him to the very bottom of her soul. He was a thief like all the others. She never wanted to speak to him again. And with no one else, either. Never again! (Jansen 336)

In this section, various aspects of Jeanne’s trauma are portrayed. First, although Jeanne has already heard about the destruction of her family’s house, seeing the ruins of her former home, a place of happy childhood-memories, provokes traumatic reactions. The sight of the burned house triggers intrusive memories of her and Jando playing in the garden – the past and the present are connected. Jeanne’s happy childhood memories are accompanied by painful emotions and a feeling of helplessness (Allen 89). Jeanne’s memories do not remind her of the traumatic events per se. However, remembering happier times makes Jeanne even more aware of the loss of her family, which could lead to memories of the violent deaths of Jando and Florence. In front of her old house Jeanne feels helplessly exposed to her memories. Intrusive memories that are extremely vivid are often referred to as “flashbacks”, which makes the affected person feel like he or she is re-experiencing the trauma (Allen 91). In that moment the destroyed house represents Jeanne’s destroyed life. Jeanne does not want to be reminded of all that pain and runs away from the house in order to avoid the recollection of traumatic memories (Allen 178).

¹ nickname of Jeanne

Second, this incident turns the hostile feelings Jeanne has had before into deep hatred, which is “an enduring, intense, embittered attitude” (Allen 55). When she realizes that James and others were ‘stealing’ the marie-angélas from her family’s property, Jeanne is so angry at everyone, and her trust in people so shattered that she dissociates from her surrounding world, which is also expressed in this passage: “Jeanne wanted nothing more to do with anyone. She was angry at the whole world” (Jansen 337).

This leads to the third point: As Jeanne needs to escape these intense emotions of anger, pain and distrust, she detaches herself from her surrounding world. This symptom of PTSD is a form of dissociation and is called constriction or numbing, in which a traumatized person’s “system of self-defense shuts down entirely” (Herman 42). Dissociation is a complex phenomenon; it is a mental escape, which “is chosen when physical escape is impossible” (Allen 81). It is an alteration of the state of consciousness to prevent further pain (Herman 42). As a consequence of numbing, traumatized people “are able to distance themselves from the state of unbearably tense arousal associated with the trauma [...] [and] maintain a state of extreme detachment” (Allen 179). Jeanne has lost all trust in humanity, and in order to prevent further disappointment and pain, she dissociates herself from the outside world. For her everyone is dishonest; therefore, she does not want to have anything to do with other people.

Jeanne maintained her silence. Words no longer passed her lips. When she wanted something, she let it be known with dumb signs. But mostly she just did what she wanted. She’d completely barricaded herself against the outside. [...] Inside and outside were two separate worlds. The outside had nothing to do with her. (Jansen 339)

This passage demonstrates that Jeanne has stopped talking to others. Mann (qtd. in Mengel, Borzaga, and Orantes 51) states that a severe trauma often has paralyzing consequences and can literally stun the affected person into silence. Due to mutism, Jeanne further disconnects herself from the outside world. Although she communicates with others by using simple signs, she is completely withdrawn into herself. Jeanne does not show any signs of interest in activities or other people,

which can be interpreted as indicators of a depression (Allen 179). She remains in this state of extreme detachment from the outside world for weeks. She isolates herself and although she registers other people and events, they seem to be “disconnected from their ordinary meanings” (Herman 42-43). She does not feel that she belongs to this life in Rwanda anymore. However, one day she meets Immaculée, whom she had known before the genocide. Jeanne starts to speak again, like nothing has ever happened. When Immaculée tells her that she is going to live in Europe, Jeanne feels that she needs to leave Rwanda as well: “The moment she said it, something began to pulse inside her, something that she had not felt for a long time, something bright, exciting. Expectation. It rose up in her, tingling, and made a breach in the dam of hopelessness” (Jansen 349-350). After weeks of dissociation, the prospect of leaving Rwanda deeply stirs Jeanne’s emotions and gives her new hope. Herman (155) describes three stages of recovery: First, safety needs to be established. Second, the traumatized person has to remember and mourn his or her losses. Third, the person is supposed to reconnect with ordinary life. However, Herman (155) also emphasizes that this representation of the three stages is a simplification of an extremely complex process, and thus not to be taken literally. Jeanne needs to leave Rwanda in order to start her healing process. She needs to get away from the place that traumatized her. Hanna Jansen and her husband offer Jeanne a new home, where she feels safe and loved. Therefore, she slowly starts to recover as she enjoys her life with her adoptive family.

However, she started having nightmares in the RPF camp: “Now she battled through restless nights and tormenting dreams. When sleep deserted her, she lay awake for a long time, sometimes until morning, and tried to remember something. But the pictures slipped away from her. All that was left was a pain so overwhelming that it displaced all else” (Jansen 312). These nightmares continue to torment Jeanne in her sleep. Although she has managed the first step of recovery – establishing a feeling of safety - she still has to struggle with her traumatic past, which is also demonstrated in the following passage: “*For days you’ve been wandering sleepless all night, you say. Because of horrible pictures from your memory that assault you in your dreams. You don’t want them. You resist. You weep. You sink ever deeper while you try to survive the night*” (Jansen 50). Van der Kolk and McFarlane (9)

explain that intrusive memories can occur years or even decades after the traumatization, and that these memories can remain as vivid as if the event took place the previous day. They further state that traumatic memories have a timeless and un-integrated character; therefore, victims continue to experience them as present events and are unable to accept them as part of their past. An interesting aspect of intrusive memories is that “even though vivid elements of the trauma intrude insistently in the form of flashbacks and nightmares, many traumatized people have a great deal of difficulty relating precisely what has happened” (Van der Kolk and McFarlane 10). This phenomenon is indicated in the above passage of *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You*. Jeanne is woken up by nightmares; however, afterwards she is unable to recall what exactly she has been dreaming. She is incapable of remembering details of the traumatic events. Leys (2) points out that “the victim is unable to recollect and integrate the hurtful experience in normal consciousness; instead she is haunted or possessed by intrusive traumatic memories.”

Jansen wants to support Jeanne with the reprocessing of the genocide and her trauma. In one passage of the book, Jansen explains that she wants to show Jeanne that there were also Hutu who saved the lives of Tutsi and detested the genocide. One of these Hutu is Paul Rusesabagina who was the manager of the Hôtel des Mille Collines in Kigali and provided refuge for over 1,200 people there (hrrfoundation.org). In this context, the commitment of Tunisian peacekeepers who guarded the hotel on their own initiative needs to be pointed out. In particular the Senegalese peacekeeper Captain Mbaye Diagne was able to charm his way past the killers and was known at all roadblocks. He had ignored orders to remain neutral and was therefore able to save the children of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana after her murder. He carried out secret rescue missions, where he brought people from all over Kigali to the UN Headquarters and from there into safety. Thereby, he was able to save hundreds of lives. Also at the Hôtel des Mille Collines his presence was often enough to keep the killers at bay (Melvern 209, Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). When Hanna Jansen explains that and addresses Rusesabagina, Jeanne replies:

"If so, then he did it because there was some sort of advantage for him in it" you pronounce in a hard voice. [...] "But it's important!" I insist. "Important for you too, above all. That in your country there were people who risked their necks to save others. Who didn't take part in the madness. I'm even convinced that there were others besides him who also acted that way. And it's really important to know that!" I repeat. Now you are absolutely infuriated. Furious with me, which I can feel. Your voice breaks. "I've had enough of this, you hear? I don't want to listen to any more of the story! I can't anymore! I feel nothing but hatred! (Jansen 253)

In this passage Jansen demonstrates that Jeanne has still a long way to go. Considering Herman's (155) three steps of recovery, Jeanne has managed the first one: She feels safe with her new family. Furthermore, from various introductory passages, it can be deduced that Jeanne enjoys her new life; therefore, she has reconnected with ordinary life. However, she still has problems with remembering, and suffers from intrusive thoughts in form of nightmares. Due to the horrible events Jeanne had to experience and the brutality she witnessed, she is still left with anger and deep distrust in Hutu. When her adoptive mother tries to tell Jeanne that there were Hutu who did not participate in the genocide, Jeanne cannot believe her. In her opinion, the only reason why Hutu could have helped Tutsi, is when they profited from the situation. However, during the genocide there was resistance from ordinary Hutu, and there were Hutu who put their own lives at risk in order to protect Tutsi. Apart from Paul Rusesabagina, there were some Hutu who were able to hide Tutsi in their houses, and thus, saved their lives, like Pastor Murinzi saved Immaculée and the others in *Left to Tell* by Ilibagiza. Furthermore, numerous Hutu showed their solidarity with Tutsi. For example, in a church in Ruhengeri soldiers commanded Hutu to move on one side of the church and Tutsi on the other side. However, they refused to do as they were told and when a soldier ordered Tutsi to move on this side, the entire crowd moved on one side; and when Hutu were commanded to move on that side, all moved. Nevertheless, in the end all 200 to 300 people were slaughtered by the soldiers (Mamdani 220). These are just a few examples which demonstrate that there were moderate Hutu, who lost their lives because they tried to protect Tutsi.

3.2 The World Stood By

The United Nations' "involvement in the Rwandan Genocide is significant for its insignificance." This quote from Freyer (RwandaFile.com) puts the role of the United Nations in a nutshell. While this inaction characterized the UN during the genocide, the organization had often intervened in Rwanda's politics before 1994 (Melvern 7). France in particular provided military support for the Habyarimana regime after the RPF invasion of October 1990. Thus, France assisted "a faltering dictatorship from an attack launched by its own refugee population trying to return home by force" (Prunier 102). The French government feared for the power of its 'protectorate' as the RPF rebels were coming from Uganda, a former British colony. France's support had far-reaching consequences as the regime was convinced that "*no matter what it did*" it could always count on French help (Prunier 106, 107). In this charged atmosphere mediation of a neutral party would have been essential; France, however, continued to support Habyarimana (Prunier 99). French assistance in form of weapons continued throughout the civil war, thus ensuring that the Rwandan military and militias were well-equipped by the time the genocide started (Prunier 148).

The main objective of the United Nations is to "maintain international peace and security" (un.org). Therefore, the UN Charter of 1945 prohibited the use of force, except for the purpose of self-defense or with the permission of the Security Council (Evans 30). However, the UN decided against an external intervention in internal conflicts of a state. There was only one exception in this regard: the Genocide Convention, which was adopted on 9 December 1948. In Article I of this document, the UN member states decided that "genocide, whether committed in time of peace or in time of war, is a crime under international law which they undertake to prevent and to punish" (ohchr.org). In Article II of the Convention the intention to "destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group" is considered as genocide. Therefore, the following acts are punishable:

- (a) Killing members of the group;
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

(e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group. (ohchr.org)

After the death of president Habyarimana, the first three points of the Genocide Convention applied to Rwanda. Consequently, it was obvious that genocide was committed in 1994. Since then, the inaction of the UN has been fiercely debated and the international community keeps asking why the UN did not intervene in the Rwandan Genocide, when genocide was evidently happening; a question that has also been taken up by researchers and novelists. In their narratives, writers not only ask how the world could stand by and let thousands of people get killed, but they also show that the victims were unable to comprehend the events. As will be demonstrated, survivors tend to ask on a personal level why the world stood by while their friends and families were being slaughtered, which is shown in *Left to Tell* by Ilibagiza and *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You* by Jansen. In contrast to that, journalists strongly criticize the inaction of the UN on a moral level. In *Murambi, the Book of Bones*, Diop particularly focuses on the French Operation Turquoise, deployed towards the end of the genocide. In *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* by Courtemanche, the UN is condemned for standing by, although they could have saved thousands of lives.

At the beginning of the genocide Tutsi were unable to comprehend the events. This is demonstrated in *Left to Tell*, where Immaculée asks, “Why is this happening? [...] What have we done to deserve this? Why is being a Tutsi so wrong? Why are you letting this happen to us, God?” (Ilibagiza 58). In *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You*, Jeanne also cannot understand what is going on:

Jeanne realized then that Hutus were allowed to stay in their houses. Or might go where they wanted [...] without being attacked. Only Tutsis were in danger. She didn't understand why it was so, yet there was no point in asking. A grave silence prevailed among them as they hurried along. No one would explain anything to her now. (Jansen 149)

Mann (336) states that the “purity of a child's vision” is perceived as “refreshingly simple.” Therefore, Jeanne's view in *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* can be

seen as “one of clarity” (Mann 336) in the complexities of the genocide. Jeanne asks herself the basic questions of how atrocities like these are possible.

What kind of war is it, Jeanne wondered, when they hang out their wash while the others next to them are killed for no reason? What had she and her family done, what had their friends done to deserve death? They were Tutsis. Jeanne knew now that all Tutsis were supposed to die. Without exception. But why? (Jansen 202)

This passage demonstrates how paradox genocide is. While the Hutu population continued to pursue their usual routines, Tutsi were killed right next to them. Moreover, the purity of Jeanne’s vision is evident as she does not know about Rwanda’s history, and thus, is not aware of the ‘differences’ between Hutu and Tutsi.

In *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* Courtemanche provides particularly interesting insights into the role of the Western countries in Rwanda. He offers serious criticism of the UN’s passivity and obvious indifference towards the signs of a coming genocide, which “was silently witnessed by the international community unwilling to respond in time to stop the killings” (den Toonder 105, 106). Rwanda was dependent on international donations and therefore had to maintain “some level of international respectability” (Des Forges 92). The donor countries wanted to preserve a positive image of Rwanda as well. Thus, they “regarded human rights abuses generally as the result of the war and they chose to work on ending the war rather than on addressing the violations as such” (Des Forges 92). Nevertheless, Rwandan activists pressured international human rights organizations to examine the situation in Rwanda in January 1993. The result of an inquiry of an International Commission was that Habyarimana’s regime played a crucial role in the massacres and other assaults of Tutsi and political opponents. However, although donor countries expressed their concern, they did not try to put the perpetrators to trial or prevent future massacres. The only actions of the US and Canada were either a redirection of financial support from governmental to non-governmental organizations or a cutback of financial aid (Des Forges 93, 94). Furthermore, some Rwandans tried to make foreign governments aware of the critical situation of their country. Jean Birara, the former manager of the Central Bank, tried to inform the international community

about the existence of death-lists, but was ignored (Prunier 210). Another mission to Rwanda, by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Summary, Arbitrary and Extrajudicial Executions from April to August 1993, resulted in the conclusion that according to the Genocide Convention of 1948, the massacres of Tutsi were genocide. Confronted with these findings, Habyarimana promised to try harder to protect all of Rwanda's inhabitants, and for several months no massacres took place. However, due to the lack of international intervention and punishment of the killers and initiators of the massacres between 1990 and 1993, the perpetrators had learned that their actions would be tolerated by the UN (Des Forges 94, 95). Therefore, the organizers of the genocide had counted on the continuation of this passivity (Prunier 228). On 11 January 1994 UNAMIR was informed by a high ranking MRNDD member and trainer of the Interahamwe about the existence of secret arms caches, a plan to exterminate all Tutsi and to kill Belgian peacekeepers, who were the backbone of UNAMIR (Laegreid 233-234, Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). After receiving the results of the missions to Rwanda about the ongoing massacres and anti-Tutsi propaganda, the UN should have been able to realize that genocide was planned. Nevertheless, the Security Council ignored the warnings and took no preemptive measures (Bah 270).

In *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* Courtemanche criticizes the actions of Western countries from colonialism to present times. At the beginning of the novel, the genocide has not yet begun; however Courtemanche provides the readers with a feeling of 'foreboding' of the coming disaster. Den Toonder (108) states that the passive role of the UN "is especially embodied by the commander of the UN troops stationed in Kigali." In a footnote she (108) explains that the figure of this commander represents Roméo Dallaire, who was the UN Force Commander of UNAMIR. He needed to wait for the clarification from the Security Council as to which mandate his troops had to protect victimized Rwandans (Dallaire 263). In form of the main protagonist Valcourt, a Canadian journalist, Courtemanche addresses the inaction of the UN.

Valcourt said he did not understand why the general needed approval and more soldiers in order to intervene – his commission stated that he should

ensure the protection of the civilian population of the capital. A few dozen Belgian paras could dispense with all the roadblocks in the city in a single night. And he knew there were killings every day and every night in Kigali. And they weren't isolated incidents, not any more. They couldn't be shrugged off as the work of a few extremists. (Courtemanche 112-113)

Before the genocide began, authorities in Kigali had described the massacres against civilians as "spontaneous acts of anger" and "self-protection" (Melvern 129). However, Courtemanche points out that these killings were not sporadic outbursts of anger but clear signs of a coming genocide. Nevertheless, the problem of UNAMIR was that the mission did neither have the mandate nor the equipment to intervene; therefore the soldiers had to witness the unfolding of the massacres, unable to help (Prunier 234). In *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* the general tells Valcourt:

I would like to protect civilians, but I do not want to risk losing soldiers, even one, without written authorization. I am not here to save Rwandans, I am here to ensure respect of the Arusha accord. [...] I don't have the necessary number of troops to intervene. They will not give them to me. [...] He repeated that he had sent this information to New York, and that his superiors had asked him to continue to monitor the situation and warn them if ever these outbursts came to endanger the lives of members of the various UN organizations at work in the country. (Courtemanche 113-114)

By criticizing the UN's passivity, Courtemanche also demonstrates Dallaire's powerlessness. He tried to make the best out of a hopeless situation: "The entire [UN] force lacked logistics, equipment, defensive stores and vehicles" (Melvern 147). Dallaire had sent detailed information to the UN about a "well-planned, organized, deliberate and orchestrated campaign" of Tutsi extermination (Melvern 168) and made it known to the Security Council that mere reinforcement of the UNAMIR troops would not be enough. They also needed a modified mandate "in terms of Chapter VII of the UN Charter to undertake enforcement actions to protect civilians facing massacres" (Bah 271-272). Although UNAMIR soldiers continued to report large-scale massacres, the UN Security Council did neither modify their mandate nor send reinforcement (un.org). To have admitted that the circumstances in Rwanda were in fact genocide, would have forced the members of the UN to intervene – something they obviously wanted to prevent, since a more robust mandate would have required a reinforcement and re-equipment of the mission (Bah 271, Melvern 158). UNAMIR

should only act as mediator between the fighting parties and as observer of the developments in Rwanda, “including the safety and security of civilians who sought refuge with UNAMIR” (un.org). The Faisal Hospital and the Amohoro Stadium became safe havens under UN protection and within one week around 14,000 civilians had sought refuge there (Laegreid 237). Nevertheless, UNAMIR’s role was seriously questioned since it was evident that the small contingent was unable to prevent the continuation of the killings or to protect Tutsi against a possible new wave of massacres (un.org). However, Dallaire kept fighting for a ceasefire and peace negotiations (Dallaire 266).

The UN was well aware of the critical situation in Rwanda, since after the death of Habyarimana the first priority of the member states was the evacuation of their expatriates. Various countries sent troops to Rwanda in order to retrieve all foreign nationals but also members of the MRNDD (Mullins 723). However, no ‘ordinary’ Rwandans should be rescued as the UN soldiers should not get involved in local politics (Prunier 234). This means that all Whites and politicians of the Habyarimana-regime were brought into safety, whereas the rest of the Tutsi population was left to their fate. In a footnote Courtemanche (223) asserts that in the first French evacuation-plane numerous “principal organizers of the genocide” were saved. Therefore, France did not only abandon Tutsi but even protected Hutu extremists. In another footnote, Courtemanche (226) explains that “in most Western embassies, the majority of local employees were Tutsis”, who had taken refuge there after the first massacres. When the last French troops left on 14 April 1994, they abandoned the Tutsi civilians who had counted on UN protection (Laegreid 235). Only hours after the evacuation of Western nationals, they were slaughtered. As Prunier (235) puts it, “the embassy’s Rwandese personnel [...] was cold-bloodedly abandoned to certain death.”

The Security Council did not differentiate between the civil war and the genocide (Laegreid 241). Catherine Newbury, a political scientist, and her husband David Newbury, a historian, who are academic experts on Rwanda, tried everything to inform the US government about the seriousness of the events but nobody listened to them (Melvern 167-168). In addition, the ICRC (International Committee of the Red

Cross) urged the Security Council to put an end to the killings and explained that “[w]hole families were being exterminated in the most atrocious circumstances” (Melvern 208). After the genocide, Philippe Gaillard, the chief delegate of the ICRC, emphasized that the UN cannot deny to have known what was going on in Rwanda because they were told every day. In the third week of April, the Rwandan Human Rights Activist Monique Mujawamariya was able to escape to Washington. She informed the US government about the events in Rwanda and asked for stronger US action. However, a Congressional Official told her that the US does not have friends, the US only has interests, and there is no interest in Rwanda (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). Neither the US nor any other Western country had economical or strategic interests in Rwanda, which made an intervention even less attractive (Straus 17). Moreover, the US wanted to prevent another Mogadishu, Somalia, where a Black Hawk was shot down and 18 American soldiers died; afterwards their bodies were dragged through the streets. This incident had changed Washington’s commitment to peacekeeping, particularly in African countries (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). As a result, American diplomats advocated a total withdrawal of UNAMIR from Rwanda. After the torture and death of ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers on 7 April 1994, Belgium’s first priority was the protection of its expatriates in Rwanda (Melvern 159, 160). Furthermore, the RPF had requested the French and Belgian troops to leave Rwanda, consequently, Belgium and France agreed to the withdrawal (Laegreid 236, Prunier 276). Finally the Security Council decided to reduce the number of UNAMIR soldiers by almost 90 percent in resolution 912 on 21 April 1994 (Melvern 158, Prunier 275). Major Brent Beardsley, who was the Military Assistant to General Dallaire says that the bottom line was that the UN simply did not want to do anything (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). The UN’s decision to reduce force in Rwanda showed of how little interest African countries were to the West in the post-Cold War era. At the same time of UNAMIR’s reduction, the UN troops in Yugoslavia were strengthened with 6,500 troops, which are 5,000 more than Dallaire would have needed to counter the Rwandan Genocide (Bah 272). The UN’ opportunity for intervention would have been between 6 April and 21 April, in particular as the troops needed to prevent the genocide were basically on the ground on 10 April, when Western countries began to retrieve their expatriates (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). However, after the official withdrawal of the majority of the UNAMIR contingent, it was difficult to get forces into

Rwanda since Kigali airport was under FAR control and was closed to traffic as soon as the Belgians had left (Dallaire 264). Furthermore, after the UN had abandoned its mission, General Paul Kagame, leader of the RPF, said that now it was the front's task to stop the massacres, and if UN peacekeepers came between the RPF and the FAR, they would be considered as enemies (Melvern 208).

General Roméo Dallaire was instructed to close down the peacekeeping mission but he and General Henry Kwami Anyidoho, who was the commander of the Ghanaian peacekeepers, defied the Council's decision (Melvern 196). Thus, they decided to stay since they considered the abandonment of the mission as morally corrupt. Nevertheless, they only had around 450 ill-equipped troops, mostly from developing countries, left. Some of these UN soldiers were completely devoid from any support of the Security Council and risked their lives by protecting Tutsi refugees without weapons (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda). In *Left to Tell* Ilibagiza points out that for her Dallaire is a hero, as he tried to save as many innocent Rwandans as possible and continued to ask for support, while the rest of the world stood by. Thus, he had to carry the moral burden of bearing witness to the genocide without the means to stop it (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda).

I couldn't understand how other countries, especially the so-called civilized ones in the West, could turn their backs on us. They knew that we were being massacred, yet they did nothing. The UN had even withdrawn its peacekeeping force shortly after the killing began. However, Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian general in charge of the UN peacekeepers, refused to obey his orders to leave and remained with a couple hundred soldiers. He was a brave and moral man, but he was also alone in a sea of killers. We heard him often on the radio begging for someone, anyone, to send troops to Rwanda to stop the slaughter, but no one listened to him. [...] It was impossible for them not to know that our politicians wouldn't stop the killing until every Tutsi man, woman, and child was dead. (Ilibagiza 116-117)

Immaculée does not understand how Western countries could even doubt that genocide was happening in Rwanda, when Dallaire was begging for reinforcement. While they were in hiding at Pastor Murinzi's house, Immaculée and the other women could occasionally listen to the radio and their hopes for international help were soon destroyed, when they realized that the majority of the UN troops were leaving the

country. Thus, the UN's decision to withdraw UNAMIR troops is strongly criticized by novelists. Ilibagiza (128-129) sums up the actions of the UN as follows:

[E]very Western country had evacuated its citizens from Rwanda when the killing started, leaving the Tutsis to face their fate alone. There had been virtually no outsiders in the country since the genocide began – that had sent a signal to our government that the world didn't care if it were committing genocide, and that the lives of Tutsis didn't matter, so the killing continued.

This passage demonstrates the Western countries' indifference towards the fate of Tutsi. Although numerous Tutsi hoped for international intervention at the beginning of the genocide, some people already knew that they were on their own. This is also portrayed in a passage in *Murambi, the Book of Bones*, where the Tutsi Michel Serumundo tries to calm his wife when the first death squads were killing.

"Don't worry, Séra, the entire world is watching them, they won't be able to do anything." [...]
In my heart of hearts I knew I was wrong. The World Cup was about to begin in the United States. The planet was interested in nothing else. And in any case, whatever happened in Rwanda, it would always be the same old story of blacks beating up on each other. (Diop 9)

In this section Diop particularly criticizes the United States when he implies that the World Cup was more important than the lives of Rwandans. This accusation is not unjustified: The US did nothing to stop the massacres and even rejected the idea of jamming the radio signal of RTLM in order to stop the hate propaganda, as suggested by Tony Marley, Military Advisor of the State Department (Video: Ghosts of Rwanda).

Another justification for the inaction of the UN, which is addressed in this passage, was that the killings were considered to be clear signs of 'tribalism', a 'typical African phenomenon'. At first outside of Africa the Rwandan Genocide was considered as an outburst of tribal hatred. Numerous killers murdered "in the most rudimentary and horrifying ways", using whatever weapon they could get hold of, ranging from tree limbs and nail-clubs to machetes and rifles (Straus 18). Furthermore, the perpetrators slaughtered Tutsi even in places of refuge and left the bodies on the site of the killing

(Straus 18). Therefore, people outside of Africa perceived those actions as primitive and came to the conclusion that tribalism must be the cause for such violence. However, as described in the historical background, the terms Hutu and Tutsi got politicized and radicalized under colonial rule. Thus, the “‘ancient tribal hatred’ model” does not take colonial influence into account and is a “gross oversimplification” of the history of Rwanda (Straus 22). A further aspect that buttresses the inadequacy of the tribal hatred model is that the massacres of Tutsi was organized by the Hutu extremists in the government and military. Moreover, ordinary people took part in large-scale killing sprees as they were instructed or even forced to exterminate all Tutsi. Therefore, today “scholars, international jurists, and human rights experts almost universally recognize the violence as an unambiguous case of genocide” (Straus 22). Prunier (140) states that the massacres and the genocide were based on political and economic problems and further points out that “the ‘tribal’ guise is just a useful cover-up” by former imperialists. Courtemanche (195) addresses the misconception of tribalism in the following section:

Valcourt raised the deteriorating situation in Kigali and around the capital. A red-haired Belgian, who had been teaching philosophy since the university’s foundation in 1963, laughed and said, “They have to kill each other at regular intervals. It’s like the menstrual cycle: a lot of blood flows, then everything returns to normal.

By equating the intervals of killing with that of the menstrual cycle, this passage portrays the underlying racism of the tribal hatred-view as it implies that it is in the ‘nature of Africans’ to kill each other regularly. In addition, Courtemanche criticizes the interference of Western countries in the politics and administration of African countries as their influence had often led to tensions between indigenous groups:

I think of what all those reasonable people have accomplished. They got us into two world wars. They organized the Holocaust, the way economists and businessmen plan regional economic development or the expansion of a multinational corporation. They were also responsible for Vietnam, Nicaragua, apartheid in South Africa, and the hundred or more wars that have ravaged this continent since the colonizers left. (Courtemanche 160-161)

In *Murambi, the Book of Bones* Diop (30-31) hints at the European colonizers when the protagonist Jessica thinks that “[b]etween our futures and ourselves, unknown people had planted a sort of giant machete”. However, it was not only the Western countries that looked the other way. Numerous African countries stood by as they were more concerned with how the killings would be perceived internationally than with intervening (Dauge-Roth 153). This is also addressed by Diop (9-10), as Michel believes that even Africans were saying, “They’re embarrassing us, they should stop killing each other like that.” They were embarrassed because they feared that African clichés of tribalism would be revived (Dauge-Roth 153). Claudine, a genocide survivor, confirms the passivity of African countries, and says, “our African brothers did not lift one finger more than the Whites to save our lives” (Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare* 203).

As the international community was reluctant to intervene, it simply avoided to refer to the events in Rwanda as ‘genocide’ (Bah 271). Instead, the massacres were described as “tribal anarchy” or “an orgy of ethnic violence” (Melvern 167). Thus, the UN’s post-Holocaust aim of ‘never again’ was rendered meaningless (Bah 254). Bah’s view coincides with that of Ilibagiza (97), who writes that “[t]he world had seen the same thing happen many times before. After it happened in Nazi Germany, all the big, powerful countries swore, “Never again!” But here we were, six harmless females huddled in darkness, marked for execution because we were born Tutsi.”

It was only due to the intervention of the RPF that the extremists were not able to succeed in the extermination of the Rwandan Tutsi (Prunier 228). The RPF decided to fight on 8 April 1994 and its troops reached Kigali three days later, starting the battle with the FAR and the extremists. In a slow, but steady advance, the front took over one prefecture after another (Prunier 268). On 6 June, the FAR tried one last counter-offensive, which was put to an end by the RPF on 13 June. When the victory of the front seemed close, the French government declared that it would send an operation for the security and protection of civilians. This ‘humanitarian operation’, called Operation Turquoise, was authorized by the Security Council (un.org). The RPF opposed this operation as it was convinced that France only intervened in order to support their old allies of the interim government, and prevent the front’s victory

(Prunier 273). After France had stood by for weeks and watched thousands of civilians getting slaughtered, the RPF doubted the humanitarian intentions of this initiative. In mid-June, Operation Turquoise seemed more like an attempt to improve France's international reputation in regard to Rwanda rather than a selfless plan of saving Tutsi, since at the point of intervention it was evident that the RPF was going to win the war (Prunier 103). Therefore, Operation Turquoise was strongly criticized from various countries and organizations. For instance, Amnesty International asked France to explain its former involvement with the death squads (Prunier 286-287). Dallaire (425) was also skeptical about the operation due to France's previous involvement in Rwanda: "If France [...] had actually wanted to stop the genocide [...] they could have reinforced UNAMIR instead." The ambiguous intervention of France is addressed in *Left to Tell*, where Immaculée talks to the captain of Operation Turquoise, who is ashamed of France's involvement in Rwanda: "Between you and me, I don't know how the president of my country can live with himself," he said. "France has blood on its hands, since we trained a lot of these Hutus how to kill" (Ilibagiza 176).

The negative reception of the French operation is portrayed in *Murambi, the Book of Bones* as well. Diop points out that France did not expect that much criticism. In his novel, the French officer Colonel Étienne Perrin reflects upon France's intervention in Rwanda.

There are all these journalists and human rights defenders who weren't exactly part of the plan. The upshot: an Operation Turquoise that lots of people are laughing at. To play the kind soul after letting our protégés commit all these stupid atrocities. No one's been fooled. [...] No one else wanted to send troops. (Diop 122)

As France had supported the Habyarimana regime during civil war, the extremists were hoping for French support again.

"We're heading toward total defeat, Doctor ... I'm a military man and I know what I'm saying."
I had just understood, at last, what he was getting at. Playfully, I slowly added: "Unless...?"

He raised his eyes toward me.

"Unless our foreign friends intervene."

"You mean the French?"

"Who else can we count on?" [...] "the French supported us against the whole world in this business. They should see it through to the end. [...]" (Diop 105)

Despite all criticism, preparations for the operation started, and a clear time-limit of two months was set. Another important aspect is that Operation Turquoise was supposed to be a humanitarian deployment (Prunier 287). Nevertheless, the initiative received a Chapter VII mandate, which allowed military intervention (un.org). On 23 June 1994, France sent its first troops, who arrived in Goma, Zaire, from where they headed towards Rwanda. Operation Turquoise consisted of 2,500 men, over 100 armored vehicles and a great number of heavy weapons. The French troops were enthusiastically cheered along by the Interahamwe, who displayed French flags everywhere. Thus, numerous Tutsi thought they were being rescued and came out of their hiding, just to be killed by the extremists (Prunier 290-292). In addition, the extremists interpreted the arrival of the French as support, which motivated them to finish their task of Tutsi extermination (Dallaire 426). As the press was aware of these events, the beginning of Operation Turquoise turned out as a public embarrassment for France. Consequently, as many Tutsi as possible needed to be rescued. In a camp near Cyangugu 8,000 refugees were found. In the area of Kibuye Tutsi were still being killed at a rapid pace (Prunier 292), and the troops of Operation Turquoise soon realized that they had underestimated the situation. At Bisesero, near Kibuye, hundreds of Tutsi came out of their hiding places to be saved by French soldiers. However, the troops left them there unprotected, while they were getting transportation. When they came back with trucks, the Tutsi had been slaughtered by Interahamwe (Dallaire 451). This careless behavior is reprocessed in *Left to Tell*.

We were more than halfway to the RPF camp when the truck stopped. The French captain came around to the back, pulled the tarp open, and said, "We have reports of gunfire in the area, and we have orders to avoid fighting at any cost. We're turning around, so this is where you'll have to get out."

I thought I'd misheard him. "You mean that you're taking us back with you, right?"

"No, we're breaking camp. You have to get out here ... now. I'm sorry Immaculée." [...]

We couldn't believe what was happening. A dozen or so Interahamwe were standing about ten feet away, watching us and listening to our conversation with growing interest. (Ilibagiza 192-193)

Although the operation had a Chapter VII mandate, military action should be prevented so as not to get involved in armed conflicts. Therefore, this passage again shows the ambiguous intentions of Operation Turquoise: Immaculée and the others were still in the prefecture of Kibuye; nevertheless, the French left the survivors in the middle of militiamen. If France's top priority was saving lives, they would not have left the survivors in the middle of an Interahamwe group.

During the genocide, hundreds of thousands of civilians fled Rwanda and arrived at the Safe Humanitarian Zone (SHZ), created by the French in the south-west of Rwanda (Prunier 295). From there, the refugees went westwards in the direction of Zaire (Congo) and comprised a mixture of all parts of the Rwandan population: exhausted Interahamwe and FAR soldiers, frightened Hutu civilians and some Tutsi survivors (Prunier 298). Due to the creation of the SHZ, the French deliberately had opened a safe corridor for the organizers and perpetrators of the genocide to escape the RPF (Mamdani 254-255). The French stated that their aim "was to protect people at risk but not necessarily to disarm the [...] [FAR]" (Dallaire 450). There were 1.5 million refugees in the SHZ, and the situation in Rwanda as well as its neighboring countries was far from stable, in particular the still armed FAR soldiers and militiamen posed a real threat (Dallaire 472). Therefore, Dallaire (455) knew it was essential that UNAMIR II troops – an operation decided on 6 May 1994 by the UN Security Council - arrived in the SHZ before Operation Turquoise left. This deployment would consist of 5,500 men and would be operating under Chapter VII. However, it took three months for this unit to be actually deployed (Prunier 276). Due to the mass exodus of over 1.5 million people, the refugees exported the Hutu-Tutsi conflict to the region of Kivu and "literally brought the trauma of postgenocide Rwanda" into Zaire (Mamdani 234). The Zairean Kivu region had been home to Hutu and Tutsi refugees who had found shelter there, after past conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi (Mamdani 235). These refugees comprised around 50,000 unarmed people; in contrast to the over one million Hutu refugees who came after the Rwandan Genocide in mid-1994. The people in refugee camps were suppressed by former FAR-soldiers and Interahamwe

militiamen, who were still receiving weapon supplies from France. After the UN had watched the Rwandan Genocide, it now stood by while the Zairean refugee camps were turned into military camps; armed and trained by former FAR soldiers (Mamdani 254-255). The extremists monopolized the distribution of international aid, collected taxes, used the money for the purchase of more weapons and held civilian refugees hostage (Melvern 249). Soon all people of the Kivu region experienced the Hutu-Tutsi animosities as a consequence of these armed refugee camps. Therefore, increasing numbers of Zairean Tutsi escaped to Rwanda and were trained and armed by the RPF since the new government in Kigali was worried about the increase of military power of the Interahamwe in Kivu refugee camps. However, the Mobutu regime of Zaire did not approve of the RPF interference and began collaborating with the Interahamwe. The rising tensions finally led to a rebellion against the dictator Mobutu (Mamdani 258). Thus, it is evident that the Rwandan Genocide had severe effects on the political developments in the Congo Wars. Moreover, due to Zairean support, the threat of Hutu extremists and their genocidal plans was kept alive (Melvern 248).

In addition to being dictated by extremists, the refugees had to live in camps lacking food, clean water, medicines, proper shelter as well as latrines; consequently, an enormous cholera epidemic broke out (Prunier 302), which complicated the return of the refugees to Rwanda (Prunier 305). Due to thousands of cholera deaths and reprisal killings, the media created the myth of a “double genocide” (Prunier 303, Dallaire 479). This comparison was later strongly criticized since an equation of the ordeal of Tutsi and the sufferings of Hutu weakens the unique intensity of the ‘real’ genocide. Although the misery of the refugees delayed the establishment of a genocide-tribunal, a conference of the United States Department of State finally at least acknowledged that “acts of genocide may have occurred” (Lyons 104, Prunier 303).

Although it was the RPF who put an end to the genocide, it was also due to the front that civil war had broken out. Mamdani (231) states that apparently the real objective of the RPF invasion of 1990 was not a struggle for rights but one of power – that is Tutsi power. This assumption was confirmed when Melchior Ndadaye, the newly

elected Hutu president of Burundi was assassinated in 1993, most likely by soldiers of the Tutsi army. Before this incident, president Habyarimana's policy had been moderate and his aim had been the reconciliation of Hutu and Tutsi. However, this plan was abandoned due to the RPF invasion, which "literally reversed the dynamic of the Second Republic" (Mamdani 231). This struggle for power in Rwanda (and Burundi) 're-polarized' Hutu and Tutsi as distinct ethnicities. The invasion evoked fears of a renewed system of suppression and in combination with the propaganda and material incentives, turned hundreds of thousands of Hutu into killers (Mamdani 231). Therefore, Mamdani (233) asserts that it was ironic that "the perpetrators of the genocide saw themselves as the true victims of an ongoing political drama."

Evans (31) criticizes the UN because even when the member states reacted to situations in need for international support, they did it in a sporadic, incomplete and often counter-productive way. He states that "it was almost as if, with the signing of [...] [the Genocide] convention, the task was seen as complete." With regard to Rwanda, Evans (31) describes international action as a "pathetically inadequate response to the genocide." While hundreds of thousands of Tutsi were tortured and killed within 100 days, the United Nations decided against a military reinforcement, and even commanded a withdrawal of the majority of troops. Lyons (102) points out that the irony behind the UN's passivity during the genocide was that the organization had declared to never let another Holocaust happen again. Unfortunately, "[n]ever" came about fifty years sooner than the UN expected." Until today, "[t]he international community fails to understand the genocide in Rwanda." A final passage taken from *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You* offers one last, interesting question concerning the UN's involvement in the genocide:

The others want to know [...] whether all who let the murder happen, even if they weren't actual perpetrators, made themselves jointly guilty. And why then did no one offer resistance. (Jansen 252)

3.3 Living in the Aftermath

On 19 July 1994, a broad-based government was established, consisting of representatives of all major parties, except for the MRNDD. The new president was Pasteur Bizimungu, the prime minister was Faustin Twagiramungu - both moderate Hutu - and Paul Kagame became the vice president (president since 2000). However, there was no triumphant victory as the country was in ruins (Melvern 247, Bah 275). Between 6 April and 17 July 1994 up to 1 million people were killed, which were more than 10 percent of the Rwandan population (Melvern 252). Hundreds of thousands of people had fled the country and were displaced, numerous people, in particular Tutsi, had lost their families and all of their possessions. Furthermore, the majority of Rwandans was traumatized, and women who had been raped had to deal with unwanted pregnancies. Moreover, the infrastructure and economy was destroyed (Prunier 299). The interim government had taken all money from the Central Bank, and small banks had been looted. Shops had closed and there was hardly any industry. In addition, ripe crops were rotting on the fields as there was no one there to harvest them (Prunier 306-307). Houses had been looted and neither electricity nor clean water was available (Melvern 247). Therefore, much effort needed to be put into rebuilding Rwanda. Apart from the reconstruction of infrastructure, one aspect of rebuilding the state was the creation of a new Rwandan identity. Therefore, a Commission for National Unity and Reconciliation and a National Human Rights Commission was established (Bah 276). A crucial part of building post-genocidal Rwanda was the removal of ethnic markers from the inhabitants' identity cards. Furthermore, a new flag and national anthem as well as the promotion of a national unity-ideology should contribute to a new Rwandan identity (Burnet 92).

Life in Rwanda after the genocide was difficult as the population was shaped by distrust, loss and trauma. On the one hand, there was individual trauma, which is a severe wound of the psyche of a person (see chapter 3.1.2). On the other hand, there was collective trauma, which is the destruction of the social fabric of society. Bonds that attach people within society were damaged, and distrust was prevailing (Erikson 187). While Tutsi feared new massacres initiated by FAR soldiers and

militias of the refugee camps in Zaire, Hutu were afraid of reprisals by Tutsi and the RPF. Neither of these fears was unjustified: While isolated cases of reprisals by Tutsi survivors happened and the RPF executed killings of suspected Interahamwe, the FAR and Interahamwe attacked Tutsi survivors as they were potential witnesses in genocide trials (Burnet 96-97). After the genocide, Hutu and Tutsi avoided interaction for years and were quite hostile towards each other. However, slowly normality developed as neighbors began to exchange greetings, started conversations and invited each other to their homes (Burnet 169). Essential aspects of living in the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide are reconciliation and forgiveness, exemplified in *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza, and commemoration, demonstrated in *Murambi, the Book of Bones* by Boubacar Boris Diop.

3.3.1 Forgiveness and Reconciliation in *Left to Tell*

Although the civil war and the genocide were over, mutual distrust had remained (Bah 275-276). Thus, a way how to call the perpetrators of the genocide to account had to be found as there were numerous Rwandans who felt the need for a separation of the perpetrators and the rest of the population (Prunier 309). In this context Dallaire (479) asserts that “[t]he only chance for reconciliation in Rwanda was for everyone to drop their machetes and focus on true justice against the planners and perpetrators of genocide.” Therefore, in November 1994, the UN established the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in order to prosecute the organizers and perpetrators of the genocide. However, as the Rwandan government was unsatisfied with the sentencing of perpetrators, it set up Gacaca Community Courts in 1996. Although these Courts lacked expertise, they were considered culturally more appropriate and effective than the ICTR. Apart from the ICTR and Gacaca Courts, women’s organizations and international aid agencies have worked to support reconciliation (Bah 276). Nevertheless, most assistance needed to come from local churches; on the one hand because Rwandans are religious Christians, and on the other hand because the church needed redemption, too. As the church was a driving force in the racialization of Hutu and Tutsi and contributed to Hutu suppression, churches became prime sites of large-scale massacres at the beginning of the genocide. Without the church and the army, “the two organizing and leading forces, [...] there would have been no genocide” (Mamdani 232-233). The church of

Rwanda even “gave moral sanction to the killings as an acceptable form of political engagement” (Longman 306-307). In *Left to Tell*, Ilibagiza emphasizes that an essential part of reconciliation in Rwanda is forgiveness. The focus of Ilibagiza’s novel is on her indestructible faith in God. She is convinced that victims need to trust in God in order to be able to forgive their perpetrators and come to terms with their past; only then can the healing process begin. Furthermore, she believes that forgiveness enables reconciliation between Hutu and Tutsi. Since Ilibagiza provides insights into her ordinary life before the genocide, readers experience the disruption of Immaculée’s life and how her family is torn apart at the beginning of the genocide. Immaculée finds shelter in a small bathroom in Pastor Murinzi’s house, where she and five other women stay until the end of the genocide. In the bathroom Immaculée spends most of her time praying to God. However, while hiding, fear and grief temporarily weaken her faith. One night, numerous Interahamwe search Pastor Murinzi’s house and a ‘struggle for faith’ starts within Immaculée. She tries to pray but is “overwhelmed by fear”; this is the first time “the devil [...] whispered in my ear. *Why are you calling on God? Look at all of them out there ... hundreds of them looking for you. [...] You can’t possibly survive – you won’t survive. [...] They’re close, almost here ... they’re going to find you, rape you, cut you, kill you!*” (Ilibagiza 89). Regardless of how hard Immaculée tries to resist, the voice of the devil - that is negative thoughts and feelings - keeps coming back: “*Dead bodies are everywhere. Mothers have seen their babies chopped in half, their fetuses ripped from their wombs ... and you think you should be spared?*” (Ilibagiza 90). Nevertheless, Immaculée does not give up her faith: “*No! God is love, [...] He loves me and [...] will not abandon me. [...] I’m holding on to Your legs, God, and I do not doubt that You can save me. I will not let go of You until You have sent the killers away*” (Ilibagiza 90). After Immaculée has been praying for hours and the killers have left, she knows that she has to rely on God in order to survive the genocide; without God she feels weak and vulnerable (Ilibagiza 91). As Immaculée continues to pray, she finally overcomes her fears, and ‘fights the devil’. From then on, every time she fears that her connection to God weakens, she prays. However, she does not only pray for the thousands of Tutsi victims but also for the killers: “*I prayed for the killers to come into God’s powerful light and be changed by His love: Touch them with Your Divine love, God. Only then will they drop their machetes and fall to their knees. Please, God,*

move them to stop their slaughter. Forgive them" (Ilibagiza 118). Although Immaculée fears for her life, she prays for the perpetrators to be forgiven by God. A great number of Rwandans found solace in the knowledge that they do not have to judge the killers, as one day God will do so (Fox 70).

During the genocide, Immaculée's entire family, except for her brother Aimable, has been killed. She is informed that her parents died at the beginning of the genocide. Her father asked the prefect of Kibuye to supply the refugees in the stadium with food and water. The prefect, however, only called him a fool and let him be dragged outside, where he was shot and left in the street. Ilibagiza (162) writes that the circumstances of her father's death "pierced [...] [her] heart like a spear". Immaculée is also told that her mother was chopped to death at the side of the road. When receiving this information, she feels that "[e]very word [...] was torture" (Ilibagiza 163). She also learns that her youngest brother, Vianney, was killed in the stadium, where people were murdered with machine guns and grenades. Therefore, her "hands were shaking, and [...] [she] was having a hard time getting air into [...] [her] lungs" (Ilibagiza 163). When she finally finds out that her brother, Damascene, died as well, she collapses and cries, overwhelmed by grief (Ilibagiza 164). Later Immaculée is informed about the details of Damascene's death: His murderers wanted to see the brain of a person with a master's degree and humiliated him before they first chopped off his arms, and then sliced open his skull and peered inside (Ilibagiza 173-174). The ruthless murders of Immaculée's family members need to be mentioned because even though her beloved family was brutally killed, she does not give in to hate and anger. She does not even feel like an orphan because due to her intensive praying, her relationship with God is deeper than ever. She feels that God is her father who will protect and guide her for the rest of her life (Ilibagiza 119). Numerous genocide survivors are consoled by considering God as "friend, parent, or guiding force", leading them to the right path (Fox 71).

The cycle of hatred and mistrust in Rwanda would not easily be broken. There would certainly be even more bitterness after the killing stopped, bitterness that could easily erupt into more violence. Only God's Divine forgiveness could stop that from happening now. I could see that whatever path God put me on, helping others to forgive would be a big part of my life's work. (Ilibagiza 177)

Immaculée has lost everything, except her faith in God. Her devotion prevents her from bitterness. Moreover, she knows that forgiveness is an integral part for Rwanda to heal. Even after she has been left in the middle of Interahamwe by Operation Turquoise, she is not overwhelmed by fear or anger, but trusts in God and prays, “If they kill me, God, I ask You to forgive them. Their hearts have been corrupted by hatred, and they don’t know why they want to hurt me” (Ilibagiza 195). For Immaculée God is the source of her strength and positive attitude: “I was living proof of the power of prayer and positive thinking, which really are almost the same thing. God is the source of all positive energy, and prayer is the best way to tap to His power” (Ilibagiza 215). When Immaculée talks to the RPF major, she tells him that forgiveness is vital for Rwanda: “We have to stop killing and learn to forgive” (Ilibagiza 201). Nevertheless, despite Immaculée’s faith, there are moments, when grief overwhelms her. When Immaculée visits the graves of her mother and brother, Damascene, vivid images of their final moment torment her:

The heartrending memories and the gory, gruesome details were all too much for me. I’d just begun to heal, and now I felt my wounds forced open again by the onslaught of brutal reality. [...] I felt the bitter, dirty taste of hatred in my mouth. [...] I wanted the soldiers to douse Mataba in gasoline and let me light the match that would reduce it to ashes. [...] My soul was at war with itself. I’d struggled so hard to forgive but now felt duped for having done so; I had no clemency left in me. Seeing my home in ruins and visiting the lonely, forgotten graves of my loved ones had chocked the life out of my forgiving soul. (Ilibagiza 222-223)

By visiting their destroyed home and the graves of her family members, Immaculée is painfully made aware of what she has lost. Nevertheless, she does not want to give in to grief and negative thoughts and feelings. Therefore, she prays,

“Forgive my evil thoughts, God [...] Please ... as You always have, take this pain from me and cleanse my heart. Fill me with the power of Your love and forgiveness. Those who did these horrible things are still Your children, so let me help them, and help me to forgive them. Oh, God, help me to *love* them.” A sudden rush of air flooded my lungs. I heaved a heavy sigh of relief, [...] I was at peace again. (Ilibagiza 223)

Although Immaculée's heart is broken, again she finds the strength to pray for being able to forgive and even love the perpetrators; because after all, they are still God's children. Nevertheless, whenever she thinks of her family she has to envision their violent deaths, and is haunted by nightmares. Thus, she prays for her wounds to be healed. One night Immaculée has a dream, in which her family is happily united with God, and Damascene tells her, "You must love, and you must forgive those who have trespassed against us." When Immaculée wakes up, she feels "liberated from grief" (Ilibagiza 229).

From that night onward, my tears began to dry and my pain eased. I never again agonized over the fate of my family. I accepted that I would always mourn and miss them, but I'd never spend another moment worrying about the misery they'd endured. By sending me that dream, God had shown me that my family was in a place beyond suffering. (Ilibagiza 229)

Immaculée's faith in God helps her to come to terms with the loss of her family's death. Although she will always miss them, she now knows that they are in 'a better place', which enables her to focus on the beautiful memories of her family, rather than on their brutal murders. On the way to another visit of her old house, Immaculée realizes that "[t]he landscape of my youth no longer saddened me; rather, I was heartened by the warm memories stirred by the sights and sounds around me" (Ilibagiza 230). A great number of genocide survivors could only see their own pain. They were unable to appreciate the suffering of others and were lost in grief and trauma (Burnet 188). The genocide-survivor Vincent states that it is crucial not to remain in a state of mourning forever, but to go on with life, make plans for the future, and allow God back in. For survivors God often is "'the only choice' for survival and inner peace" (Fox 71). In this regard, Ilibagiza (226) points out that "I may have lost everything, but I'd kept my faith, and it made me strong. It also comforted me and let me know that life still held purpose". Essential aspects of reconciliation were to share each other's pain and find commonalities, instead of suffering in silence (Burnet 187). Furthermore, in churches Rwandans began to discuss "the Christian principle of forgiveness, and studied relevant passages from the Bible" (Burnet 190). Thus, hate slowly dissolved and people began to support each other within their communities, regardless of their Hutu or Tutsi origin.

Unfortunately, numerous religious people had lost their connection to God, particularly due to the active role of the church in the large-scale massacres at the beginning of the genocide. Since churches – once sacred places of sanctuary – turned into prime sights of slaughtering, and thereby disrupted the religious ideology of “thou shall not kill”, a great number of Rwandans have had contradicting feelings towards faith in God and the institution of the church (Fox 69). Therefore, they have a hard time forgiving perpetrators. Francine says, “I hear no one asking for forgiveness. In any case, I know there is nothing that can be forgiven. [...] if he [a man] has worked at killing for a whole month, even on Sundays, how can he hope for pardon? [...] For us [...] it is impossible to forgive” (Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare* 42-43). Angélique also states, that “they seek no forgiveness” (Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare* 85). Christine asserts that Hutu asking for forgiveness is a crucial step towards reconciliation (Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare* 148), since the desire to reconcile is a determinant for a united Rwanda (Burnet 170). Even though the majority of perpetrators did not literally ask for forgiveness, they did yearn for it: Numerous perpetrators had let themselves be carried along, and later regretted having participated in the genocide. Foster (qtd. in Mengel, Borzaga, and Orantes 119) emphasizes the complex state of mind of people who are victims as well as perpetrators. Those people often have multiple, fragmented identities and when they turn into perpetrators, all other parts of their identity are suppressed. Hutu, on the one hand, had been victims of a colonial system of oppression and feared the possibility of a future Tutsi rule. On the other hand, a great number of Hutu were forced to kill by extremists. Thus, (former) victims became perpetrators; however killing others did not empower but traumatize them. Perpetrators can suffer from PTSD as well since they are haunted by the memories of the atrocities committed (McNally 85). Nevertheless, perpetrators are only traumatized by their actions when their own moral code has been violated (McNally 87), that is, they would not have killed under normal circumstances and are now haunted by their guilty conscience. This is demonstrated in *Left to Tell*, where Ilibagiza (174) explains that one of the killers of Damascene, Semahe, is unable to comprehend how he could have participated in the brutal murder of Immaculée’s brother. Semahe has traumatized himself by killing Damascene and now suffers from the consequences of his misdeed. The same is true for Felicien, who was the leader of the gang that killed Immaculée’s mother and Damascene. Furthermore, Felicien

looted the house of Immaculée's family and robbed their plantation and farm machinery. Although he had known Immaculée since her childhood, he was the one who repeatedly called for her death in Pastor Murinzi's house (Ilibagiza 231, 232). Immaculée visits Felicien in prison: "When he looked up from the floor and saw that I was the one who was waiting for him, the color drained from his face. He quickly shifted his gaze and stared at the floor" (Ilibagiza 231). Due to this reaction, Immaculée can see that he is so ashamed of his actions that he cannot bear to look at her. Felicien seems to be bruised, broken and filthy; and his suffering deeply affects Immaculée, "Felicien had let the devil enter his heart, and the devil had ruined his life like a cancer in his soul. He was now the victim of the victims, destined to live in torment and regret. I was overwhelmed with pity for the man" (Ilibagiza 231-232). This passage demonstrates that Immaculée is convinced that Hutu killers were not born evil, but ordinary people who gave in to the 'devil's temptations'. Anti-Tutsi propaganda twisted their minds, and greed made them blind to God, that is they were no longer able to distinguish between right and wrong. Propaganda and material opportunities turned into the killing frenzy that claimed almost one million lives. Immaculée further states that, "Felicien was sobbing. I could feel his shame. He looked up at me for only a moment, but our eyes met. I reached out, touched his hands lightly, and quietly said what I'd come to say. 'I forgive you.' My heart eased immediately, and I saw the tension release in Felicien's shoulders" (Ilibagiza 232). Therefore, Ilibagiza points out that forgiveness can have healing effects on both, victims and perpetrators. When Immaculée is asked why she forgave Felicien, she replies that "Forgiveness is all I have to offer" (Ilibagiza 232). For Immaculée forgiveness is a natural part of her belief in God. Édith, another genocide survivor, is also "ready to forgive". For her forgiveness "is not a denial of the harm they did, not a betrayal of the Tutsis, not an easy way out. It is so that I will not suffer my whole life long asking myself why they tried to cut me. [...] If I do not forgive them, it is I alone who suffers and frets and cannot sleep I yearn for peace in my body" (Hatzfeld, *Life Laid Bare*, 173-174). Édith as well as Immaculée experience forgiveness as a liberation from obsessive thoughts about the past. Due to their ability to forgive, they can move on with their lives.

Survivors for whom their faith was a resource of strength, the belief that ‘God had a plan for them’, supported their acceptance of the events of the genocide (Fox 70), which is emphasized in *Left to Tell*: “God saved my soul and spared my life for a reason: He left me to tell my story to others and show as many people as possible the healing power of His love and forgiveness” (Ilibagiza 237). The most important aspect of reconciliation probably is that Rwandans help each other to deal with their individual trauma, so as to overcome collective trauma.

Rwanda can heal herself, if each heart learns the lesson of forgiveness. [...] The love of a single heart can make a world of difference. I believe that we can heal Rwanda – and our world – by healing one heart at a time. (Ilibagiza 239)

3.3.2 Commemoration in *Murambi, the Book of Bones*

Diop took part in the project “Writing by Duty of Memory”, organized by the annual literary festival Fest’ Africa. In the course of this project, a group of African writers spent two months in Rwanda in 1998, during which they visited prime sites of massacres and memorials of the genocide. They talked to representatives of humanitarian organizations, journalists and intellectuals; and also interviewed survivors as well as perpetrators. Their work should contribute to the commemoration of the genocide (Applegate 47). At the beginning of the genocide thousands of people were killed in public places, in particular churches (Mamdani 225). Today, prime sites of massacres serve as memorials, where visitors are physically and visually confronted with the gruesome consequences of genocide (Dauge-Roth 160). *Murambi, the Book of Bones* is a poly-vocal novel as there are various protagonists – victims and perpetrators - who tell their stories of the genocide in part one and part three of the book. As Diop juxtaposes the first-person narratives of the protagonists, he does not try to take a neutral position (Dauge-Roth 155). Part two and four of the novel are about Cornelius, a Hutu who has returned from exile in Djibouti four years after the genocide. He needs to find out the details of his family’s fate and wants to write a play about the genocide. If writing is considered as duty to remember, authors have to think carefully about how they want to represent the past so as to fulfill their aim of supporting commemoration. Therefore, writers have to take a clear position (Dauge-Roth 155-156), which Diop does in form of Cornelius, who is narrated in third

person. By using the perspective of various protagonists, Diop offers a multi-perspective view of the past events; and due to the juxtaposition of these views, there is no entire truth to be found. Thus, the novel emphasizes the importance of considering the historical background and a poly-vocal approach to genocide. Ultimately, readers need to make sense of the different perspectives, and thereby position themselves within these views (Dauge-Roth 157).

All Rwandans have been affected by the genocide and are physically and psychologically traumatized (Burnet 74). They are dealing with the past in different ways. Numerous people want to draw a 'veil of silence' over the events as they hope to be able to forget in that way. They avoid talking about their experiences so as not to relive their trauma (Burnet 76). This is also true for Cornelius' friend Stanley.

"[...] We try and forget, but sometimes it comes welling up so powerfully. No-one can do anything about it. That man escaped a massacre and ... and there!" [...]

"I get the feeling that you don't like to talk about this business."

"No, I hate it. Know that once and for all I want to forget." (Diop 53)

It also seems that the more time has passed after the genocide, the less people are willing to talk about it (Burnet 86). A major role in this regard plays the state authority that mandates silence, if the stories of the victims do not fit into the main discourse of commemoration. Therefore, the victims' suffering, and the silence of victims and perpetrators was amplified (Burnet 109). Nevertheless, the governments' idea was to make "re-membering' the genocide an integral component of its nation building" (Burnet 92). Therefore, the civilians' wish for silence and the government's aim to establish national mourning as part of the Rwandan state collided. A further problem in this regard was that the RPF declared all Tutsi as victims and all Hutu as perpetrators, which does not mirror reality. The genocide comprised a great variety of experiences of a diverse population, which makes memories and ways of mourning individual. National mourning, however, reduces the experience of each individual to one state-discourse, thus "individual mourning becomes political and managed by the state" (Burnet 92-93). However, numerous survivors feel that their memories of the genocide and their trauma are too personal to be 'shared with society'. Furthermore,

due to the Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy, moderate Hutu could not mourn their loved ones in ceremonies as they were accused of being perpetrators (Burnet 102). April has been declared as the month of national mourning, where numerous organized activities take place. The period of commemoration has been extended to 4 July, celebrated as Liberation Day by the RPF (Burnet 93, 94). The first memorial-ceremony of 1995 was not attended by any minister or head of state of the Western countries, which once again demonstrated their lack of interest in Rwanda. Nevertheless, the role of the international community during the genocide was a constant theme of these ceremonies, especially between 1995 and 2005 (Burnet 97).

Apart from ceremonies, genocide memorial sites also serve the remembrance of the events of 1994 (Burnet 103). The main protagonist of *Murambi, the Book of Bones*, Cornelius, is made to visit the memorials of Ntarama and Nyamata Church by his uncle Siméon Habineza in order to begin to grasp the extent of violence of the genocide. This should gradually prepare him for the fate of his family in Murambi. At first, he and his childhood friend Jessica visit the Ntarama Memorial, where 5,000 people were brutally murdered. There the human remains of the victims as well as their belongings are displayed (genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw). In a shelter outside the church bones of people who were killed in the churchyard or on their attempt to escape were neatly organized (Burnet 105). However, inside the church bodies were left in the state they died. This is also portrayed by Diop:

Inside the parish grounds Cornelius saw for the first time remains of victims of the genocide. On two long tables, inside a rectangular straw hut, human remains were exhibited: skulls on the right, and an assortment of other bones on the left. [...] In this second building the bodies were to be found in the same state that the killers had left them in, four years earlier. Shreds of clothing still clung to the bodies (Diop 71-72)

Right after the visit of Ntarama, Cornelius and Jessica visit Nyamata. Behind the church, more than 45,000 victims – killed inside the church or in the surrounding areas - are buried in mass graves (genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw).

Twenty-five to thirty thousand cadavers were on display in the stately red brick building. [...] There too, remains were heaped onto a long table covered by

fine sand. At one end stood a preserved body almost intact. [...] “Her name was Theresa Mukandori. We all knew her very well,” [...] The young woman had her head pushed back and the scream extracted from her by the pain had been frozen on her still grimacing face. Her magnificent tresses were disheveled, and her legs wide apart. A stake – of wood or of iron, Cornelius didn’t know, he was too shocked to notice – had remained lodged in her vagina. (Diop 72-73)

In 1998, in certain memorials bodies could be found in the places the victims had died. Today, the Rwandan government still considers such a display of human remains as an important reminder of the horrors of the genocide but also as proof that the genocide took place. However, some people believe that this practice of commemoration objectifies the victims (Applegate 53). Furthermore, the question, whether being confronted with this evidence of violence actually informs visitors or whether it only shocks them, has been debated (Applegate 55). Moreover, the display of the bodies was highly controversial as numerous genocide survivors felt that it would dishonor the dead, as they just served as “inhuman embodiments of the terror of genocide” (Burnet 99, 101). In the second part of the novel, Diop criticizes this “practice of visual evidence as a way to understand” (Applegate 58). After Cornelius had seen Mukandori’s remains, “he remembered the words of a famous African American intellectual after passing through Nyamata. Completely traumatized, he had declared on television: ‘I’ve been wrong all my life. After what I saw in Rwanda, I think that blacks are, in fact, savages’” (Diop 73). This passage refers to the display of bodies in memorials rather than to the genocide itself. Being confronted with such demanding visual evidence can have traumatizing effects on the visitor, who tries to understand.

Numerous researchers refer to Mukandori who was an actual woman that was repeatedly raped and then killed in Nyamata church in April 1994. As Mukandori’s body was remarkably well preserved, her remains were displayed for years in the position she had died. Her body was supposed to symbolize the sexual torture a great number of victims had to endure before their death. Moreover, Diop considers it important to write about Mukandori as a name can be related to the body, which gives her a “symbolic life” (Applegate 58). In addition, Diop counteracts the objectification of victims by introducing Mukandori in the first part of his novel, where

she is still alive and tells Jessica that she will be safe inside the church of Nyamata (Diop 26-27). In another passage, Diop (146) scrutinizes the 'unification' of the victims' bodies by a memorial guide:

"Do you want to go on, sir? [...]"

"Yes. I want to see everything."

"You'll see the same bodies everywhere."

"No," said Cornelius dryly, "I don't think so."

He was so furious with the unknown man that he almost asked him to leave him alone. [...] Each one of these corpses had had a life that was different from that of all the others, each one had dreamed and navigated between doubt and hope, between love and hate.

When Cornelius is confronted with Theresa's remains, he begins to realize that the idea of writing a play about the genocide from his perspective as an outsider was arrogant. He comes to understand that he has only had intellectual knowledge about the experiences of genocide survivors; thus he has no right to claim to know what living in the genocide was like. He is so shocked by the violence that surrounds Theresa's remains that he realizes that a revaluation of his position as an outsider is necessary. Therefore, he begins to see the limits of writing against forgetting. Nevertheless, Cornelius is "also animated by a sincere willingness to know" (Dauge-Roth 158). In this way, Diop does not only point out the horror of the genocide but also the difficulty of transforming these horrors into narratives (Applegate 51). There is another aspect of the display of human remains Diop addresses:

During the last few minutes the odor had become frankly intolerable. Cornelius stepped back toward the entrance-way to get some of the pure outside air. Jessica joined him and they visited crypt no. 2 in the rear courtyard of the church. No sooner had he entered when Cornelius was literally propelled outside by the stench that came from within. (Diop 74)

Based on the decay process of the bodies, visitors were confronted with an unbearable stench, "The acrid odor of decomposing bodies remained like a stinking little ball, diluting slowly in his blood" (Diop 75). After the visits of the Ntarama and Nyamata Memorials, Cornelius is still in shock. When Jessica suggests a place to eat, he answers "mechanically, still haunted by what he had just seen in Nyamata

and Ntarama” (Diop 75). Regardless of whether someone advocates or opposes the visual display of bodies, the sensations experienced by visitors remain with them.

Before Cornelius and Jessica visit the Murambi Memorial, which lies in the south of the prefecture Gikongoro, Jessica tells Cornelius that his father, Joseph Karekezi, was the organizer of the massacre at the Murambi Polytechnic School; among the victims were also Cornelius’ mother, who was Tutsi, his brother and sister and all in-laws. Furthermore, he was informed that his father was evacuated during Operation Turquoise in June 1994 (Diop 77-78). In and around the Polytechnic School an estimated 50,000 people were killed. After Habyarimana’s death, Tutsi of Gikongoro were told by authorities to be safe at the school; consequently within two weeks thousands of people gathered there. However, on 21 April 1994, the building was encircled and attacked by Interahamwe, making it almost impossible for Tutsi to escape. On the next day, the Interahamwe dug mass graves in order to bury the bodies (genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw). Some sources, like the memorial websites, state that the militias were assisted by French soldiers of Operation Turquoise, who also built a volleyball court on top of the mass graves. Other sources, like Burnet (Burnet 99), doubt that such accounts are reliable. Regardless of the French’s involvement in the burial of the bodies; they established their headquarters in the Polytechnic School during Operation Turquoise. In September 1995, the bodies of the Murambi victims were exhumed. As the bodies of one grave were barely decomposed, they were preserved in lime and displayed on wooden tables in classrooms at the Murambi Memorial. Apart from that, a reconstruction of the main building provided enough space for an exhibition and a burial place. The exhibition explaining the context of the genocide is in an open hall, whereas two rooms serve as burial chambers. In addition to the information available and the display of the bodies, there is also one room equipped with bones and belongings of the victims (genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw). The Murambi Memorial is in the center of the novel as Cornelius’ father was the organizer of the killings, and also responsible for the death of his family. It seems that Diop has chosen Murambi for Cornelius’ story since the bodies are best preserved there. Thus, their display at Murambi is overwhelming and forms the climax of visual evidence of the genocide Cornelius is confronted with.

These dead people laid out on the ground struck him as very different from the ones he had already seen. In Nyamata and Ntarama time had put the finishing touches to the work of the Interahamwe: skulls, arms, and legs had become detached from their torsos and the different types of remains found there had to be organized separately. In Murambi, the bodies, which were covered with a fine layer of mud, were almost intact. Without his being able to say why, the remains in Murambi gave him the impression of still being alive. He took fright. Instead of going into the classrooms, he started pacing up and down the hallway, glancing indecisively in every direction, as if looking for a place to flee. Saliva was collecting in his throat and he swallowed it to conceal his disgust. Even from the outside the stench of the cadavers was intolerable. (Diop 144)

In contrast to the memorials of Ntarama and Nyamata, the bodies of Murambi were mummified with lime, therefore shriveled bodies with distorted faces can be seen (Burnet 99). Although the visit of the Murambi Genocide Memorial deeply stirs Cornelius, the tour continues.

The man showed him an enormous crater in the center of some wild grass: "There are several of these in this school. These holes served as mass graves." "I was told that in Murambi the victims were buried, then exhumed," said Cornelius. "That's correct. The bodies are intact because there's clay in the soil here." [...] "But who had them buried?" "Some French officers with Operation Turquoise." [...] "This is where they hoisted their flag. As soon as they arrived in the zone, they saw that this school was just what they needed. But there were cadavers all over the place." [...] "Doctor Karekezi ordered the Interahamwe to place the bodies in these common graves [...] The French soldiers lent them the equipment, and when the cadavers were collected in the graves, they set up camp on top of them." (Diop 149)

On the compound of the Murambi Memorial, outside of the building, signs indicate where the French flag and the volleyball court were. Furthermore, the "crater" mentioned by Diop, is the one mass grave that has been preserved in order to demonstrate visitors the physical depth of the mass graves (rwandanmemorials.omeka.net).

Although Diop criticizes the display of the victims' bodies in part two of the book, in part four Cornelius begins to understand why Rwanda's authorities wanted to present them in that way:

Rwanda was the only place in the world that these victims could call their home. They still wanted its sun. It was too soon to throw them into the darkness of the earth. Besides, every Rwandan should have the courage to look reality in the eye. The strong odor of the remains proved that the genocide had taken place only four years earlier and not in ancient times. As they were perishing under the blows, the victims had shouted out. No one had wanted to hear them. The echo of those cries should be allowed to reverberate for as long as possible. (Diop 147)

Due to the display of the victims' bodies, their final moments are 'frozen in time'. Their faces distorted by screams of fear and pain, and their injuries bear witness to the atrocities committed during the genocide. As long as the cries of the victims reverberate, the genocide will be remembered. In the novel, one of the few survivors of the Murambi massacre, Gérard Nayinzira, tells Cornelius how he managed to survive and talks about the atrocities he had witnessed. Afterwards, he says to Cornelius:

I'm not making it up, for once that's not necessary. If you prefer to think that I imagined these horrors your mind will be at peace and that's not good. This pain will get lost in opaque words and everything will be forgotten until the next massacre. They really did all these incredible things. It happened in Rwanda only four years ago, when the entire world was playing soccer in America. (Diop 176)

In form of Cornelius' uncle Siméon Habineza and Gérard Nayinzira, Diop emphasizes the importance of the account of genocide survivors, without whom the performance of the "duty to remember" would be impossible (Dauge-Roth 159).

During his stay in Rwanda, Cornelius has begun to realize that the Rwandan Genocide is 'his story' after all; he is not the outsider he believed to be. Dauge-Roth (161) states that "Cornelius must envision himself as an heir for whom the past must remain 'forever' within the present so that the present 'never again' mirrors the past!" This means that Cornelius, the son of a mass murderer of the Rwandan Genocide,

inherited a legacy - a duty to remember, so the past is never forgotten. In order to prevent history from repeating itself, the refusal of reproducing the logic of hatred is essential (Dauge-Roth 160).

Commemoration is not only important for remembering the genocide, but is also a means of reprocessing and coming to terms with the past. This coming to terms with the past has to happen on a personal as well as societal level, which is demonstrated in the following section:

[A]fter a genocide, the real problem is not the victims, but the executioners. To kill almost a million people in three months took a lot of people. There were tens or hundreds of thousands of killers. Many of them were fathers. And you, you're just the son of one of them. [...] You have a long path to take in your heart and in your mind. You're going to suffer a lot, and that might be good for you. (Diop 79)

Cornelius also finally knows that "accepting his past was the price he had to pay to begin to recover his serenity and sense of the future" (Diop 164).

He did not intend to resign himself to the definitive victory of the murderers through silence. [...] He would tirelessly recount the horror. With machete words, club words, words studded with nails, naked words and – despite Gérard – words covered with blood and shit. That he could do, because he saw in the genocide of Rwandan Tutsi a great lesson in simplicity. Every chronicler could at least learn – something essential to his art – to call a monster by its name. (Diop 179)

In this passage, Cornelius represents various crucial aspects: Rwandans need to break their silence and talk about their experiences in order to come to terms with their past and make people understand the extent of the genocide. In order to do so, novelists do not need to use beautiful language or paraphrase atrocities. On the contrary, they need to use words appropriate for the horrors described so as to shock the readers. Thereby, readers are confronted with the reality of Rwanda's past and can reprocess it. Furthermore, Diop points out that it is essential to use the appropriate terms for events. In the years after the genocide, the majority of Rwandans referred to it as "the war" or "the events of 1994" because they wanted to avoid describing the atrocities committed as genocide. However, today people in

Rwanda almost exclusively talk about “the Tutsi genocide” as they have learned from the government (Burnet 85). Finally, if the international community had sooner called the monster by its name, tens of thousands of people might have been saved.

4 Conclusion

As was clearly demonstrated in this thesis, the Rwandan Genocide was not a spontaneous outburst of tribal hatred, but the culmination of various political and social changes and a related increase in animosities. In this regard, it needs to be pointed out that the genocide was a multi-perspective and complex phenomenon. While Hutu were victims of a colonial system of suppression, Tutsi were oppressed during the First Republic under Kayibanda. Although Habyarimana's regime in the Second Republic tried to reconcile Hutu and Tutsi, equality was not achieved. Since the beginning of Rwanda's colonization, tensions between Hutu and Tutsi heightened. Therefore, on both sides numerous attacks and reprisal killings took place. Consequently, thousands of Rwandans, mostly Tutsi, fled the country. However, numerous refugees wished to return home, and thus formed the RPF who carried out raids in the north of Rwanda. Based on the power that the RPF would have gained by the implementation of the Arusha Peace Accords, Hutu feared a renewed system of suppression. As a result various militias were formed and anti-Tutsi propaganda was spread. Finally, the assassination of president Habyarimana ignited the genocide of Tutsi.

This thesis set out with the aim of providing an overview of the prevailing themes in novels about the Rwandan Genocide. Three themes addressed by the majority of writers are the extreme violence perpetrators resorted to, the inaction of the United Nations, and the life of Rwandans in the aftermath of the genocide. These aspects were analyzed in the novels *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* by Gil Courtemanche, *Murambi*, *The Book of Bones* by Boubacar Boris Diop, *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza, and *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You* by Hanna Jansen.

The first chapter of the literature analysis was dedicated to 'Physical and Psychological Violence' employed by the extremists. In this regard, *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* was examined in relation to violence against women. During the Rwandan Genocide thousands of women were brutally raped, which is depicted in Courtemanche's novel. Therefore, first theoretical background of rape during the Rwandan Genocide was provided. Afterwards, the rape and death of Georgina, and

the sexual abuse of Gentile and how she lives in the aftermath of it are analyzed. The second novel dealing with violence is *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You*. This narrative tells the story of the young girl Jeanne who survives the genocide but has lost her entire family. She has to witness the brutal murders of her mother and brother, and thus is deeply traumatized. Therefore, the violent death scenes were portrayed in order to gain better insights into Jeanne's trauma.

In the second chapter of the literature analysis the emphasis was on the inaction of the United Nations. The indifference of western countries towards Africa is evident throughout the genocide – and its representation in novels - as the UN was unwilling to intervene, while 800,000 to 1 million Rwandans were brutally killed (Bah 254). The passivity of the UN is criticized in all four novels, therefore passages of each of the narratives are analyzed in this chapter.

In the third and final major chapter of the literature analysis the life of Rwandans in the aftermath of the genocide was examined. In this context, forgiveness and reconciliation are vital aspects; which are pointed out in the novel *Left to Tell*. Although Immaculée has lost her family and all of her belongings in the genocide, she keeps her unwavering faith in God. This enables her to forgive the perpetrators involved in the killings of her mother and brother. Furthermore, she wants to support other survivors in forgiving murderers so as to heal themselves and Rwanda as a whole. Another essential part of living in the aftermath is commemoration. In Rwanda, national mourning and public commemoration has become a central aspect of the post-genocidal state. In various genocide memorials human remains, and even bodies left in the place they died, have been displayed. This form of presentation of visual evidence has been criticized by a great number of survivors as they feel that the dead are dishonored in this way. Nevertheless, the government considers this form of display as appropriate in order to remember the victims and prove that the genocide did take place. Apart from this disagreement of survivors and the government, the new state of Rwanda has had to deal with other difficulties, such as nation-building, overcoming mutual distrust and finally reconciling Hutu and Tutsi, a still ongoing process.

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6 Appendix

Deutsches Abstract

Während des Genozids in Ruanda im Jahr 1994 wurden innerhalb von 100 Tagen bis zu einer Million Menschen auf brutalste Weise umgebracht. Die Mitgliedsstaaten der UNO entschieden sich dennoch gegen einen Eingriff, da sie der Ansicht waren, es hätte sich bei den Massakern um eine Auseinandersetzung zweier afrikanischer Stämme gehandelt. In dieser Diplomarbeit wird jedoch darauf hingewiesen, dass eine Reihe von institutionellen und gesellschaftlichen Veränderungen zu den Spannungen und Feindseligkeiten zwischen Hutu und Tutsi führten. Seit 1994 bemühen sich Journalisten und Journalistinnen sowie Überlebende des Völkermordes Außenstehenden den Genozid näher zu bringen. Infolgedessen wurden Romane veröffentlicht, die eine Vielzahl wichtiger Thematiken behandeln. Die folgenden vier Romane werden in dieser Arbeit näher beleuchtet: *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* von Gil Courtemanche, *Murambi*, *The Book of Bones* von Boubacar Boris Diop, *Left to Tell* von Immaculée Ilibagiza und *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You* von Hanna Jansen. Der Schwerpunkt dieser Arbeit wurde auf die Analyse der drei am häufigsten vorkommenden Themen gelegt. In jedem der vier Romane wird die extreme Brutalität, die von den Tätern und Täterinnen ausgeübt wurde, angesprochen. Des Weiteren ist aus heutiger Sicht klar, dass durch ein rechtzeitiges Eingreifen der UNO hunderttausende Leben gerettet hätten werden können. Letztendlich werden die Schwierigkeiten, mit denen der Ruandische Staat sich nach dem Genozid konfrontiert sah, erörtert. Obwohl die Regierung, die Kirche und zahlreiche Organisationen, besonders anfangs, an einer Versöhnung und Annäherung von Hutu und Tutsi arbeiteten, wird die Aufarbeitung des Geschehenen noch viele Jahre in Anspruch nehmen.

English Abstract

During the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 up to 1 million people were brutally killed within 100 days. The United Nations decided against an intervention because they considered the massacres to be the result of tribal hatred between Hutu and Tutsi. However, in this thesis an examination of the historical background of the genocide demonstrates that various institutional and social changes led to the animosities between Hutu and Tutsi. Since 1994 journalists and survivors have tried to make the international community understand the Rwandan Genocide. Therefore, they have published novels that address a great variety of important themes. The following four narratives are analyzed in this regard: *A Sunday at the Pool in Kigali* by Gil Courtemanche, *Murambi*, *The Book of Bones* by Boubacar Boris Diop, *Left to Tell* by Immaculée Ilibagiza, and *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk With You* by Hanna Jansen. The focus of this thesis is laid on three prevailing themes, which are physical and psychological violence, the passivity of the United Nations and living in the aftermath of the genocide. As is indicated in each of these four novels, the perpetrators resorted to extreme violence and torture before killing their victims. Furthermore, it is evident that the UN could have saved hundreds of thousands of Rwandans if they had decided for an intervention. Finally, the difficulties of the post-genocidal Rwandan state are addressed. Although the government, the church and various organizations worked on reconciliation in the aftermath of the genocide, Rwanda is still wounded.