Fernanda Barreto Alves

Memory Matter(s):
Assembling Memorials in Post-genocide Rwanda

Tese de Doutorado

Thesis presented to the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Relações Internacionais of the Instituto de Relações Internacionais of PUC-Rio in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doutor em Relações Internacionais.

Advisor: Profa. Carolina Moulin Aguiar

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To Vanderlei, for unconditional devotion and so many lessons of caring;
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Abstract

Alves, Fernanda Barreto; Aguiar, Carolina Moulin (Advisor). **Memory Matter(s): Assembling Memorials in Post-genocide Rwanda**. Rio de Janeiro, 2018. 249p. Tese de Doutorado – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

Working within the transversality of memory and memorialization, this dissertation proposes an engagement with materiality in order to explore memory as a fusion of bodies (human and nonhuman intermingling), places (fragile and provisional spatiotemporal configurations), and practices (actions always embedded in performances and translations), forming mnemonic assemblages (Freeman; Nienass; Daniell, 2016) in post-genocide Rwanda. As memorialization in Rwanda is deeply embedded in a particular type of matter – human remains –, we adopt a corporeal focus, looking into the entanglements between persons and things considering their blurriness. Going beyond practices of representation, we explore the movements of friction between a wide range of entities assembling (and disassembling) in memorials, stressing its unpredictable character and underlining their provisional spatiotemporal configurations. With this move, we hope to energize the landscape with other possibilities beyond the conception of matter and place as passive or stable and towards a more fluid transformation enacted in the encounter between these material-semiotic entities. Exploring affective encounters between bodies and places, we argue that it is only in this co-becoming that memorial places are enacted. Working under the rubric of 'new materialism', we suggest a bricolage of approaches, accounting for 'the political' in a more 'co-operative-cum-experimental sensibility' (Thrift, 2008) towards generative matter. Such effort enables us to remember and forget with and through other bodies, acknowledging the importance of things/matter and places in memorialization practices in Rwanda, and inviting to join the call for a theoretical and methodological engagement with the lived experience in International Relations. More specifically, this dissertation engages with movement and flux of places and matter through memorials sites as places of friction and through the circularity of the dead body. Trying to grasp different

modes of memory gatherings, we offer two assemblages to explore these differences: carefully designed national-level memorial sites (Kigali, Murambi, and Bisesero) and a spontaneous place of memory – Nyabarongo River. The research on these heterogeneous spaces assembled as places of memory is based on fieldwork conducted in Rwanda in 2011 and 2014.

Keywords

Resumo

Alves, Fernanda Barreto; Aguiar, Carolina Moulin (orientadora). **Materialidades da Memória: Montando Memoriais no Pós-genocídio de Ruanda**. Rio de Janeiro, 2018. 249p. Tese de Doutorado – Instituto de Relações Internacionais, Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro.

Trabalhando na transversalidade entre memória e memorialização, esta tese propõe um engajamento com a materialidade a fim de explorar a memória como uma fusão de corpos (humanos e não-humanos se misturando), lugares (configurações espaço-temporais frágeis e provisórias) e práticas (ações sempre permeadas por performances e traduções), formando assemblagens mnemônicas (Freeman; Nienass; Daniell, 2016) em Ruanda no pós-genocídio. Como a memorialização em Ruanda está profundamente permeada por um tipo particular de matéria - restos humanos -, adotamos um foco corpóreo, olhando para os enredamentos entre pessoas e coisas, considerando seu embaçamento. Indo além das práticas de representação, exploramos os movimentos de fricção entre uma ampla gama de entidades que se agrupam (e desmontam) em memoriais, enfatizando seu caráter imprevisível e sublinhando suas configurações espaço-temporais provisórias. Com este movimento, esperamos energizar a paisagem com outras possibilidades além da concepção da matéria e do lugar como passivo ou estável e em direção a uma transformação mais fluida encenada no encontro entre essas entidades materiais-semióticas. Explorando encontros afetivos entre corpos e lugares, argumentamos que é apenas nesse processo que os lugares memoriais são encenados. Trabalhando sob a rubrica do 'novo-materialismo', sugerimos uma bricolagem de abordagens, dando conta do político em uma sensibilidade mais 'cooperativa-experimental' (Thrift, 2008) em relação à materialidade generativa. Tal esforço nos permite lembrar e esquecer com e por meio de outros corpos, reconhecendo a importância das coisas/matéria e lugares nas práticas de memorialização em Ruanda, e convidando a participar do chamado para um envolvimento teórico e metodológico com a experiência vivida em Relações Internacionais. Mais especificamente, esta dissertação se engaja com o movimento e o fluxo dos lugares e da matéria por meio de memoriais como locais

de fricção e da circularidade do corpo morto. Buscando compreender diferentes modos de agrupamentos de memória, oferecemos duas assemblagens para explorar essas diferenças: memoriais nacionais cuidadosamente projetados (Kigali, Murambi e Bisesero) e um lugar de memória espontâneo – o Rio Nyabarongo. A pesquisa destes espaços heterogêneos construídos como locais de memória é baseada em trabalho de campo realizado em Ruanda em 2011 e 2014.

Palavras-chave

Assemblagens mnemônicas; Novo(s)-materialismo(s); Afeto; Memorialização; Ruanda pós-genocídio

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Abbreviations

AERG	Association des Etudiants Et Éleves Rescapés Du Genocide
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANT	Actor-Network Theory
AVEGA	Association des Veuves du Genocide Agahozo
AVP	Association des Volontaires de la Paix
BPO	Butare Prefecture Office
CDR	Coalition pour la Défense de la République et de la Démocratie
CNLG	Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Genocide
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ESPR	Education for Sustainable Peace in Rwanda
FAR	Rwandan Armed Forces
GAERG	Groupe des Anciens Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide
GRRP	Genocide Research and Reconciliation Programme
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HWR	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IGSC	Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Center
IR	International Relations
IRVSDC	Iwawa Rehabilitation and Vocational Skills Development Centre
KGMC	Kigali Genocide Memorial Center
LVFO	Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization
MRND(D)	Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement (et la Démocratie)
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
PARMEHUTU	Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu
PSD	Parti Social Démocrate
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
RGB	Rwanda Governance Board
RNP	Rwanda National Police

RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RPEP	Rwanda Peace Education Programme
RTLM	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
STS	Science and Technology Studies
SURF	Survivors Fund
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
UNAR	Rwandese National Union
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee

1 Introduction

MADNESS

This evil and accomplice sun
That dares smile to the assassins
That dares illumine this damned country
Where the prevailing law is the law of blood
In which I can only see the abyss
In which the whole word will sink
A black hole in which there is nothing but death
No glimmer whatever, no ray of hope
The absence of victims is the hangmen's absence
The absence of hangmen is the victims' absence
We all have our life in common
Such a funny species humans are
I kissed the wind that took away my children
I wanted to kiss it so I could feel them
To hold them tight in my arms
To say to myself nothing could ever take them away
I would follow them farther than the most distant point
We would remain together for all eternity
An eternity only I understand
Because my eternity is my present time.
The wind blew all over my body
I wanted to be naked to feel its coolness
I felt hot living in unreality of my reality
I sweated a lot seeing the unreality of my life
I would have loved this wind had tickled me
To be able to laugh, as of old, at my foolishness
To laugh at my silliness of thinking evil is strong
To be able to laugh at myself
To laugh out of joy in a too strong misfortune
I must get rid as fast as I can
Of these sufferings sterilizing me
Reducing my body and my soul
While the world thinks I go on living
However I died that day
Those 100 days without an answer from on high
Made me doubt of its existence
Even holding in contempt those who showed it to me.

- Yolande Mukagasana

In July of 2011, I met the author of the poem above. Strength is the only word I would use if someone asked me to describe this encounter. I will refrain myself from clarifying such choice for a few moments so that the reader can also interact.

As part of the activities scheduled for that day, we would be meeting Yolande Mukagasana[1]. I was awaiting a Rwandan writer who was about to discuss the role of literature, fiction, and novels in addressing genocide, but I knew nothing else about her. She arrived in the room and we stood up to present ourselves. After introductions, we all gathered around a big wooden table and looked, in silence, into each other's faces. I smiled. She smiled back. I remember feeling excited about this discussion; after all, it was not directly connected to all the pain and suffering of genocidal violence, but to novels as an alternative to discuss genocide.

It was only too soon that I realized she was a survivor of the genocide and she would actually delve into literature as a way to mourn her beloved family and country. I was expecting a reflection on the way novels could offer us new possibilities in conceiving space, time, Self, and Other focusing on the interaction between the many voices of characters and how we relate (or not) with them. And she surely delivered all that, but the content and form were too striking for me.

Mukagasana narrated, in unbearable details, every aspect of her struggle to survive. She was a nurse during the genocide and became a target of the génocidaires due to her role in the community. She escaped being killed by hiding where she could, but her husband and children perished. She said she began writing during the genocide by scribbling the names and dates of death of her family and friends on a cigarette carton when hiding under her neighbors' sink. This is only one example demonstrating how the trivial and the exceptional entangled in potential ways, exploring things, places, and feelings inextricably connecting and producing unexpected effects. Those trivialities, always brutally detailed, pervaded all the discussion, and she never dismayed or shirked away from them while narrating – it was what affected me most in our encounter.

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[1] The next section of this chapter describes the context of this and many other encounters, detailing my two fieldwork experiences in Rwanda. For now, I just want to underline that "we" in this case refers to the group of scholars to whom I joined in 2011.

In her last considerations, she summarized in a deep breath: "c'est le monde" and offered us a poem (the one above). I was writing it down while she slowly declaimed it. It was pure beauty and excruciating pain at the same time. There is a multiplicity of layers in this poem, disconcertingly mingling words of horror and love in revisiting her memories. The all-consuming experience of genocide was now on me – all over me, and I did not bear the weight of her posture, her words, and her position. Like two other people in the group before me, I left the room. I was trembling and crying uncontrollably – devastated by a poem. And the strength I mentioned before was felt in many ways: the powerful force of poetry; the strength of the author in telling, and telling, and telling vigorously and in every detail; the way she sat with us offering a potential and transformative energy despite all that happened; her memories baffled me and, unanticipatedly, invaded my body in such a way I am still not able to describe properly.

A poem: a piece of paper, a pen, distressing words, Rwandan genocide, and Yolande Mukagasana. A poem is a thing, a text, and a person's echo in an assemblage of material-semiotic entities intertwining. It was through encountering things that I became curious about memory and memorialization in Rwanda, exploring the "inseparability of thought and feeling in our relationship to things" (Turkle, 2007, p. 5). I decided to follow the things I encountered and its associations, always asking 'what did I feel?' and 'what can be done in order to understand what happened?'; this combination of experience and self-reflexivity made me wonder on the intricacies of the sensuousness of matter and how, assembling with other entities, it can affect us.

Mukagasana's poem evoked the extremities of human experience in ways that more conventional and linear narratives could not. I believe this is related to what Inayatullah (2013) points out when he differentiates reading a professional article from reading a novel. According to him, "we are suspicious, alert and guarded when reading a scientific account. In contrast, while reading a literary narrative our 'guard' is down" (p. 194). My guard was definitely down, all opened and surprised by every move. Although shocking and intense, her poem moved me in ways I had never experienced before, producing unexpected a/effects.

As Inayatullah (2013) argues, while social sciences demand precision and distance, literature allows intimacy and multiplicity. This research tries to balance

both worlds, calling attention to the way a text can energize our bodies and make them travel, generating affect. As suggested by Inayatullah, I try to combine some aspects of literary practices with a more analytic mode so that we can "get to the point over telling the tale" (2013, p. 210). Hence, the style and form are also relevant in making our arguments. In exploring how this aesthetic engagement can be incorporated by social scientists, Inayatullah suggests:

> "If we stress opening questions rather than display an eagerness to close them, if we disclose our ambiguity, if we share the complexity and difficulty of the issues rather than hiding them, we may move toward a cooperative and collegial relationship with the reader. (…) While in social life we, individually, do not have the constructive license literary authors possess, nevertheless we do collectively create and re-create the world we explore. If so, then we need to admit and demonstrate a similar intimacy. (…) I deeply admire their [novelists'] willingness to explore, expose and display an intimacy with doubt. In social science, by contrast, doubt is usually seen as a dangerous opponent. But it need not paralyze you, nor constrain us from presenting our claims. Indeed, if our prose incorporates doubt with a sense of play and humility we can tell our tale *and* present convincing arguments " (2013, p. 211).

Delving into this collective creation of the world, this research cherishes the literary practice of "displaying generosity to every character" (p. 195), acknowledging multiple and mobile subjectivities (or new forms of subjectivization), in which the subject is always unconsummated, always a yet-to-be through the writing process (Shapiro, 2013, p. 15). As Inayatullah (2013) underlines, "the streams, rivers and oceans of life are too overflowing, too rich and too interconnected to be cut with tools of surgical precision and then stored in the mutually exclusive containers of modern science" (p. 212). Although the author does not aim to address the role of nonhuman entities in co-fabricating the world, this metaphor fits my endeavors quite well since this research advocates in favor of the agency of things/matter in composing and transforming the international. Moreover, chapter 5 of this dissertation specifically delves into the stream of a river, calling attention to its connections with other entities to explore how this assemblage contributes to unexpected memorialization across boundaries and borders.

Balancing literary and scientific analysis can be a useful tactic since memory (and memorialization) is permeated by an always-present struggle to distinguish fact from fiction. Memorialization combines art and historical facts, imaginative and technical skills, producing affective responses. Remembering and forgetting a traumatic event like genocide is also about art crafting; it involves

constant visits to the past as one travels in the present through tenuous lines between reality and imagination. In this sense, cutting, omitting, fantasizing, and imagining is constitutive to memory (and memorialization), always implying a negotiation between recollection to avoid recurrence and deleting some parts to make forgiveness and life possible again; between open wounds and poorly healed scars; between deep sorrow and rampant vengeance.

Turning to lived experience, this research aims to go beyond practices of representation when looking into memorialization, calling attention to the excesses and intensities through sensorial experience. In this regard, we ask: *What if matter is considered beyond 'passive stuff' and mere representation? How its textures and vibrancy can affect us?*

In exploring multisensual encounters in memorial places, we foreground, following Hamilakis (2013), the link between sensoriality and affectivity, digging deep on how people, things, and ideas assemble (and disassemble) and how these connections can transform memorialization. Therefore, memory can be conceived as a verb, always becoming through experience with and in the world, enacted within the interactions with other bodies (and our own bodies as well).

In a *tentative and experimental manner*, I opt for exploring inter/trans-disciplinarity or even indisciplinarity (Shapiro, 2013)[2], combining theoretical approaches that aim to open up space for new political thinking that can revitalize and re-energize the international, always flirting with doubt as a productive engagement.

In adopting such diasporic orientation, we avoid providing a theory as the foundation guiding our paths. In other words, we do not propose generalized explanations of how things work through empirical tests. We do not advance an all-comprehensive theory of the social; in fact, we resist the idea of explaining the social based on generalized inferences. Our proposal is more an orientation towards the fluid transformation of human and nonhuman entities in symbiosis, "tell[ing] stories about how relations assemble or don't" (Law, 2009, p. 141). The basic principles of our 'inquiry' are: pay attention to the noises of the wide range of actants; do not rush or take shortcuts to 'explain the social' (I mean, 'the social'

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[2] Drawing on Rancière, Shapiro argues that indisciplinary thought can put together a variety of heterogeneous elements in a methodological injunction that "breaks disciplines in order to deprivilege the distribution of (disciplinary) territories that control 'who is qualified to speak about what'" (2013, p. 31).

as an explanatory concept); describe as much as possible everyday associations; uncertainty and messiness are more revealing than we usually recognize; controversies and frictions are significant elements in our cartographies. In this sense, our work is more rhizomatic, "operating as an open system that facilitates debate, developing new points of contact between theoretical approaches" (Acuto and Curtis, 2014, p. 4).

In suggesting these reflexive principles and avoiding pre-given concepts and a theoretical framework to be applied to our 'object of study', we are all the time playing with uncertainty, improvisation, and vulnerability. Working on a performative, practice-based, embodied, and affect-oriented research can "destabilize the 'know-and-tell' politics of much sociological methodology" (Dewsbury, 2010b, p. 321) but it also leads to a huge anxiety and to the risk of failure. Nevertheless, as Lisle (2014) argues, it is when we are most vulnerable that we practice creativity, opening new avenues in knowledge production. According to her,

> "To make assemblage thinking relevant, we need to start with an acknowledgement of vulnerability, fragility and contingency – of the material world we exist in, of ourselves as researchers within that world, and of the multiple self/world interactions that arise. (…) On the one hand, we have to remain undecided as to where the research will take us, and therefore constantly negotiating powerful feelings of doubt, anxiety and uncertainty when asked to justify our work. On the other hand, that vulnerability must be pursued with confidence that our critical ethos will create the space necessary to allow the assembled actors to articulate themselves in all their plurality, contradiction and particularity. To achieve that balance between vulnerability and confidence, we need to carefully recalibrate our critical skills which have so long been honed against hegemonies that entrench the asymmetries of the global order" (p. 73).

With this in mind, this research advocates for the plurality of materialities and forces (human and nonhuman) populating the world, acknowledging their agentic capacity, paying attention to their associations and disassociations, and focusing on how life takes shape in these affective and sensorial encounters. As such, we *avoid applying and explaining*, opting instead for *describing and thinking*; in so doing, we can "unbind what are ordinarily presumed to belong together and thereby challenge institutionalized ways of reproducing and understanding phenomena" (Shapiro, 2013, p. xv), calling attention to multiplicity, mobility and to the fragility of things (Connolly, 2013). Therefore, we have to advise that this dissertation works as a laboratory – "a place for trials,

experiments, and simulations"(Latour, 2005, p. 149); in describing and writing we hope to work as a cartographer, identifying the intertwinedness of several actants in a network of associations, including our own movements as mediators, but recognizing that new cartographies could emerge.

While objects, things, and matter were always already a central concern of museum studies, heritage studies, and archeology, the recent practice and material turns in social sciences and International Relations presents a renewed concern with materiality and sensoriality, acknowledging the agentic capacity of nonhuman actants, and addressing how a confederation of striving entities (humans and nonhumans entangling) act in and on the world, enacting complex and fluid landscapes.

Drawing on these insights, this research calls attention to affectivity and lived experience emphasizing the ways in which various subjectivities unfold, intersect and interact (Ingold, 1993) in memorial places, necessarily transforming them in unexpected ways. Rather than conceiving memorials as stable spaces anchoring and freezing the past in such a way that people could supposedly access (and ultimately claim to know) a historical event, our attempt is to focus on the movements of friction between a wide range of entities assembling (and disassembling) in memorials, stressing its unpredictable character and underlining their provisional spatiotemporal configurations. As such, we look into memorial places in post-genocide Rwanda with a sensibility towards generative matter, calling attention to co-becoming (Stengers, 2010) and exploring the in-betweenness of sense and sense-making. Therefore, the question of this research can be framed as: *In what ways a shift towards the sensuousness of matter and affectivity enables new forms of engaging with memorialization practices?*

Focusing on practices of engagement, experience and sensoriality in memorials enables to feel the space in multisensual encounters, exploring how things linger and affect us, instead of relying on already made authoritative narratives. This research aims to explore affective encounters between bodies and places, underlining that it is only in this co-becoming that memorial places are enacted.

Trying to avoid ruining people's expectations, an important note is necessary: this work is not about genocide; at least, not directly. We do not aim to retell the horrors of the genocide in Rwanda through memorialization lenses. Our

goal is to (re)think agency and the political, bringing material-semiotics to the fore in the context of Rwandan post-genocide memorialization. Thus, we resort to this context to think on the following question: *How would 'the political' acquire a revitalized feature if we pay attention to the capacity of things/matter?* Foregrounding vibrant matter, we propose looking into their ambiguities and recalcitrances in movements of assembling and disassembling. This association of heterogeneous entities, rubbing against each other, could produce unexpected a/effects in an unsettled, disputed and, intrinsically, controversial arena, revitalizing and reenergizing the political.

Unlike other countries plagued by mass atrocities (or genocide), memorialization in Rwanda is deeply embedded in a particular type of matter – dead bodies. Bones, skulls, and other human remains are constantly on display in memorial sites, mobilizing embodied experiences to the visitors. The (dead) body is then the locus of memory, complicating clear-cut distinctions between persons and things. A corporeal focus in memorializing, we argue, enables a move away from hierarchical binaries (in this case human x nonhuman) considering their blurriness, and energizing the landscape with other possibilities beyond the conception of passive things awaiting representation and towards a more fluid transformation enacted in the encounter of these material-semiotic entities.

Although advocating for the unremitting flux of things, we try to explore different modes of memory gatherings, emphasizing the intricacy between matter, memory, affect, and politics through the analysis of carefully designed national-level memorial sites (Kigali, Murambi and Bisesero) and a spontaneous place of memory (Nyabarongo River).

Notes on methodology

In 2011, I joined a group of artists, playwrights, producers, and directors exploring the role of art in reconstructing Rwandan society after genocide. From July to August, we traveled throughout the country in a bus meeting all kinds of people and addressing many issues related to post-genocide reconstruction and reconciliation. Joining the staff of Rwandans receiving and guiding us, we were about thirty people from all over the world, but mainly from what we call the Global North – United States of America, Canada, and France. Apart from

Rwanda, there were also people from Tanzania, Uganda, a girl from India, and myself from Brazil. With the support of the National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG) and the Interdisciplinary Genocide Studies Center (IGSC), we immersed ourselves into the daily life of Rwandans, exploring educational programs, economic initiatives, juridical challenges, memorialization efforts, and artistic performances.

People working with arts and performance studies composed the majority of the group, but there were also independent researches – a woman in the field of Anthropology and myself in the field of International Relations. Both of us tried to balance group activities with our individual activities related to the specificities of our researches. In that occasion, I was there to research on sexual violence against Tutsi women during the genocide; however, memorialization was already puzzling me.

In our group activities, we visited universities, convents and churches, art centers, restaurants, street markets, hospitals, NGO's, prisons, rehabilitation places, and memorial sites. All those places were embedded in some kind of genocide reminder – such as bullet holes, memorial plaques, mass graves, purple signs, people's testimonies (and so on) –, leaving a trace or vestige to the work of memory. It was genocide all over, an impossibility to get rid of so many memories. I wondered: how much memory can a person bear?

Empathy and friendship grew fast between us, and soon we were bonding and taking care of each other. Due to the content and form of our discussions in a post-genocide context, such connection was fundamental to endure distressing situations. Particularly because the majority of the people in the group were above forty years of age, 'taking care' rapidly gained an extra layer of responsibility toward the youngsters.

Another aspect that contributed to strengthening our connection was the ritual of the circle. In the end of each day, after finishing all activities, we gathered in a circle, very close to one another. Erik, Theatre Arts and Performance Studies professor at Brown University (and the person responsible for organizing the group), usually opened our conversations and then we more or less let our bodies act as they desired to. Some of us cried, some danced, some shared intimate experiences, some became mute, and some just hugged one another in mutual support. This experience with a group from performance studies was

probably when I began to listen carefully to the sensuous encounters we had with other bodies (human and nonhumans). What we saw, heard, and felt was not always possible to be explained, analyzed, measured, known, and represented. Sometimes, we just let ourselves with the senses, avoiding to quickly capturing it by making-sense. Many times we did not say anything, just concentrated on our inner bodily responses. What I have learned from our group encounters was to be more open *to feel our surroundings* and avoid precipitated judgments.

In early April of 2014, I went back to Rwanda in order to attend the Kigali International Forum on Genocide – "After Genocide: Examining Legacy, Taking Responsibility" and to join the 20th commemoration of the genocide at Amahoro Stadium. The plan was to apply for a research authorization, organize all the visits and interviews, and then come back to conduct a three-month-long fieldwork. Nevertheless, things did not work quite as planned.

Person A[3], who was part of the organizational staff in 2011, helped me in all the steps during the process of applying for an authorization. At that time, I described my research as an effort to look into memorialization beyond the dominant narratives in memorial sites. I was committed to visiting non-official memorial sites and listening to other voices not being represented at national-level genocide memorials. Person A listened carefully but underlined this topic was a very sensitive one and that probably I would not be granted authorization to research on this theme. Instead, Person A suggested I should explore reconciliation, as the country was very committed to working on that. I decided to follow this advice and submitted a research project on reconciliation, exploring the 'lessons Rwanda could teach the world'.

As part of the application process, I was submitted to an interview with the Person B[4] at CNLG. My whole academic life was on top of Person B desk, and although it was not a long list of accomplishments, a conference paper was chosen to test me. In 2013, I had presented a paper in Siena, Italy, on post-genocide memorialization with the title: 'Forging bonds of cohesion and solidarity – social suffering, memory and violence in the reconciliation process of post-genocide Rwandan society'. With the paper in hand and flipping through it, Person B said: "why again are you saying you need the authorization for?" I was in shock. I kept

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[3] Name undisclosed for the sake of anonymity.
[4] Name undisclosed for the sake of anonymity.

thinking how come a piece of paper could decide the future of my new research proposal. Person B did not mention directly the Siena paper, only insinuated knowing about it. I quickly recomposed myself from the astonishment and started to talk non-stop on the future research. Person B teased and discouraged every move. I stayed until the end of the interview and left the room. It was enough for 'keeping eyes on me'. For the fourteen days I spent in Rwanda in 2014, only one day I was not being under veiled surveillance – the day I was leaving[5].

Person A was the one elected to follow my steps. I was completely frustrated with the research, faithlessly awaiting an answer. Without the authorization, I would not be able to take pictures inside the memorials, to interview the guides, or any other people. A few days later, my authorization was granted, specifying I could only take pictures and interview guides working at national-level memorial sites.

Two pieces of paper summarize the trajectory of the fieldwork research: Siena paper, and the research authorization. Together, they spoke and act as much as I did during field research. While the former was my 'academic identity' for the director analyzing the authorization, the latter was the key opening the doors of every memorial without the need of any further justification.

I finished all my fieldwork activities and went back home partially regretting my own decision not to go back for completing the three-month-long research. 'Partially' because I had some previous expectations regarding the research but I was also concerned with my own wellbeing. It took me a while to realize that such 'failure' was a crucial part for this research developing the way it did – with a focus on the unexpected character of encounters. Rather than going to the field to confirm a hypothesis through critically *debunking* taken-for-granted assumptions about memorialization in post-genocide Rwanda, I opt for exploring

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[5] It is important to mention I was not the first and certainly not the last under surveillance when conducting fieldwork in Rwanda. Numerous publications had already addressed the challenges and tensions permeating field research in Rwanda, such as those by Begley (2013), Burnet (2012), Ingelaere (2010), and Thomson (2013). Thomson described being constantly followed to the point of having her research suspended and sent to an *Ingando* (camps of political and civic reeducation) to be adequately reeducated. She emphasizes how "the government seek to control the sociopolitical realm through fear, harassment, and intimidation" (p. xvii). For more on her experiences at *Ingando*, see Thomson, Susan. "Re-education for Reconciliation: Participant Observations on *Ingando*". In *Remaking Rwanda*: State Building and Human Rights after Mass Violence, Scott Strauss and Lars Waldorf, 311-339. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011.

things/matter' agentic capacities through sensible experience and how they also *do* memorialization in a move that takes into account our *becoming in the world* – a shift that necessarily implies a becoming with other bodies (human and nonhumans).

This movement engenders a less anthropomorphic conception of politics, calling attention to the ways in which our relationships with other bodies and living beings are enacted through frictional and messy encounters in a generative way. It also emphasizes what Mol (2002) called a praxiological commitment, which underlines that activities (including this research) take place in the entanglement of entities acting, and only through this act that something is *being enacted*. As an actant taking part in these associations, I have no privileges; I am working too – both interacting in the field and as a translator in writing this dissertation –, not merely describing or observing but actively involved, like other actants, in mediation, translation and, many times, betrayal.

This move is associated to a disruption in the hierarchical distinction between subject and object, researcher and researched, claiming that a pure objectivity or a detached position is impossible, precisely because, as DeLyser et al (2010) emphasize, "each researcher finds her or himself enmeshed in the social world he or she studies, and the understanding of lived experience (of both research participants and the researcher) calls for an empirically grounded and necessarily subjective approach that acknowledges the situatedness of all knowledge" (p.7). In this regard, when exploring Rwanda's memorial landscape, I perform two main roles: visitor and researcher. Focusing on sensorial and visceral encounters at these places of memory, I do not intend, in any way, to compare my experiences with those of survivors, nor to focus on my position of a researcher as the knower, mastering all encounters.

As a performative research, this work is committed to addressing distributed agency, practice-based thinking, and embodiment (Dewsbury, 2010b, p. 322), traveling between sensing and sense-making. Moreover, an affect-oriented research is always felt, "no longer being scripted by disembodied contemplation but rather being apprehended by the very open sensations and connections of the body itself" (p. 324). In this perspective, I cannot separate the visitor from the researcher; the sensing from critically reflecting on what I sensed.

In writing this research I am, following Austin, Bellanova, and Kaufmann (forthcoming), *practicing critique*; I am acting, mediating, and producing transformations through translations necessarily in a co-joint action. Thus, when we practice critique we are doing it with our associates or companions. As the authors emphasize,

> "Pragmatically, critical companionship is about cultivating a set of subject/subject rather than subject/object relations. This position recognizes that while a particular phenomenon may be the focus of critique, this very critique can only emerge by engaging with the subjecthood of all that makes it possible" (Austin; Bellanova; Kaufmann, forthcoming)[6].

While this research explores the knitting together of many striving entities at memorial places in post-genocide Rwanda, it is important to underline that I did not experience Rwandan genocide; never personally ran and hid from perpetrators or watched friends and relatives dying from machete blows, so I write this work as an outsider. I believe I adopt some kind of autoethnographic sensibility (Butz, 2010) when addressing the relationships among experience, knowledge and representation traversing memorialization, paying attention to bodily responses, sensations, emotions and self-reflexivity. As Dauphinee (2010) argues, autoethnography opens "a space for radical possibility in terms of how we understand ourselves and others in the course of our interactions with, and participation in, politics, history, and scholarship" (p. 812). But this autoethnographic sensibility does not entail a self-indulgent or narcissistic move; rather, I aim to practice *careful reflexivity*, trying to grasp how our thought is bounded up with other bodies; affect as the force bonding them. As such, the *style* of this research is also important.

Austin, Bellanova, and Kaufmann (forthcoming), point to the literary style of spy to exemplify how some scholars desire to "hermeneutically unveil (deliberately or not) previously hidden aspects of the world by being suspicious of everything [they] see, hear, or read about", investigating and solving the crimes. In such style, there is no space for intimacy and multiplicity, only judgments and distance. Instead, we propose an engagement with a literary style in which we can engage not in suspicion but in a curious move with all the senses, seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching every aspect of our surroundings; aware of the

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[6] See also Haraway, 2016; Kurowska and Tallis, 2013; Mol, 2002.

fruitful companionship with all entities populating this world; embracing messiness, awkward encounters, vulnerability and failure; wandering and wondering, with no pressure to reach a happy ending.

Therefore, while navigating memorial places in Rwanda, I will try to make sense of the political by sniffing trails, avoiding aprioristic conceptions and clunky dichotomies; I will displace the human as the hero and emphasize a flat ontology; I will be attentive to sensibilities and affect; praise messiness and try to grasp its productivity; I believe I can contribute to knowledge production in a way not consistent with Truth and Theory; sensations and emotions will not be kept in the backstage, they have a prominent role in this play; hybrid approaches will not be condemned, but celebrated; the body will not be confined to the private or personal, but will claim its right to speak; human and nonhuman actants will not compete against each other, they necessarily work together, many times they are one.

Structure of the dissertation

The main goal of this research is to work within the transversality of memory and memorialization. In this sense, we do not depart from a designated location but emphasize openness and the power of traces in an unsettled, nomadic, emergent and relational movement enacting productive encounters. Memory is deeply embedded in those material-semiotics traces, enabling new gestures and, at the same time, limiting the content and form in which we translate remembering and forgetting. We suggest looking into memorialization practices as something always already entangling individual and collective, rather than focusing either on (traumatic) memory as deeply personal and emotional, or (social) memory as a mere representation of state/national identity. Thus, we attempt to discuss memory as a process of becoming that negotiates the intertwining of cultural traditions, archives, representations, technologies, environmental elements, materialities, sensations (and so on) in what Hoskins (2016) call 'memory ecologies'. With this movement, we embrace multiplicity, complexity, and fluidity in a more "co-operative-cum-experimental sensibility" (Thrift, 2008) towards generative matter.

To advance such arguments, **chapter 2** presents 'how matter comes to matter' interweaving assemblage thinking, ANT and affect theory. Under the rubric of 'new materialisms', these theoretical orientations develop concepts that help to advance memory as a fusion of *bodies* (human and nonhuman actants intermingling), *places* (fragile and provisional spatiotemporal configurations) and *practices* (action always embedded in performances and translations - *enactment*), forming *mnemonic assemblages*. In using this term, we are trying to grasp virtualities and actualities negotiating the lived, the desired, the imagined, the narrated, the unexpected in complex entanglements of past, present, and future. Thus, we engage with the materialities, discourses, and practices through which people remember and forget and explore how specific mnemonic assemblages are being enacted by the constant work of actants. We will then describe not only how memories are (provisionally) frozen, but also the ways in which they move away from established modes of representation in a movement of *becoming*.

Chapter 3 discusses my encounters with materialities reflecting on how matter matters to memory. In this sense, the chapter seeks to insert the reader into *affectivity*, delving into sensorial and visceral encounters with materialities to rethink their role in mnemonic assemblages. The two assemblages describe how places (room 28 in Centre Christus) and objects (machetes) that were not originally of memorial relevance contribute to rethinking collective remembrance in figurations of violence and trauma, exploring the productive force of affect in the sense of 'capacity to produce' and 'how to respond' in an unavoidably intertwined way. Memory is entangled in a continuum of affect, sensation, emotion and reasoned argument, not in a causal sequence, but inextricably intermingling. As a way to capture the different modes of memory gatherings, the third chapter emphasizes more carefully designed memorial sites, while the fourth chapter stresses the flux and circularity of memory flirting with the unexpected. It is worth underlining this is only a heuristic move since we advocate for the unremitting flux and transformation of things (and memories).

Chapter 4 addresses memorial sites as fragile spaces of friction, stressing the constitutive relation between memory and place and emphasizing how they change and unfold through their entanglements and controversies. Although the chapter focuses on official memorial sites, these memorials hold more than historical traces of the past, enacting collective material-semiotic practices of

remembrance that are highly dependent on the effusive work of actants. In this sense, the effects of mnemonic assemblages are unpredictable, and so is memorialization. In arguing for memorials as spaces of friction, I do not intend to affirm these are only sites of *contestation*; rather, they are also sites of *conformity*, but these transformations, deformations, and conformations are negotiated through the work of actants. While we have to pay attention to the (provisional) stabilizing effects of some associations and to the endurance of networks, we also stress how the agentic capacities of materialities in conjunction with discourse and technology can disrupt such memorialization efforts even when a place is designed (involving human and nonhuman forces) with the purpose of securing a dominant narrative. Grenades, sculptures, corpses, scars, plaques, rain, wind, soil alteration can all contribute to transforming collective remembrance in unexpected ways, showing the ambiguities and recalcitrances of materialities. Three official memorials will be described in this chapter: Kigali, Murambi, and Bisesero. It was in these memorials that I experienced more intensely the symbiotic relation of bodies/entities within my own body with other bodies intermingling with it and striking back. In short, they were the memorials that most affected me during fieldwork. I chose Kigali, Murambi and Bisesero in order to compare the different modes of memorializing the genocide in Rwanda, exploring them in a way that travels through a cosmopolitan gaze, a dead gaze and a native gaze respectively; also emphasizing movements ranging from a more ingrained to a more volatile design, without fixing them into only one possible configuration. In this sense, we want to take into account *both conformity and contestation*, underscoring the fragility of these spaces of friction. These memorials were also chosen due to a recent application to qualify as UNESCO world heritage sites, discussing not only their importance transnationally but also the implications of this move towards a standardization of such memorials. Moreover, the chapter discusses the digitalization of such memorials in 'virtual tours', producing a transnational circulation of memory, reconceiving/destabilizing previous scales and temporalities, and enabling new affective alliances in what we can call a *delocalization of memory*.

Chapter 5 emphasizes the circularity of matter and memory, traveling through the stream of a river and exploring the transformation of it into an unusual and unexpected memorial, producing other memorial sites across

boundaries. Every actant contributes to an encompassing understanding of *political matter*; in this sense, hydrogen, oxygen, water hyacinth, crocodiles, rain, wind, temperature, water pressure, currents, bones, flesh, words, myths, machetes, human beings, borders, emotions, and the media (to name just a few) play a role in this ecology of human and nonhuman entities. We also delve into the literature on the dead body/corpse in order to disrupt the living human body as the only legitimate locus for agency, playing with the binary human/nonhuman and addressing the dead body as both human and nonhuman (pollution) - or *person-things*. The main goal of this chapter is to emphasize how memorialization can unfold in an ongoing process that is never fixed, controlled, or settled, but always becoming something else in its circularity and unexpected effects.

The **concluding chapter** will summarize the main movements developed throughout the dissertation, seeking to present some provisional considerations on the main contributions of this research, underlining the agentic capacities of nonhuman entities to explore some points of connection (and disconnections) between different modes of memory gatherings. The chapter also reflects on the limits of this research and some future avenues for exploration.

2 The liveness of things: assembling affective bodies

> In a time of so many crises in what it means to belong, the task of cohabitation should no longer be simplified too much. So many other entities are now knocking on the door of our collectives. Is it absurd to want to retool our disciplines to become sensitive again to the noise they make and to try to find a place for them?
>
> – Latour, Reassembling the social, p.262

2.1 Introduction

Following Latour's advice, the main concern of this research is to be sensitive to other entities' noises. Such noises are vestiges and we just need to sniff the trails to realize they also have a freedom of movement. In other words, we are aware that a wide range of entities have agency and intermingle forming complex meshworks. In this sense, we advocate that things matter. Matter is circulating on, within, through, to bodies: human and nonhuman. Bodies have agentic capacity. Bones, blood, microbes, soil, corpses, water, (and so on) can act. Symmetry, relationality, and performativity are key ideas in an assemblage.

The things I encountered in Rwanda made me think of matter as generative, pulsating in an energetic and transformative way. It is impossible to capture all stories and meanings inscribed on them, as they are always entering new associations in a network. Their vibrancy generates action and affects other entities, so they are important actants in *mnemonic assemblages* (Freeman; Nienass; Daniell, 2016).

The term 'assemblage'[7] tries to present the commingling of human and non-human entities. It is important here the active, dynamic, symmetric and relational features of the term. In this sense, assemblage is a composition of those vitalities that are not reducible to one another but intertwined. In adopting such term, we aim to show that memory is inextricably embedded and embodied in our

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[7] 'Assemblage' was the term used by Paul Foss and Paul Paton in 1981 when translating Deleuze and Guattari's 'agencement', later retained in Massumi's translation of *A Thousand Plateaus*. For a discussion on the implications of the translation of 'agencement' to 'assemblage', see Phillips, 2006. The term 'assemblage' and its features will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

encounters with matter/things. The vitality of memory and memorialization can be perceived by the interweaving of human, discourse, and matter in a process of becoming in which neither matter nor memory are still or stable but affectively transforming other bodies.

My first fieldwork in Rwanda was in 2011 and the first time I got psychologically and physically ill for reviving the experience of others. It was much more than I could endure. I was not able to pay attention to the discussion scheduled for that morning, I was still thinking about Yolande Mukagasana's testimony and the horrors she had to survive[8]. I felt dizzy, I was vomiting and I could not continue. I thought it was something I ate the day before, but I was actually affected by the pain of others. I went back to *Centre Christus*, trying to forget things I heard and saw. It was maybe even worse. I went to my room, but I passed in front of room 28 on the way. Later, on my way to the bathroom (outside the room), I saw (imaginary) perpetrators arising from the bushes with machetes in their hands coming in my direction; I went back to my room and locked the door. I kept thinking about the victims' testimonies and realized I was clearly stressed out, so I took a Dramamine and slept until the next morning. Reflecting on the entanglement of affect and emotion, I will delve into how we are "wired up to 'feel with others' if we stop thinking of the self as a bounded subject" (Brennan, 2004, p. 123)[9].

Blood, bones, bullet holes, machetes, purple signs, shoes, clothes, catholic rosary beads, and corpses made me think about memory and rethink agency. I had never paid attention to matter/things/objects in a non-hierarchical way until they struck me and produced an effect. They are not passive, but have a vitality (Bennett, 2010)[10]. Two of them were regular in my daily life: room 28 and machetes[11]. Room 28 was the place where 17 Rwandese people were killed by grenades during the genocide, including priests and nuns. It was still possible to

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[8] Yolande Mukagasana is a Rwandan writer and a survivor of the genocide of 1994.

[9] Recent findings from neuroscience and social psychology point to the existence of 'mirror neurons'. They are said to be related to empathy for other people's feelings, so they react to emotions expressed by others and then reproduce them, literary as "feeling the pain of others". See Lindsey MacGillivray, 'I Feel Your Pain: Mirror Neurons and Empathy', *Health Psychology*, v.6, n.1, 2009, pp.16-20; Marco Iacoboni, 'Imitation, Empathy, and Mirror Neurons', *Annual Review of Psychology*, v. 60, 2009, pp. 653-670.

[10] Jane Bennett (2010) argues that vitality is a "capacity of things (…) not only to impede or block the will and designs of human but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own" (p. viii).

[11] Room 28 and machetes will be addressed in the next chapter.

see vestiges of blood and bullets on the walls. Machetes are very useful tools in agricultural work, so it is common to see people carrying up and down the streets. This experience was a non-intentional illusion of coming as close as possible to the actual pain[12].

This research aims to delve into the sensuousness of matter and affectivity in addressing memorial places in post-genocide Rwanda. We suggest that sensorial and visceral encounters with materialities can enable new forms of engaging with memorialization practices, broadening agency beyond consciousness and towards movement and intensity of bodies.

In analyzing room 28, machetes, national-level memorial sites (Murambi, Kigali, Bisesero), and Nyabarongo River, I hope to offer some insights on the intricacy of matter and memory and how can these assemblages contribute to understanding the political in International Relations (IR). 'The political' will become apparent when the vitality of forces – most of the time hidden in the current state of affairs – reveal themselves.

In what follows, this chapter attempts to advance a broader conception of agency, one that encompasses everyday objects, matter, bodies, flows, technologies, images, memories (and so on) as symmetrical units composing an assemblage. This move is important because it detaches the human as the center or the only relevant actor, opening space for a more integrative and transformative conception of agency in which matter does not figure as mere passive stuff. Within this view, the ambiguities and recalcitrances of matter show their force in shaping sensory, affective, and embodied experiences of memory (Ireland; Lyndon, 2016, p. 1), enabling us to embrace multiplicity and mobility in addressing the emergent and unsettled character of memorialization. The next section situates the research encounters within a wider movement called 'new

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[12] I use the word 'illusion' here due to the impossibility of knowing entirely another person's pain. According to Elaine Scarry, "pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it" (Scarry, 1985, p.4), to put it differently, there are no words capable of representing the pain experienced. For other references on the difficulty of explaining trauma linguistically, see Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray, 'Survivor Discourse: Transgression or Recuperation?', *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture*, 18:2 (1993), pp. 260–90; Roberta Culbertson, 'Embodied Memory, Transcendence, and Telling: Recounting Trauma, Re-establishing the Self', *New Literary History*, 26:1 (1995), pp. 169–95, esp. 173, 176, 178–80; Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, History* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); Nancy K.Miller, '''Portraits of Grief'': Telling Details and the Testimony of Trauma', *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 14:3 (2003), pp. 112–35, esp. 112–16; David B. Morris, 'About Suffering: Voice, Genre, and Moral Community', *Daedalus*, 125:1 (1996), pp. 25–45.

materialism' underlining the main features of this turn in the humanities and social sciences and its contributions to IR specifically. The third section will flirt with some intersections between actor-network theory (ANT) [13] , and other assemblage approaches in social sciences proposing a bricolage. This section is divided into four subsections that address respectively the dislocated feature of action, the actant-rhizome tension, translational displacements, and a discussion on affect and emotion. Our orientation draws a pathway within the nodes enacted in these encounters, (re)combining the philosophical stances of assemblage thinking with actor-network theory's concepts to guide us empirically. Rather than providing a framework of analysis, these (inter)sections will work as a general orientation, a sensitivity (Mol, 2010) towards a semiotics of materiality[14] (Law, 1999).

While all the chapters of this dissertation describe the synergies of heterogeneous entities in a movement of enacting mnemonic assemblages, this chapter suggests a cartographic call towards political matter(s), not with the intent to deliver a finished and cohesive map, but to show the potentialities of traversing a wide range of maps to create alternative cartographies.

2.2 Something called 'new materialisms' (or the background of our encounters)

While the focus of this research is on retrieving the importance of materialities in configurations of the collective, adopting an orientation towards a bricolage of concepts provided by actor-network theory, assemblage thinking and affect theory, the background of our encounters can be considered part of a wider movement of materialism revival – what has been referred to as "new

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[13] 'Sociology of associations', 'associology', 'sociology of translation', 'actant-rhizome ontology', 'sociology of innovation' (Latour, 2005), 'semiotics of materiality' (Law, 1999) are other terms to refer to Actor-Network Theory. See Latour, 2005 and Law, 1999 for a broader discussion on the naming of such approach and the implications of it. Latour had expressed discomfort with the term Actor-Network Theory (Latour, 1999, p. 15-25) until he was pointed out the acronym ANT, recognizing that it was "perfectly fit for a blind, myopic, workaholic, trail-sniffing, and collective traveler. An ant writing for other ants, this fits my project very well!" (Latour, 2005, p. 9).

[14] According to John Law, "(…) actor-network theory may be understood as a *semiotics of materiality.* It takes the semiotic insight, that of the relationality of entities, the notion that they are produced in relations, and applies this ruthlessly to all materials— and not simply to those that are linguistic" (Law,1999, p. 4).

materialism" (Coole and Frost, 2010; Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, 2012; Connolly, 2013; Acuto and Curtis, 2014).

The rubric 'new materialism' encompasses a heterogeneous and sometimes divergent range of theoretical (dis)positions. Such heterogeneity emerges from disparate philosophical orientations entangled with scholarship on feminism, queer theory, post-colonialism, globalization, international political economy, environmentalism, material culture, and so on (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 2).

William Connolly describes new-materialism as:

> "(…) a series of movements in several fields that criticize anthropocentrism, rethink subjectivity[15] by playing up the role of inhuman forces within the human, emphasize the self-organizing powers of several non-human processes, explore dissonant relations between those processes and cultural practices, rethink the source of ethics, and comment on the need to fold a planetary dimension more actively and regularly into studies of global, interstate and state politics" (2013, p. 399).

These series of movements upsurge in the context of rapid and far-reaching scientific and technological advances predicated on matter and how they can alter the human-nonhuman relation; of a concern on the relationship between human beings and the biosphere in unprecedented environmental crisis, arguing that we entered a new geological era – the Anthropocene – in which humans are said to "have become the dominant influence on the conditions of planetary existence" (Eroukhmanoff; Harker, 2017, p. 2); of a suspicion towards the divorce and hierarchy between particular and universal, natural and social, humans and nonhumans; of critically addressing the limits of criticism heavily centered on discourse and representation.

This turn to matter expresses a concern with unsatisfactory structural or 'macro-level' approaches, criticizing foundational or transcendental power (Fox; Alldred, 2018, p. 2; van der Tuin and Dolphijn, 2010, p. 159), rejecting the hierarchical distinction between cultural and natural worlds (Braidotti, 2013; Latour, 2005, p. 13) and all other derivative binaries, and emphasizing both materiality and expressivity in a more praxis-oriented approach. Questioning the anthropocentric lens that considers humans the center of concern or the "measure

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[15] Connolly stresses the "variable *degrees* of subjectivity and agency well beyond the human estate, far into the biosphere" (Connolly, 2013, p. 400).

of all things" (Braidotti, 2013, p. 2), they criticize the categorical distinction between the given nature and the constructed culture (Ibidem), suggesting a turn to *more-than-human* and *more-than-representational* accounts in which matter is not opposed to signification, but simultaneously material and representational. Consequently, it implies a rethinking of our interaction with human and nonhuman bodies from atomic/cellular/micro to global relations in which each entity exercises their agency and contributes to transforming the collective.

New materialists understand materiality as "always something more than 'mere' matter: an excess, force, vitality, relationality, or difference that renders matter active, self-creative, productive, unpredictable" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 9). To overcome anthropocentrism, some scholars offer a sensibility towards vitalist or vibrant materialism (Braidotti, 2013; Bennett, 2010), underlining that humans and nonhumans are not dualistic entities structured in opposition (vibrant life versus dull matter, respectively) and that vibrant materiality runs alongside and inside humans, calling attention to "immanent matter-energy" (Bennett, 2010, p. x). This move is inspired by Spinozist monism in which body and mind cannot be conceived as two separated entities but made of the same substance.

Generally speaking, a dualistic ontology conceives the mind as distinct and independent from the body, while monists claim that mind and body are not ontologically distinct entities. Concerning materialisms, while an 'old' materialism emphasizes the distinctions of the natural from the cultural, the human from the material and the mind from the body; 'new' materialism highlights exactly the impossibility of dissociating them and showing their inextricability. By presenting a monist ontology, new materialists challenge aprioristic distinctions between human and matter regarding their agentic capacity, opening up possibilities to "explore how each affects the other, and how things other than humans (for instance, a tool, a technology or a building) can be social 'agents', making things happen" (Fox and Alldred, 2018, p. 193). In the same vein, Bennett argues, following Spinoza, that "conative bodies strive to enhance their power of activity by forming alliances with other bodies" (2010, p. x) considering both organic and inorganic bodies as *affective*[16], "which refers broadly to the capacity of any body for activity and responsiveness" (p. xii).

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[16] I provide a more detailed account on affect and affective bodies in subsection 2.3.4 of this chapter and in the next chapter.

Consequently, the hierarchical binarisms between human and nonhuman are replaced by a conception of animated of matter (although recognizing different degrees of animation), in which these vibrant entities are not "entirely reducible to the contexts in which (human) subjects set them, never entirely exhausted by their semiotics" (Bennett, 2010, p. 5).

Agential realism (Karen Barad), vibrant materialism (Jane Bennett), assemblage theory (Manuel DeLanda), actor-network theory (Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, John Law, Annemarie Mol), speculative materialism (Quentin Meillassoux), and object-oriented philosophy (Graham Harman) are only a few orientations under the rubric of 'new materialism' discussing *how matter comes to matter*. While coming from all corners of the world, they generally share a post-anthropocentric character, recognize the agentic capacity of matter – or a materially embedded and embodied orientation (Braidotti, 2011, p. 128) –, disentangling the dualisms mind/matter, subject/object, and social/natural, and emphasize the complex, relational, and provisional relations in our collectives.

The degree concerning matter's affective force or agentic capacity is highly dependent on what philosophical stances they highlight. In this perspective, it matters how far beyond anthropocentrism one aims to go; to what extent one conceives matter as not divorced from humans; to what extent one acknowledges the political dimensions of matter – those are the issues that make each new materialist approach idiosyncratic. As these differences usually arise due to their diverse philosophical orientations, this dissertation does not aim to explore and compare each approach and how they differ from our research. Instead, we want to show the similarities of this greater movement called 'new materialism', but we will focus on the bricolage between assemblage thinking and actor-network theory, trying to address how they contribute to studying mnemonic assemblages.

Although we do not particularly endorse the 'newness' of it, we concur with the thrust of their argument that materialities play an important part in (re)thinking the political. When referring to the 'new', I suppose the so-called new materialists do not convey it in a teleological sense of progress or in a way that conceives it as a better option in opposition to what used to be archaic. Rather, the idea of 'new' aims at expressing the power to retake, reinterpret, and recast. In

this regard, it is a matter of reassembling. The 'old' is still part of the 'new' but now carries the strength of translational displacements[17].

The use of terms, such as 'new' and 'old', is a strategic way of grasping change. A Bergsonian conception of time – as real duration in a continuum – shows the impossibility of disentangling the end of something from the beginning of something else. The author claims that to grasp such dynamism and intense flux, we need to decompose/divide it; we need to stop the flux in order to act upon and to think about something.

> "I recognize moreover that it is in spatialised time that we ordinarily place ourselves. We have no interest in listening to the uninterrupted humming of life's depths. And yet, that is where real duration is. Thanks to it, the more or less lengthy changes we witness within us and in the external world, take place in a single identical time" (Bergson, 2002, p. 319).

It is then a periodizing practice, the spatialization of time, which makes possible for us to refer to this 'newness' of something, or to the past as something different from the present and the future. A(n) (re)engagement with old philosophical texts or a rereading of them can result in a supposedly revolutionary 'new turn'. Yet, it is not an erasure of the engagement with past scholars, but a renegotiation and a redirection. As Dolphijn and Van der Tuin emphasize (2012):

> "It is in the resonances between old and new readings and re-readings that a 'new metaphysics' might announce itself. A new metaphysics is not restricted to a here and now, nor does it merely project an image of the future for us. It announces what we may call a 'new tradition', which simultaneously gives us a past, a present, and a future. Thus, a new metaphysics does not add something to thought (a series of ideas that wasn't there, that was left out by others). It rather traverses and thereby rewrites thinking *as a whole*, leaving nothing untouched, redirecting every possible idea according to its new sense of orientation" (p. 13, emphasis in original).

A reading that does not consider the transversality of new materialism, following Braidotti (2006) and Dolphijn and Van der Tuin (2012), runs the risk of reifying the two characteristics of dualism: sequential negation and progress narrative (Dolphijn and Van der Tuin, 2010, p. 159). In other words, we avoid claiming that the materialist turn entails a transcendental gesture, emphasizing its immanence or what Karen Barad (2007) called intra-action. Therefore, we will

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[17] Translational displacements will be detailed in subsection 2.3.3 of this chapter.

focus on highly diverse and trans-disciplinary associations and disassociations in constant metamorphosis.

Consequently, the trajectories of this research express the spatiotemporal flows I am traveling through, recognizing that my choices are not innocent but inherently embedded in a politics of assembling and disassembling – or what we can call *positionality*. As a mediator-researcher, I more or less translate my travelings towards the entanglement of matter and memory (specifically addressing political matter in mnemonic assemblages) with a focus on boundaries and borders – symbolic and physical[18]. After all, those are the bread and butter of IR.

Traditionally, in mainstream approaches in IR, analyses depart from already defined actors, such as the individual, the international system, institutions, but special attention is given to *the state*. The role of these actors and the degree to which they influence politics tend to vary according to the approach adopted for an *explanation*, but those actors are *either human or anthropomorphized*. In this sense, matter/things/objects like nuclear weapons, currency, and computers appear only as disposed to be managed by human(ized) beings, detached from any agentic capacity of their own (Nexon and Pouliot, 2013, p. 343). Their agency and motion are dismissed in the eagerness to contemplate the capacity of action of the sovereign state. The state is reified as an actor detached from "the heterogeneous elements that comprise specific historically situated states, and the processes and mechanisms that provide it with the emergent properties and capacities of statehood" (Acuto and Curtis, 2014, p. 7).

In trying to understand how things play a crucial role in enacting the international, recent contributions on surveillance devices, environmental change, global political economy, and queer theory within IR, and especially in new materialist approaches, emphasize the change from an anthropocentric thinking to an engagement with the agentic capacities of human and nonhuman forces in interaction, demonstrating how material forces can challenge our understandings

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[18] While the first relates to practices of spatiotemporal differentiation (Walker, 2016, p. 2), the latter refers to geographical divisions.

of the international and the political (Salter, 2015)[19].

The material turn articulates a complex understanding of the entanglements between things/matter and humane forms, emphasizing how the circularity and motion of these inter-corporeal practices are necessary to (re)produce the international. In order to understand such complexity, Salter (2015) [20] calls for a 'method of radical openness' in which humans and nonhumans alike demonstrate their agentic capacity for making the international, displacing the human as "the star of the project of modernity" (location 78[21]), enlarging what we understand as political subjects. For example, Pugliese (2015) describes a network entangling military, industrial, media and entertainment entities that enables an assemblage that kills at distance, disassociating the killer from killed. Drawing specifically on the case of United States' military drones, the author argues those drones allow a transformation of the geopolitical space, transposing the domestic sphere and sovereignty in the name of a global reach of power and vigilance. By the same token, Walters and Vanderlip (2015) explore the role played by electronic passports as standardized material travel documents that constitute not only the conditions of possibility for circulations but also the identities and subjectivities necessary for humans (and animals to that extent) to move internationally. Similarly, in describing 'illegal circulations', Bourne (2015) shows how cocaine is a socio-chemical process in which agency cannot be attributed only to chemicals or to people but to the intra-action of chemicals, drug-users, drug-traffickers, technology, legal elements (and so on) composing an assemblage and circulating different scales and borders. These circuits of flow and messy encounters demonstrate how "nonhuman actants fundamentally alter the condition of human possibility in ways that are unpredictable and irreducible to their constituent elements" (Salter, 2015, location 101[22]).

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[19] For an effort in conjoining new materialism with international relations, see "Making things international I (2015) and II (2016); Millennium: Journal of International Studies' special edition on new materialist turn, 2013 vol. 41 issue 3; and International Political Sociology 2013, vol. 7 issue 3; Acuto and Curtis, 2014.

[20] Aiming to show the agentic capacities of things and their circulation and mobility in transforming the international, the volume adresses passports, containers, boats, symptoms, corpses, microbes, blood, drones, tanks, garbage, currency (and so on). The article by Auchter on corpses will be further explored in the next chapters of this dissertation, especially addressing human remains in memorial sites and dead bodies as waste/pollution.

[21] Kindle version, location 78 of 544.

[22] Kindle version, location 101 of 544.

For this reason, as Salter (2016) argues, we need a more fluid notion of agency and the political since "material connections, and the circuits and controversies that they call into being, catalyze political stakes that are nonlinear, emergent, and unpredictable" (location 80[23]). Accordingly, the political is highly dependent on the associations (trans)formed. As Andrew Barry observes, "the political significance of materials is not a given; rather, it is a relational, a practical and a contingent achievement" (2013b, p. 183).

Taking place in this revival of materialism, scholars in IR engage in assemblage thinking and ANT to reflect upon what these orientations can offer for the study of world politics (Acuto; Curtis, 2014). In this scenario, we can observe a sensitivity towards the political force of matter in transforming the international, although some authors point out to the problems and limits they bring to the field of IR, especially due to its departure from *the international as a special or distinct scale of analysis*. As Nexon and Pouliot (2013) argues,

> "ANT's injunction to 'go micro' may not always be the best way to conduct empirical research. (…) ANT, perhaps deliberately, lacks the more holistic concepts that alternative social-constructionist approaches propose to capture macro phenomena (…). For that reason, it is not clear exactly how one may 'scale up' in an ANT framework. This limitation seems problematic in a discipline such as IR, where most phenomena of interest—from war to international organizations—have macro-level dimensions" (p. 344).

Similarly, Barry points to other problems in applying actor-network theory to IR, stressing that "while actor-network theorists have emphasised on the ways in which scientific and technical practices can be translated across space, in the field of international relations, borders continue to matter" (2013a, p. 429). Moreover, he argues, actor-network theorists expand the realm of politics "without much concern for the domain of what was commonly recognised as political by political theorists" (p. 425). The author is referring to what, in his view, is conventionally understood to be politics, involving political expertise, the practice of politics in parliaments, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, activists, multinational corporations (p. 423) and the machinery of parliamentary democracy. Additionally, the author claims the field of IR poses a challenge to actor-network theory especially due to the importance of secrecy and discretion in international relations. Consequently, he maintains,

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[23] Kindle version, location 78 of 526.

"while it has proved possible for the actor-network theorist to negotiate access to institutions such as scientific laboratories, a hospital and a court of law, it is difficult to envisage the same level of access to an embassy, an intelligence agency or even an international organization" (p. 426).

In advancing such an argument, Barry seems to be misunderstanding, first, that not all IR theorists are interested in high politics and macro-level events and, second, the difference between *politics* and *the political*. In our view, while the former refers to the practices and institutions of politics that organize and regulate the collective, the latter is related to the ontological level or what constitutes the collective. In this regard, we argue, the political is the realm of controversies in which an ongoing interweaving of heterogeneous actants exert their co-joint agency and affective force shaping the collective. Returning to the case in point, we understand that whereas Barry recognizes that ANT cannot merely be applied "without distortion or modification" (p. 417), he fails to grasp the immanent generative sensitivity towards change and fragility of assemblage thinking – in short, the de/territorialization of IR.

Let me try to work a little bit more on this matter. We conceive International Relations, following a long lineage of critical interventions[24], in terms of a specific formation of assembling practices that aim at stabilizing its boundaries in spatial and temporal terms. This stabilization or territorialization is being sustained by nested assemblages, enacting a particular reading of the international. But, as Connolly (2013) stresses, things – and to that extent disciplinary boundaries – are always fragile and can be deterritorialized.

Deleuze and Guattari (1987) describe these dynamics of material-semiotic entities and territorialization and deterritorialization in two axes that are always entangling fluxes of becoming.

> On a first, horizontal axis, an assemblage comprises two segments, one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another; on the other hand it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies. Then on a vertical axis, the assemblage has both *territorialized sides*, or reterritorialized sides, which stabilize it, and *cutting edges of deterritorialization*, which carry it away. On the one hand, the ship-machine, the hotel-

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[24] Many authors in IR critically engaged on this view of the international as a distinct realm of politics in different ways. See, for exemple, Shapiro & Der Derian, 1989; Ashley, 1988; 1989; Ashley & Walker, 1990; Walker, 1993; 2009; 2016; Bigo & Walker, 2007; Edkins & Zehfuss, 2005.

machine, the circus-machine, the court-machine, each with its own intermingled pieces, gears, processes, and bodies contained in one another or bursting out of containment. On the other hand, the regime of signs or of enunciation: each regime with its incorporeal transformations, acts, death sentences and judgments, proceeds, "law" (p. 88, emphasis in original).

The focus of this research is on the volatilities of flows, their recalcitrances and transformations. We do not separate and territorialize them within the international, we chose to just follow the actants wherever they may lead, not aprioristically focusing on a distinct scale. The assemblages are constantly entangling private and public, everyday and exceptional, domestic and international[25] in a non-hierarchical way, which means the international is already embedded in the everyday, the private, the domestic and vice-versa. Conversely, as we are interested in the *effects* of these associations, we are motivated by what usually is regarded as trivial or unimportant, describing how those entities can contribute to thinking the political in unexpected ways.

We will navigate through topographies that entangle the personal, the domestic, the international, and the transnational through the enactment of mnemonic assemblages in post-genocide Rwanda. In addressing such processes of bundling, we are concerned with the ways in which the 'livingness of the world' (Winterson, 1997 apud Whatmore, 2006, p. 602) encompasses an intimate relation with nonhuman forces, transforming memory in its encounters with environmental elements, technologies, representations, materialities and sensations in a co-fabrication of the collective. As these *material, discursive, and experiential* entanglements are *rizhomatic* – hybrid, multiple, non-hierarchical, inter-corporeal connections – we can describe assemblages "without implying a central organizing principle or power", precisely because they are not "indebted to previously established categories or level of analysis" (Salter, 2016, position 204). From molecules to collectives, we are already surrounded by intensive and heterogeneous fluxes and actants traversing all levels simultaneously, hence, what counts is connectivity[26].

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[25] As Connolly underscores, "each of these zones of study needs to have *both a microscopic and a planetary dimension folded into it, with the relevant features shifting, depending on the problem complex under scrutiny*. Of course, you do not engage everything all the time; that would present the image of a holistic philosophy of totality resisted here. You adopt a *problem orientation*, pursuing the contours of an issue up and down these interacting scales, as the issue requires" (Connolly, 2013, p. 401, my emphasis).

[26] Peter Chambers' (2016) essay on smartphones is very illustrative of this case since it stresses the

Rather than granting a special status to the international focusing on its distinctiveness from other levels in a hierarchical way, let's just delve into Debbie Lisle's suggestion: to energize the international enabling us "to work *collaboratively* with like-minded scholars across all disciplines – including the sciences – who accept that vulnerability is central to any research endeavor" (Lisle, 2014, p. 74, emphasis in original).

2.3 The sensuousness of matter in mnemonic assemblages: between sense and sense-making

In researching aspects of cultural remembrance, historical objects and material traces of the past are key to discuss the entanglements of materiality, agency, and memory. Souvenirs, letters, photographs, plaques, monuments, and memorials are all things retained at a particular moment in time, constituting private or public efforts to avoid the evanescence of memory. However, the material dimension of memory still remains relatively under-theorized, especially when we consider the agentic capacity of these things/matter and their affect on us (and other entities). Usually, materialities are treated as 'mere objects', ignoring their social, affective, and agentic forces and flows.

We suggest following those forces and flows through a combination of approaches capable of accommodating "the various hybrids of material, biological, social and technological components that populate our world" (Acuto and Curtis, 2014, p. 2) to understand practices of memory and memorialization. Specifically, we are interested in describing how these materialities can alter memorialization *involuntarily*, through describing visceral encounters with room 28 and machetes; *disruptively*, addressing national-level memorials as spaces of friction; and *unexpectedly*, following the flow of a river to grasp the complex entanglements of nature and culture. In this regard, we want to show that the textures of things/matter affect memory enactments in ways not commonly acknowledged (regarding their agentic capacity). Such a reading can contribute to (re)articulate how we memorialize trauma and violence, and to embrace the (international) political dimension of their enactments.

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connections between coltan, ethnic conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chinese factories, and multiple and new connections that a smartphone enables.

The term assemblage is a crucial concept here and can be traced back to the works of Deleuze and Guattari. 'Assemblage' is the English version for the original French term '*agencement*'. While capturing the notion of relationality, in which multiple and heterogeneous parts are entangled, forming a confederation, the translation loses the sense of an arrangement that creates agency (Müller, 2015, p. 28). The term is understood *in connection with* other complex concepts and not in isolation – it is such connections that precisely give *agencement* its meaning. As Phillips (2006) underlines, "*agencement* designates the priority of neither the state of affairs nor the statement but of their connection, which implies the production of *a sense that exceeds them and of which, transformed, they now form parts*" (p. 108, my emphasis).

Although it is difficult to establish a definition – given its provisional and rhizomatic character, uncertainty, multiplicity, and openness, but also because, as Manuel DeLanda (2006) underscores, of the dispersion of the definitions of concepts used to characterize it throughout the Deleuze's work, (p. 3)[27] – we tentatively sustain that assemblages are

> "(…) a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them across ages, sexes and reigns – different natures. Thus, the assemblage's only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a 'sympathy'. It is never filiations which are important but alliances, alloys; these are not successions, lines of descent, but contagions, epidemics, the wind" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1987, p. 69).

Assemblages, thus, are constituted by alliances of heterogeneous entities working together during a certain time and space. They do not involve aprioristic hierarchies, nor organizing guiding principles but an open and in-process system of transient material and expressive components (Müller, 2015; Acuto and Curtis, 2014; Dittmer, 2014). Such sensitivity orients this research on mnemonic assemblages, emphasizing remembering and forgetting as highly dependable on our encounters with things/matter trying to grasp its sensuousness in a mixture of affect, sensation, experience, and meaning. Therefore, we suggest paying attention to the in-betweenness of sense and sense-making, exploring not only representation but also embodied experience when studying places of memory.

This project is theoretically and methodologically pluralist in its conception and in the intertwining of innovative approaches in social theory and

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[27] See DeLanda, 2006 for the proposal of an 'assemblage theory'.

international relations. First, it builds upon recent contributions that aim at broadening the concept of agency, recognizing the influence materiality and other nonhuman forces[28] have in producing *the political*.

Second, it condemns essential qualities, dissolving hierarchical binaries such as mind/body; human/non-human; animate/inanimate; somatic/psychological; social/material, focusing on the multiplicity, symmetry and commingling of human and non-human forces that compose such an assemblage. So, we adopt a skeptical posture towards a taken for granted coherent whole that seeks to *explain the social* through binaries. We will *describe the encounters* between agentic capacities of things/matter and forces of nature, the bodily responses (somatic and psychic affections) and the configurations in which we can make sense of this composition through memory enactments. We propose these connections to advance a particular reading of memorialization in post-genocide Rwanda that calls attention to the recalcitrance of these materialities and their political dimensions.

Third, we recognize the multiplicity of affect, emphasizing the play of affective forces in, at least, two movements[29]: 1) the affective forces of things/matter and their capacity to produce and/or transform human and other bodies; 2) the bodily responses to the potentialities of these affective forces. In other words, we work with affect in the sense of 'capacity to produce' and 'how to respond' in an unavoidably intertwined way. While we address the discussion on affect and emotion in the last section of this chapter, we will engage empirically in the next chapter on mnemonic assemblages through my encounters with affective materialities, recognizing that the textures of things/matter can affect memory enactments beyond consciousness and beyond representation.

Our goal is to underline the potential of an assemblage approach – incorporating things/matter, forces of nature, happenings, gestures, utterances, autonomic, and cognitive responses – in analyzing memory enactments in

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[28] Those nonhuman forces could be a soil alteration due to the action of torrential rain and wind, which could lead to the discovery of human remains; friction or disturbance on objects by weather agency; or even the strength of a stream, as will be examined in the fifth chapter of this dissertation on Nyabarongo river. That is, they are forces acting in nature, in bodies and things, producing changes relevant to a political analysis.

[29] I am using 'at least' here because these are the main concerns of this research, but it can also incorporate a discussion on affect transmission, understood as the power to mobilize in an affect economy (Sara Ahmed). For example, how to use affect to create empathy for the victims of the genocide and mobilize international aid.

memorial places in post-genocide Rwanda. We suggest that memory always interweaves bodies, places and practices in complex entanglements of past, present, and future in movements of becoming. We hope, in the end, to provide some insights into the importance these compositional units play in mnemonic assemblages and their political dimensions.

In order to understand the enactment of memory practices through material forces (or how the liveness of things is central to affecting memories of Rwandan genocide), we build on nodal points of intersection among scholarships from various disciplinary fields. Though sometimes disparate in their epistemological and philosophical premises, such works attempt to advance complex analytics that has materiality and flows as central (dis)positions of politics and of our contemporary condition.

In traveling through mnemonic assemblages, we advocate the expansion of agency beyond human intentionality, emphasizing the ways in which matter can be *generative*, combining material and expressive accounts in multisensual encounters. Consequently, we suggest matter should be conceived as more than 'dead stuff' awaiting representation, stressing open encounters in lived experiences. As Lorimer (2005) summarizes, the focus falls on how life is energized and shaped "in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions" (p. 84). Ranging across poststructuralism, gender theories, performance studies, science and technology studies, anthropology (and so on), this diverse literature has influenced more-than-human and more-than-representational[30] approaches, contributing to entangle a common grammar orienting this research.

Such combinations could be seen as inappropriate from the point of view of a purist, defending fixed claims and rules to be applied as a traditional Theory[31]; however, it is interesting to underline that all these approaches are

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[30] The terms *more-than-human* (Whatmore, 2002) and *more-than-representational* (Lorimer, 2005) derive from the original terms *posthuman* (Haraway, 1991; Hayles, 1999; Braidotti, 2013) and *non-representational* (Thrift, 1996; 2008). Although all terms refer to the same movements of expanding agency to nonhuman entities and considering matter beyond passive stuff awaiting interpretation and representation, we opt to adopt the alternative terms in order to avoid being counterproductive and escaping misunderstandings. See Connolly (2013) and Lorimer (2005) for detailed accounts on the original terms as unfortunate hindrances.

[31] Reading Mol (2010) I came across an interesting quote from Lakoff; Johnson (1980): "Argument is war", emphasizing that argumentation is often permeated by war-metaphors like

concerned with (re)thinking materiality, agency, relationality, transformation, and deny departing from and/or arriving at a single location. They can be identified as pertaining to what Acuto and Curtis (2014) called '*assemblage thinking*', recognizing it as "a repository of methods and ontological stances toward the social" (p. 3) rather than a unified and applicable theory. In this perspective, we emphasize fruitful entanglements rather than 'gatekeeper' positions policing disciplinary boundaries.

In underscoring the interactions between bodies (humans and nonhumans), many authors expose the *anthropocentric bias*, criticizing the view that subjectivity must coincide with a conscious agency. For example, in 'Materiality', anthropologist Daniel Miller (2005) emphasizes how material things and places shape human life, transcending the dualism of subjects and objects towards co-constitution (p. 3). Rather than assuming objects as passively awaiting representation, the author underscores their active role in a continuous process in which people and things constitute one another. He points out that while such dualism subject-object can be solved through philosophy, we also need an account of the agency of materiality that always incorporates "an empathetic encounter with the least abstract and most fully engaged practices of the various peoples of the world" (2005, p. 14), especially because "we live in a changing and varied world of practice" (p. 4). I am sympathetic to Miller's effort to balance, as a mediator, a philosophical with a practical engagement with the agency of materialities. However, our proposals differ in the sense that Miller seems to be compromised with a discussion on the possibility of a theory of things and does not explore the entanglements of humans and nonhumans from scratch.

In the field of material cultural studies, Knappett and Malafouris (2008) also suggest an escape from such anthropocentric view exploring the active nature of material culture. The authors argue "when agency is linked strictly to consciousness and intentionality, we have very little scope for extending its reach beyond the human" (p. ix). Rather than proposing a *material agency* as an alternative to *human agency*, the contributors are challenging the inherent anthropocentrism in existing approaches to agency (p. xvii).

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powerful or weak, winning or losing and so on. Preparing myself for the criticisms on the contributions of such approaches in (re)thinking material agency in memorial assemblages and why this is relevant to IR, I would suggest the engagement with other kinds of conversation (Mol, 2010, p. 266).

Similarly, Munteán et al (2017) orient their research towards new materialist approaches to show how memory is mediated materially, emphasizing that "objects and things are no longer regarded as expedients for memory work but as potential agents of memory themselves" (p. 12), acknowledging the agentic capacities of materialities. Although underlining the interrelation of memory and materiality in art and popular culture, the political dimensions of memory enactments are sub-explored[32] by the authors, focusing on their agentic capacity but not so much on what are the implications of this agency – a central step in our research, especially attentive to ongoing fluxes and transformations in memorial places, flirting with the unexpected.

By taking seriously the political dimension of semiotic-materialities, Bennett (2010) introduces the concept of 'thing-power', engaging with the vitality of matter – a lively materiality that both precedes and exceeds us – to show how to "promote greener forms of human culture and more attentive encounters between people-materialities and thing-materialities" (p. x). Moreover, the author, following Spinoza, stresses an active impulsion present in *every* body – conatus – recognizing nonhuman matter as vital players in the world (p. 2; 4). Drawing on such arguments we ask: how would 'the political' acquire a revitalized feature if we pay attention to the vibrancy of things? In exploring the specificities of memorialization practices in post-genocide Rwanda, we stress, for example, the role of torrential rains and soil alteration in discovering hidden mass graves; river flows and corpses causing acute health and economic crisis across borders; and technological devices contributing to transnationalizing and delocalizing memory[33].

In a similar vein, geographers Bruce Braun and Sarah Whatmore (2010) try to overcome the uncomfortable division between the social and the natural, underscoring human-environment relations and developing new understandings of the human, citizenship and politics. Focusing on environmental processes, topologies, and spatiotemporal arrangements, the authors show the role of these actants in the making of social collectivities and political associations (p. xiii),

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[32] Except for chapter 9, which discusses memory in post-dictatorial Argentina through a 'docufiction' film, exploring the nuances and overlappings between personal and political, fact and fiction, and subject and object.

[33] We will discuss these examples in greater detail in chapters 4 and 5.

claiming that "the matter of politics and the politics of matter have never seemed so thoroughly entwined" (p. x).

All these efforts to focus on matter's agentic capacities *beyond representation* and the political implications of this move are part of what Nigel Thrift (2008) has called *non-representational theory*[34]. Rather than an actual theory, non-representational approaches are orientations guiding our thinking towards practice, aiming to "escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgment and ultimate representation" (Lorimer, 2005, p. 84). A crucial point here is the difference between representation conceived as a system of signification that can fix the world into meanings, making it "graspable and knowable once and for all" (Dewsbury, 2010a, p. 155) to be translatable into different empirical sites "innocently and in an hermetically sealed way" (p. 158); or representation as a generative tension between words, images, movements (and so on) assembling, taking place within these situated encounters in the experience of thinking – "meaning as though-in-action" (Anderson; Harrison, 2010, p.6). As Dewsbury highlights,

> "[non-representational theory] contains in its ethos the fact that the empirical site, or encounter, affects the thought that is thought there: it makes explicit an ethos of attunement to the event of thought itself, to the experience of thinking. The task then is to re-treat representations exactly as they are: presentations of thought in the wake of the event (2010a, p. 158).

Following Thrift's reflections on space, politics, and affect, we navigate mnemonic assemblages engaging in visceral and sensorial encounters with affective materialities in a "co-operative-cum-experimental sensibility in to the mix of the world" (2008, p. 4). Working on the geography of what happens and inspired by vitalist philosophers, the author travels through the 'onflow' of everyday life stressing the importance of recognizing "equal weight to the vast spillage of things" forming hybrid assemblages (p. 9), underscoring that agency transcends consciousness. Consequently, Thrift does not conflate personhood with

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[34] Non-representational thinking emerged from a series of papers written by Nigel Thrift (1996; 1997; 1999; 2004; 2008) and other authors (Dewsbury, 2000; 2003; McCormack, 2002; 2003; Lorimer, 2005; Anderson, 2006) aiming to criticize representation as the only way to understand our engagement in and with the world. In his most noteworthy work, Thrift (2008) articulates the basic principles guiding non-representational theory – which should not be conceived as a traditional theory and more like an orientation.

subjectivity, emphasizing a potentiality that is brought into being only as it acts or exists in the interstices of interaction between all kinds of things in continuous and involuntary process of encounter (p. 7; 15). In this regard, he "trades in modes of perception which are not subject-based" (p. 7), paying attention to pre-cognition or those 'roiling mass of nerve volleys' preparing our body for actions before we are even aware of them (Ibidem). In so doing, Thrift calls attention to the human body and its co-evolution with things/matter in a joint-action, stressing that it is not easy to separate them. As he points out,

> "(…) it could be argued that the human body is what it is because of its unparalleled ability to co-evolve with things, taking them in and adding them to different parts of the biological body to produce something which, if we could but see it, would resemble a constantly evolving distribution of different hybrids with different reaches. Indeed, the evidence suggests that organs like the hand, the gut, and various other muscle and nerve complexes which have evolved in part in response to the requirements of tools have subsequently produced changes in the brain. The human body is a tool-being" (2008, p. 10).

This emphasis on the co-evolving of bodies and things brings attention to affect and sensation as "concept-percepts that are fully as important as signs and significations" (p. 13). In suggesting to "let the event sing you" (p. 12) instead of framing and fixing meaning, Thrift calls attention to lived experience and the productive force of affect to "get in touch with the full range of registers of thought" (Ibidem).

As Thrift, I also flirt with the desire of experimenting a combination of approaches joining him in a move to "inject a note of wonder back into a social science which, too often, assumes that it must explain everything" (2008, p. 12). Hence, in our theoretical and empirical endeavors, we will dwell on messy encounters, unexpected e/affects, sensing our surroundings and trading in-between sense and sense-making when exploring mnemonic assemblages. Working on the fusion of bodies, places, and practices, we aim to grasp the virtualities and actualities in remembering and forgetting, negotiating the desired, the imagined, the lived, and the narrated through the sensuousness of matter in spaces of friction, always attentive to affective encounters.

Precisely because I understand my own work as a set of associations, with multiple and heterogeneous entities contributing to assemble it, in tentatively bringing those contributions together I am not trying to transform assemblage

thinking, ANT or affect theory into a more robust and better-equipped theory, but highlight *possibly generative partial connections in a bricolage*. In so doing, we want to stress the openness to the wide range of actants and the multidirectional, heterogeneous and distributed character of agency in an effort to highlight hybridisms, recalcitrances and uncertainties and their contributions to rethinking international relations. In this sense, all the assemblage approaches guiding this research offers a more 'in the making' and 'could be otherwise' inclination, emphasizing intricateness and contingency. As John Law emphasizes,

> "(…) actor-network theory (and here, no doubt, it is like everything else) is diasporic. It has spread, and as it has spread it has translated itself into something new, indeed into many things that are new and different from one another. It has converted itself into a range of different practices which (for this is the point of talking of translation) have also absorbed and reflected other points of origin: from cultural studies; social geography; organizational analysis; feminist STS. So actor-network theory is diasporic. Its parts are different from one another. But they are also (here is the point) *partially connected*. (…) this thing we call actor-network theory also transforms itself. This means that there is no *credo*. Only dead theories and dead practices celebrate their self-identity. Only dead theories and dead practices hang on to their names, insist upon their perfect reproduction. Only dead theories and dead practices seek to reflect, in every detail, the practices which came before. So there is, there should be, no identity, no fixed point (Law, 1999, p.10, emphasis in original).

Through a bricolage of concepts and approaches, we aim to offer a (re)combination that could account for the sensuousness of matter and affectivity in transforming memorialization in post-genocide Rwanda. In suggesting such gatherings, we necessarily produce a text through translations. In this regard, we do not endorse the whole package as a 'religious conversion' (Thrift, 2008, p. 18), but knit some concepts together in order to provide an affecting text in a tentative/experimental move that always requires cutting and omitting. Neither ANT nor assemblage thinking can be conceived as clear-cut theories but as general orientations sensitive to the transformational forces and movements in an unfolding ecology of becoming. In this perspective, they are diasporic approaches always under transformation and cannot be stabilized in order to be straightforwardly applied.

For this reason, we opt to benefit from their cross-fertilizations, following Müller and Schurr (2016) and Müller (2015) in adopting "ANT as an empirical sister-in-arms of the more philosophical assemblage thinking" (p. 30). So, we are interested in two movements: virtualization and actualization. While assemblage

thinking provides a more encompassing philosophical orientation to understand both movements – virtualization as the capacity to affect and be affected inherent to entities and actualization as a more concrete ensemble of relations (p. 33) –, ANT is more devoted to actualization in the sense that it focuses on *empirical* associations in an actor-network.

In combining these approaches, we hope to offer a fruitful gathering that recognizes the *potentialities of mnemonic assemblages in movements of becoming* but also aware of the *empirical actualities of embodied encounters with materialities in memorial enactments*. As Dovey suggests, "we might treat this assemblage of concepts like a strange place – we visit, we explore, we use it; we may or may not get a feel for the game of inhabiting, and we may or may not feel at home" (2010, p. 14).

2.3.1 The dislocated feature of action

In separating body/mind; material/social; emotional/rational and favoring one pole over the other, both cultural theory and natural sciences neglected the traversing of fluxes and privileged the human[35] as the center of all actions (Haraway, 1988; Braidotti, 2000; Colebrook, 2004; Dolphijn & Van der Tuin, 2012). Nonetheless, the commitment with dismantling these dialectical ties neither means to reverse the poles - arguing for a place of privilege to nonhuman matter -; nor to distinguish *a priori* the 'material' and the 'social', in order to link them back together in an explanatory tone. That is, there are no specific realms or special domains of the social, only movements of (re)assembling (Latour, 2005).

In this movement of reassembling, we adopt a *symmetrical perspective*, which means that one does not grant ontological superiority to either humans or nonhumans. As Latour argues, "to be symmetric for us, simply means not to impose a priori some spurious asymmetry among human intentional action and a material world of causal relations" (2005, p. 76). To advocate for symmetry does not mean to deny asymmetries; they are part of daily life, and they are central to the assemblages we will discuss. However, these hierarchies are not pre-existing,

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[35] Although the focus of the argument is highlighting an anthropomorphic fetishism in both cultural theory and natural sciences in detriment of granting equal attention to materialities, I cannot avoid pointing out a gender-oriented observation that the centrality on the *human* generally means a western white man.

nor distributed along a human-nonhuman divide; also, they do not explain anything but are exactly what need to be described in order to trace the actants sustaining such positions. As Elizabeth Grosz (1994, p. 167) remarks, "it is not that the world is without strata, totally flattened; rather, the hierarchies are not the result of substances and their nature and value but of modes of organization of disparate substances". To sum up, we recognize different degrees in the intensities or affective forces of those entities according to the way they enact an assemblage but we cannot say that those differences are aprioristically given.

In claiming for a symmetrical orientation, we are not suggesting that humans and nonhumans are identical in every manner possible (Khong, 2003, p. 702; Riis, 2008, p. 295); nor claiming to abandon all distinctions between them (Amsterdamska, 1990, p. 499). Neither are we attributing purpose to nonhumans, as Schaffer (1991) seems to understand when he accused Bruno Latour of committing "the heresy of hylozoism, an attribution of purpose, will and life to inanimate matter, and of human interests to the nonhuman" (Schaffer, 1991, p. 182)[36]. Symmetry here only supports a *flat ontology*, which means to conceive the relations of all interacting and heterogeneous entities in a nonhierarchical way; while they can differ in spatiotemporal scale, they have the same ontological status (DeLanda, 2013 [2002], p. 51).

A difference explored by Latour (2005) between the 'sociology of the social' and the 'sociology of associations' in studying the social may be of help here. While the former is said to impose order, limit the range of acceptable entities, and teach actors what they are in an orientation that confuses what they should explain with the explanation; the latter tries to follow the actants (human and nonhuman) in order to learn from them how the collective is being assembled, claiming that 'the social' does not exist as an objective reality before tracing the associations[37].

Therefore, a flat ontology demolishes the distinctions practiced by the adherents of 'sociology of the social' between micro and macro, natural and social, matter and humans, placing them on a more horizontal plane. That is to say, there are no macro forces conditioning the action of micro actants, as there

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[36] Just one answer came to mind when reflecting on those critiques – and here I am quoting Tickner (1997) in a remarkable response to the critiques arguing that gender lenses do not contribute to solve "real world" problems – "You just don't understand!"

[37] See Latour, 2005 (Introduction chapter) for a broader exploration of these differences.

are no inherently larger, better, faster, stronger human actant exercising agency towards passive matter. The artificial divide between social and natural only obfuscates the multitude of actants commingling in a network. The example of Pasteur in Latour's book 'The Pasteurization of France' (1993 [1988]) illustrates such a problem between "mere things" and a "human hero". As Annemarie Mol highlights,

> "All kind of people, journalists, farmers, technicians, vets, were involved in the discovery/invention of anthrax and the inoculations against it. All kinds of things were active as well, Petri-dishes, blood, transport systems. But (…) Pasteur was singled out as the hero, the responsible actor behind the pasteurisation of France. Bringing out that he, like any general, could only fight thanks to an entire army of people and things, is a typical ANT move. Against the implied fantasy of a masterful, separate actor, what is highlighted is the activity of all the associated actors involved. A strategist may be inventive, but no body acts alone" (Mol, 2010, p. 256).

For, as Latour argues, "action is not done under the full control of consciousness; action should rather be felt as a node, a knot, and a conglomerate of many surprising sets of agencies that have to be slowly disentangled" (2005, p. 44), agency is understood here as *making some difference or producing a transformation*, necessarily leaving a trace.

So, an actant[38] is acting when producing a difference in the course of the associations, a change of direction, of meaning, a dispute. An actants' agency is then measured by the strength of the associations it makes with other entities forming a network. In this research, an actant should not be conceived as the source of action; rather, *an actant is somebody or something that is made to act by many others* (Latour, 2005, p. 46, my emphasis).

Any actant transforming and modifying another entity is a mediator. Whereas, as Latour underlines, "an intermediary (...) is what transports meaning or force without transformation", "mediators transform, translate, distort, and modify the meaning or the elements they are supposed to carry" (2005, p. 39). Hence, intermediaries make no difference in the course of associations, while mediators are more complex and can lead to multiple directions. Mediation is an

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[38] Latour highlights why the use of the term actant: "Since the word agent in the case of nonhumans is uncommon, a better term is actant, a borrowing from semiotics that describes any entity that acts in a plot until the attribution of a figurative or nonfigurative role" (Latour, 1994, p. 33).

operation of displacement and translation is what allows us to qualify the type of this displacement.

Since an actor is never alone in acting (Latour, 2005), the *source of action* is not traceable. In this regard, Latour highlights: "Action is borrowed, distributed, suggested, influenced, dominated, betrayed, translated. If an actor is said to be an actor-network, it is first of all to underline that it represents the major source of uncertainty about the origin of action" (Latour, 2005, p. 46).

In this regard, Bennett (2010) argues,

> "Assemblages are not governed by any central head: no one materiality or type of material has sufficient competence to determine consistently the trajectory or impact of the group. The effects generated by an assemblage are, rather, emergent properties, emergent in that their ability to make something happen (a newly inflected materialism, a blackout, a hurricane, a war on terror) is distinct from the sum of the vital force of each materiality considered alone (p. 24)".

It is impossible to know aprioristically who/what is acting in a network; we must not presuppose agency. Different kinds of actants – human and nonhumans – produce traces and displacements, never alone carrying out a course of action. There is no such a thing as a hierarchical archetype easily arranging the actants from the least to the more powerful in a search for the 'leader', especially due to the intricateness character of the assemblage. Moreover, the actants are not stable or fixed, but intermingled, being rearranged among and within other actants. Composed of diverse elements, each one having its own vital force, this confederation of striving actants, working together, is what constitutes *an agency of the assemblage*. It is not the sum of the forces of each element considered alone, but their ability to make something happen as a group (Bennett, 2010, p. 24).

In this perspective, the parts of an assemblage do not form a seamless whole, with a fixed identity or essences; rather, the whole is assembled through the many capacities that only emerge due to the parts' interactions and, precisely because these capacities are actualized 'in-relation', it is not possible to determine preemptively what those entities can do. Hence, as DeLanda (2006) suggests, we should focus on entities' capacities to interact and not on their properties. As he argues,

"While its properties are given and may be denumerable as a closed list, its capacities are not given - they may go unexercised if no entity suitable for interaction is around - and form a potentially open list, since there is no way to tell in advance in what way a given entity may affect or be affected by innumerable other entities" (p. 10).

As agency is distributive alongside (and inside) entities and their interactions are multidirectional and multifaceted, assemblages do not present causal linearity but a productive and emergent one, in which the focus is on the process as itself an actant. As Connolly (2004) clarifies,

"Emergent causality is causal ... in that a movement at [one] ... level has effects at another level. But it is emergent in that, first, the character of the ... activity is not knowable in ... detail prior to effects that emerge at the second level. [Moreover,] ... the new effects become *infused* into the very ... organization of the second level ... such ... that the cause cannot be said to be fully different from the effect engendered. ...[Third,] ... a series of ... feedback loops operate between first and second levels to generate the stabilized result. The new emergent is shaped not only by external forces that become infused into it but *also by its own previously under-tapped capacities for reception and self-organization*" (Connolly, 2004 apud Bennett, 2010, p. 33, emphasis in original).

2.3.2 A tension: actor-network (or actant-rhizome)

In actor-network, the terms should always be considered together, since they embody a tension (Law, 2009). Unlike sociologists of the social, we are proposing to see the network as a provisional configuration of entities intertwining. It is not the old parts and wholes as separated, but the wholes as more than the sum of its parts and as manufactured as the parts in constant negotiations. In this regard, the network depends on its association/connections, its nodes having as many dimensions as they have connections – in short, the more numerous and stronger their associations, the larger the network.

While traditional thinking in IR conceives the whole as a sum of its parts, assemblage thinking conceives always-provisional wholes intermingling a wide range of parts. In this perspective, assemblages are not restricted to the small entities composing its larger wholes, but they are non-linear and take place at various scales. One assemblage is already a component part of another assemblage, entangling with different heterogeneous entities to form a new one; assemblages are always open to transformation. As Acuto and Curtis summarize, "assembling and disassembling is what the social theorist *does* to convey the stabilities and fluidities of the world one is trying to describe. In this sense, the

analytics of assemblage are embedded in an account of immanence and change" (2014, p. 10).

Together 'actor-network' enacts a force of gathering. Separated, the terms can lead to misunderstandings. As Law maintains,

> This is a name, a term which embodies a tension. It is intentionally oxymoronic. The tension, of course, lies between the centered 'actor' on the one hand and the decentred 'network' on the other. In one sense the word is thus a way of performing both an elision of, and a difference between, what Anglophones like to call 'agency' and 'structure' (1999, p. 5).

As the author underscores, the term actor-network has been confused and misused, diffusing the tension present in the original oxymoronic expression (1999, p. 8). Latour then suggests the term network could be better understood as a worknet – in this case, the emphasis is not on the interconnections in a net, but on the flows, the movement, the work and the shifts (2005, p. 143). Indeed, the term network can be confused with something more stable or transporting without deforming, while the point is to stress the flux (Law and Mol, 2001, p. 612-613). The effects of these flows and shifts are what interest us the most.

In 'Complexities' (2002), Law and Mol emphasize multiplicity, oscillation, mediation, material heterogeneity, performativity and interference as some of the elements needed to understand the complexities, flows and shifts of unfinished relations, arguing that things overlap and coexist, thus "there is no resting place in a multiple and partially connect world" (p. 20).

Because, as Mol, (2010, p. 259) points out, different actor-networks coexist simultaneously and in tension, modes of ordering depend on translational displacements, so the power is on the enrolment of actants in a network and its provisional stability (Murdoch, 1998). In this sense, the striving entities need to constantly act in their entanglements to maintain the network. As Law argues,

> "(…) the notion of 'network' is itself an alternative topological system. Thus in a network, elements retain their spatial integrity *by virtue of their position in a set of links or relations*. Object integrity, then, is not about a volume within a larger Euclidean volume. It is rather about holding patterns of links stable (1999, p.6-7, emphasis in original).

In addressing space topologically, ANT emphasizes the potential transformations of the movements of comingling entities. Rather than describing an already bounded space, they stress the necessity to think space relationally; in

other words, topology underlines spatial relations calling attention to the connections of entities and not in regard to distance and position. By the same token, Massey argues for "thinking space relationally", as "a product of practices, trajectories, interrelations" (2004, p. 5) and Whatmore (2002) points out "hybrid mappings are necessarily topological, emphasising the multiplicity of space-times generated in/by the movements and rhythms of heterogeneous association" (p. 6). These movements toward topology are clearly in line with our endeavor in recognizing the rhizomatic character of associations, but we also propose, following (Wylie and Rose, 2006), a balance with the topographical. Consequently, we need both a vitalist, relational, ephemeral and a textured, perspective and positioned sensitivity in order to grasp mnemonic assemblages.

In our view, and in line with an assemblage thinking orientation, actor-network (or actant-rhizome) can account for the potentialities of assemblages also describing them empirically, following the actants sustaining the network to see how it can be practiced/enacted, and focusing on the alliances being formed due to successful translations.

When describing the agentic capacity of the entities in an assemblage, we inevitably need to "freeze" the flux of their dynamism in specific time-spaces (Massey, 2005) in order to grasp them. In this perspective, we highlight the relational character of assemblages, in which a configuration is the result of the precarious and provisional comingling of actants in networks. It is then experiential time that enables a multiplicity of temporalities to co-exist when we describe movements of dis/assembling and de/territorialization.

When talking about network, we necessarily mean a string of actions in which each participant is a full-blown mediator (Latour, 2005, p. 128) and, in this research, this includes me as well. The network is, according to Latour (2005, p. 129) something that helps to describe something, not what is being described - it is a term to "check how much energy, movement, and specificity our own reports are able to capture (p. 131). In this perspective, it is not merely transportation, but a transformation in which "each point of a text become a bifurcation, an event, and the origin of a new translation" (p. 128). As the author elucidates,

> "(…) the network does not designate a thing out there that would have roughly the shape of interconnected points, much like a telephone, a freeway, or sewage 'network'. It is nothing more than an indicator of the quality of a text about the topics at hand. It qualifies

its objectivity, that is, the ability of each actor to make other actors do unexpected things. A good text elicits networks of actors when it allows the writer to trace a set of relations defined as so many translations" (2005, p. 129).

In tracing and translating the complexities and multiplicities of memory enactments, a *praxiographer*, as Mol (2002) calls it, needs to pay attention to the transformations/conformations/deformations enacted while engaging in the research. In examining different ways of enacting atherosclerosis, Mol emphasizes the body as multiple, describing how this is possible through practices. Moreover, she warns us to be careful when talking about an assemblage in relation to the terms used when referring to practices. She carefully elaborates on the differences between *construction, performance* and *enactment*. Construction involves the idea that something is under way, but will be stabilized at some point[39] (2002, p. 42). However, the entanglements of heterogeneous actants carefully maintain this apparent stabilization. Mol (2002) and Law (2004) suggest a shift from the metaphor of the workshop to a theatre metaphor. In this perspective, the term performance is the one that may account for the multiplicity of roles available. However, she argues, performance "may be taken to suggest that there is a backstage, where the real reality is hiding" (2002, p. 32). Finally, she cautiously favors a word that does not imply "a shift from an epistemological to a praxiographic inquiry into reality" (Ibidem) – *enactment*. While the term "suggests that activities take place—but leaves the actors vague. It also suggests that it is in the act, and only then and there, that something *is* – being enacted" (Mol, 2002, p. 33, emphasis in original).

Accordingly, we are aware and open to the many possibilities of *enacting* mnemonic assemblages and that such enactments are the provisional configuration of heterogeneous bodies intertwining, recognizing that even the silencing/neutralization of some actants are embedded in the ways we interfere and demarcate what is being left out of the research.

In this perspective, the research practice, according to Fox and Alldred (2018), should explore "the relational character of events and their physical, biological and expressive composition" (p. 193) in order to describe "the

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[39] As Mol argues, "the term 'construction' was used to get across the view that objects have no fixed and given identities, but gradually come into being. During their unstable childhoods their identities tend to be highly contested, volatile, open to transformation. But once they have grown up objects are taken to be stabilized" (2002, p. 42).

continuities, fluxes and 'becomings' that produce the world around us" (Ibidem) and, they further emphasize, "this requires a focus upon the specific inter-actions between events and research acts (events in their own right)" (Ibidem). And, precisely because our own research practice is inextricably entangled with translations and betrayals, we now turn to them.

2.3.3 The translational displacements

As discussed above, the ability to act is not an inner attribute of an actant, but something emerging by way of the entanglements in which the actant is immersed. In this sense, we cannot affirm what is the agentic capacity of an entity before looking into the associations it is forming with. By way of example, we cannot presuppose that a machete acts in some way, we need to see the role it plays in a specific spatiotemporal configuration and the web of associations in which the machete in question is immersed. For example, a machete can act as an agricultural tool, as a weapon, as a memorial artifact, as a substitute for a knife and so on. We have an infinitude of potentials for both the machete and the other entities holding it together. To avoid prejudgments and reifications, we suggest a focus on the empirical enactments of entities composing an assemblage.

So, we have to pay attention to the implications of the process of translation between all the assemblages at play and to recognize the difficulties in describing the persistent contingency between the compositional parts in interaction. In this sense, we underline that actor-network theory can never be used as a model applied to understand different configurations, but will be adjusted in the process and in response to specific empirical situations (Mol, 2011). In this regard, we advise, as Latour did, that "(…) in the world ANT is trying to travel through, no displacement seems possible without costly and painful translations" (2005, p. 25). Those painful translations are the traces we will try to follow to understand the interactions between the actants and the associations they will form in a network[40]. A careful understanding of translation is necessary:

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[40] In tracing these associations, it is relevant to emphasize that we will not be able to analyze all the network's extension, since there are so many mediators in an association and intensive flux of translations that the tracing process would be extremely slow and tiring (if not impossible).

> "Translation does not mean a shift from one vocabulary to another, from one French word to one English word, for instance, as if the two languages existed independently. Like Michel Serres, I use translation to mean *displacement, drift, invention, mediation, the creation of a link that did not exist before and that to some degree modifies two elements or agents*" (Latour, 1994, p. 32, my emphasis).

Translation is a term borrowed from Michel Serres (1974) in which both transmission and distortion are involved; the movements of linking and changing occur at the same time, since "translation is the process or the work of making two things that are not the same, equivalent" (Law, 1999, p. 8). In translating the movements of association and disassociation of entities, there is a displacement that transforms, in their own terms, other entities. This is the reason why we say mediation involves change, distortion, betrayal (Law, 2009).

It is not uncommon that some networks *appear as particularly stable configurations* even before the process of entanglement with the entities. If this is the case, we should never take the network as if it was a structure, leaving the new entities without any agentic capacity. Or, in philosophical terms, we should never take agency as transcendence, but immanence. There is nothing with a special status holding them together, but this apparent stable configuration is a result of entities' constant hard work supporting it that way. In the words of Pels, "No one 'reflects' a pre-given structure: every one pushes and pulls at it, works upon it, modifies it, in order to render it a little more solid or a little more fluid" (2002, p. 84). There is no 'being' in the actions, only 'havings' – inextricably going both ways, as a mutual enactment of entities and configurations constituting each other in their movements of association; *agency is not related to what is (verb to be), but to what has (verb to have)*[41].

In the constant movement of associations of heterogeneous entities commingling, translations are important vestiges of the past trajectories that formed a network – a provisional configuration of these connections. When the associations of entities forming a network stabilize, it would act as a *black box*, translating into a new entity. It is this stabilizing effect that permits a network to gain the appearance of a homogeneous entity. Hence, a network can be an actant in a new set of associations, forming another one in a confederation of multiple

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[41] This difference between being and having was Gabriel Tarde's (the forefather of ANT, according to Latour) movement. See Latour, 2002 for a detailed discussion on the implications of conceiving agency as related to the verb to have and not the verb to be.

and mobiles actants. The configuration or achievement of a new network inescapably encompasses all the workforces necessary to maintain a previous one, which now helps to form a new one through the process of entanglement.

The consequence of this black boxing effect, when related to a network, is the stability appearance or illusion of autonomy of something that is only provisionally stable due to the entities' forces of entanglement supporting it. When related to entities, this effect can give the appearance that an entity has complete autonomic capacities, devoid of its relation within the network. Usually, such autonomic capacities are well accepted in human beings, while it is conceived as a monstrosity or mystic when referring to matter. The resistance in recognizing things/matter agentic capacities is due to our mistaken effort to detach them as acting independently of their entanglements. In this vein, Latour argues,

> "The mistake of the dualist paradigm was its definition of humanity. Even the shape of humans, our very body, is composed in large part of sociotechnical negotiations and artifacts. To conceive humanity and technology as polar is to wish away humanity: we are sociotechnical animals, and each human interaction is sociotechnical. We are never limited to social ties. We are never faced with objects. (...) Objectivity and subjectivity are not opposed, they grow together, and they grow irreversibly together" (1994, p. 64).

In this sense, regarding issues of intentionality, purpose, and responsibility and how it can be 'solved' in actor-network perspective, Latour (1993) offers a word that describes the main movement of assemblages: *gatherings.* As the passage above underscores, we are not humans dissociated from the nonhuman parts forming us and interacting with us. Therefore, we do not assume human intentionality as a necessary condition to agency – understood as something that makes a difference in the course of associations. And, of course, we are not trying to grant intentionality to nonhumans; rather, we are just respecting the mediating role of all the actants mobilized in an assemblage and being aware of recalcitrances of things/matter.

In adopting a material-semiotic orientation, truly important insights about subjectivity, relationality, and symmetry abound. According to Law, ANT describes "the enactment of materially and discursively heterogeneous relations that produce and reshuffle all kinds of actors[42]" (2007, p. 2). It is important to

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[42] Including objects, subjects, human beings, machines, animals, 'nature', ideas, organisations, inequalities, scale and sizes, and geographical arrangements (Law, 2007, p. 2)

point out that the semiotic insight is "*applied ruthlessly to all materials*" (Law, 1999, p. 4). In this regard, ANT shares with post-structuralism the notion of production in relations and takes language into account when describing the assemblages; however, it distinguishes itself "from those versions of post-structuralism that attend to language and language alone" (Ibidem). By the same token, Lundborg and Vaughan-Williams (2015) try to emphasize that some approaches in 'new materialism' are not that far from some versions of post-structuralism; it is only a matter of adopting a *radical* inter-textuality (p. 7). And yet, it does not mean to adopt an orientation based on the conception that the material realm exists only through meaning-making practices, but that matter has significance beyond the politics of representation (p. 12).

Yet, attention is needed to avoid an either/or reading towards memory enactments. In affirming that matter has significance beyond representation does not lead us to abandon this semiotic inclination, but emphasize this is not the only mode of ordering, acknowledging matter's affective forces. Hence, in emphasizing the realm of enactment we are describing mnemonic assemblages as *inextricably material and expressive*. Following DeLanda (2006), we point to a *generative matter*, "which is a concept that does not capture matter-as-opposed-to-signification, but captures *mattering as simultaneously material and representational*" (Van der Tuin and Dolphijn, 2010, p. 155, my emphasis).

In describing memory enactments, we are aware of the collective work underway, not only in relation to the heterogeneous actants striving to form an assemblage, but also in our own connection with these agentic and affective forces during the research constantly being transformed in our translations. As Best and Walters emphasize,

> "To act collectively and to exercise power, we depend upon the agency of human and non-human others, an agency which is often truculent, recalcitrant, crafty, and self-interested. Translation pretty much ensures that, like the splintering assassination plot described in De Lillo's Libra, *things never unfold quite as planned*" (2013, p. 333, my emphasis).

It is exactly to describe this "unfolding not quite as planned" that we delve into the affective forces of materiality in memory enactments. This orientation helps to highlight the ambivalences, messes, frictions, and contradictions embedded in memory and memorialization practices, adopting a sensitivity

towards the sensuous presence of things/matter in mnemonic assemblages. Freeman, Nienass and Daniel (2016) highlight "how sensuality plays a key role in the relationship between matter and memory through the glances, seductions, and revulsions that arise through encounters with the visual, tactile, textual, and synesthetic expressions of the past" (p. 4).

2.3.4 Affect and emotion – excavating on the body(ies)

The engagement with affectivity is crucial, especially in the dynamics of violence, trauma, memory, and reconciliation. Theories of the body and embodiment, subjectivity and performativity, biopolitics and disciplinary power, loss and trauma are great contributions to what has been called an 'affective turn' in the social sciences and humanities (Clough, 2007). These theoretical trends invite to other possibilities of analyzing the political, complicating the clear divides between body and mind, actions and passions, public and private.

Focusing on the body and exploring emotions are not new inclinations since feminist and queer theory have been extensively contributing on this matter for some time. Yet, a shift to affect complicates our view of causality due to, simultaneously, belonging to both sides of the causal relationship. As Michael Hardt maintains in his foreword to Clough's book 'The Affective turn' (2007), "they illuminate (…) both our power to affect the world around us and our power to be affected by it, along with the relationship between these two powers" (p. ix).

Drawing on a Spinozist conception of body and mind as autonomous and *developing in parallel*, Clough (2007) points out to a *relation of correspondence*, in which the body does not determinate the mind to think nor the mind determinates the body to act; they are different aspects of the same substance inseparable from each other – it is then *not a relation of determination* (Clough, 2007, p. x; Grosz, 1994, p. 11). Although I will not dig deeper into Spinoza or even "affect theory" in general, I want to maintain that we will engage on affect in the interstices between body and mind, action and passion, reason and emotion empirically, since affect pulses within these entanglements and "we cannot know in advance what a body can do or what a mind can think – what affects they are capable of" (Clough, 2007, p. x). This move to explore affectivities is relevant in our research since memory is inextricable from matter, flows, experiences, and

feelings. While exploring affectivity we propose an engagement with both affect and emotions [43] . I see this fruitful discussion as a good balance between overemphasizing things/matter on the one side or relying too much on discourse and representationalism on the other side, trying to grasp "what pulses through assemblages and actor-networks and what constitutes their power (puissance)" (Müller, 2015, p. 36).

I believe we can clarify some things with a reflection on *power*. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari understandings of power, we offer two different conceptions of it: puissance and pouvoir. While *puissance* pertains to the plane of consistency and can be understood as potential, "a 'capacity for existence', 'a capacity to affect or be affected', a capacity to multiply connections that may be realized by a given 'body' to varying degrees in different situations" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. xvii); *pouvoir* pertains to the plane of organization and is related to actualized power, "a selective concretization of potential" (Ibidem). In entangling such approaches (and concepts), we believe that we can explore both the potentialities and actualities of mnemonic assemblages combining the strength of assemblage thinking when delving into the virtual with ANT's work in describing actualized associations.

Assemblage thinking and ANT are both concerned with the agentic forces of human and nonhuman entities, addressing the material-semiotic character of assemblages; they emphasize the world as relational, emerging from the entanglements of disparate elements where the whole is not merely the sum of its parts; and underscore that what hold things together is highly dependent on the intensive hard work of entities commingling (Müller and Schurr, 2016). Therefore, we decided to explore the fertile grounds this encounter can bring, paying attention to the cross-fertilizations accentuated by Müller and Schurr. Affect is one of the main concepts of assemblage thinking, strengthening ANT when describing the agentic capacities of matter/things[44], while ANT can provide a rich conceptual apparatus to bound up with empirical accounts.

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[43] I (somewhat thwarted) had to limit the debates on the intricacies of affect and emotions to the empirical cases due to its connection with the mind-body problem in philosophy of mind. Although the main debate is centered on monism or dualism, there is a broad array of differences even within them.

[44] I am aware that while ANT is more concerned with the actual and the relations between the actants in association, assemblage thinking can account for both the virtual and the actual, emphasizing the relations of exteriority. According to Dittmer, "these relations of exteriority mean

Accordingly, we delve into the intricacies between matter and memory through affect, broadening agency beyond consciousness but also concerned with what affect produces in specific mnemonic assemblages. We are interested in the *fluxes of affect as potential and how it relates to memory, paying attention to the productive forces of its actualization.* Through all the chapters, we will focus on the uncertainties and recalcitrances generated by the interlacing of matter and memory. As Hamilakis argues, "memories can be unpredictable; they can spring up involuntarily and disrupt and upset the consensual order"[45] (2014, p. 117).

It was looking into my inner bodily responses that I became curious about the affective power of semiotic-materialities. Looking inside made me reflect on how the body is entangled with matter and ideas, how feelings result from an entanglement of somaticities and cognition, interlacing in a symbiotic relation the bodies/entities within my own body with other bodies intermingling with it and striking back. Hence, we need to be open to the "material substances, airwaves, rays of light, gestures, and movements, as well as discourses, affects, memories, and ideas which (…) are of equal ontological status" (Hamilakis, 2014, p. 116). It is through the entanglements of virtual and actual[46], and affect and emotions that we dig into mnemonic assemblages. In so doing, I want to leave the door open to the 'could be otherwise', but also be aware of what/who is entering through this door and how, accounting for the actual (even if provisional) in a more ethnographical character. The fluidity of the body(ies) are crucial in this research

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that component parts of a whole *cannot be reduced to their function within that whole*, and indeed they *can be parts of multiple wholes at any given moment*. The parts are nevertheless shaped by their interactions within assemblages, and indeed it is the capacities, rather than the properties, of component parts that are most relevant in understanding resultant assemblages. While the properties of a material are relatively finite, its capacities are infinite because they are the result of interaction with an infinite set of other components" (2014, p. 387, my emphasis). Hence, I opt to conjoint these two approaches and work on the interstices of their interactions.

[45] While all these terms (unpredictable, involuntary, disrupt and upset) will be observed when describing all mnemonic assemblages in this research, 'unpredictability' can be better illustrated in chapter 5 with the stream of a river changing memorial practices; memories 'springing up involuntarily' is what I have tried to grasp when looking to my encounters with room 28 and machetes; 'upsetting the consensual order' can be better addressed in the fourth chapter when describing national-level memorial sites and the attempt to form a collective memory of the genocide in Rwanda.

[46] I am trying to balance too much fluidity, multiplicity and ephemerality with actualization, avoiding the ungraspable. As Deleuze and Guattari warn, "so much caution is needed to prevent the plane of consistency [virtual] from becoming a pure plane of abolition or death, to prevent the involution from turning into a regression to the undifferentiated. Is it not necessary to retain a minimum of strata, a minimum of forms and functions, a minimal subject from which to extract materials, affects, and assemblages?" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 270).

– always a *becoming body* within its interconnections with others: bodies as matter, bodies as humans, bodies as memorial artifacts, bodies as pollution[47].

It is important to take into account that the contributions on affect are not in unison, given the polysemy of the term and the variations on the readings of former philosophers of affect. Moreover, as affect constitutes a nonlinear and open complexity, involving both human and nonhuman bodies, somaticities and cognition in multifaceted associations knitting together sensations, emotions and self-reflexivity, it is not easy to grasp its chaotic and messy inter-corporeal connections. As Thrift (2008) questioned: "who can truly say that they fully understand the forces we tag as 'affect'?" (2008, p. 19).

In exploring the productive forces of affect, we tentatively try to delve into affect as a 'capacity to produce' and 'how to respond' in an intertwined way. The point here is not only focusing on how matter can affect the human body, but also how the human body is already full of matter acting even before we are aware of that. In this perspective, we have to pay attention to matter we interact with in memorial landscapes and to matter within our own (human) bodies. These complex entanglements point to the impossibility of dissociating body and mind.

In 'Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation', Brian Massumi (2002) stresses the autonomy of affect, emphasizing its preconscious and pre-linguistic features, contrasting affect to emotion. As the author underlines,

> The autonomy of affect is its participation in the virtual. *Its autonomy is its openness*. Affect is autonomous to the degree to which it escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is. Formed, qualified, situated perceptions and cognitions fulfilling functions of actual connection or blockage are the capture and closure of affect. Emotion is the most intense (most contracted) expression of that *capture* – and of the fact that something has always and again escaped (Massumi, 2002, p.35, emphasis in original).

Similarly, according to Gregg and Seigworth (2010),

> "Affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and to be acted upon. (…) Affect is the name (…) we give to those forces – visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion – that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension (…)" (p. 1, emphasis in original).

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[47] The fluidity of bodies permeates the entire dissertation, stressing they can become many things, although we will emphasize the unexpected and recalcitrance character of bodies. For example, the fourth chapter underscores bodies as memorial artifacts and the fifth chapter describes bodies as pollution.

Thus, while affect refers to non-reflective bodily visceral forces, emotions necessarily involve conscious awareness. In vehemently emphasizing affect from emotion, underlining they follow "different logics and pertain to different orders", Massumi (2002, p. 27), as well as Thrift (2004; 2008), concentrate their effort on the "pre-personal, "pre-social" character of affect. Conversely, our work is aware of the potential character of affect, without dislocating it from the entanglements of human and nonhuman bodies we are describing. In other words, despite the impetus to treat emotion and affect separately and to analyze what comes first and why this is important to affect studies, I am much more interested in their interrelatedness and co-evolving movements. I do not think it is particularly important to this study to measure the un/intentionality or un/consciousness of affects; affect and emotion can be distinct but not opposite.

In this regard, I do not share Thrift's effort in concentrating on the virtual, working within an "'inhuman' or 'transhuman' framework in which individuals are generally understood as effects of the events to which their body parts (broadly understood) respond and in which they participate" (2004, p. 60). I work with the virtual as a way to expand the forces, synergies, flows, and unpredictabilities entangling human and nonhuman entities to recognize agency and affect beyond mere representation – in short, human language as not the only meaningful model of communication (p. 59) –, but we also benefit from emotional translations of affect.

As I am proposing a very specific and localized discussion on memorialization of violent and traumatic events, I am interested in affect as potential, recognizing the contributions of its virtuality for understanding the ''real-material-but-incorporeal'' character of affect (Massumi, 2002, p. 5); affect as intensity, potentiality, vitality – the emergent and opened potentials of assemblages. But we are interested as well in actualization. Let me be clear here – it is not to argue that the potential is what precedes the actualization toward something in particular as if in a linear causality or teleological sense – we are talking about the *unpredictable until it is narrated, a sensibility towards the freedom of movement prior to economies of meaning* (McCormack, 2003, p. 495). Indeed, due to its excessive character, affect is never equivalent to its capture (Hynes; Scharpe, 2015, p. 119). In this regard, when describing encounters with

semiotic-materialities in places of memory I am aware that this is just an actualized capture of its virtual potential.

Maybe I should clarify that I perceive, following Jo Labanyi (2010), affect, sensation and emotion as "occupy[ing] different points on a continuum going from body to mind, each having a different temporality (p. 224), but they are entangled with each other (p. 230)". The author further elaborates on these entanglements[48], following Massumi in his treatment of affect as preconscious intensity, moving away from mere representation, but also – and this is worth stressing – not disentangling affect from emotion in trying to pursue a non-discursive account of relations[49]. As Labanyi argues,

> "Massumi's insistence that affect and emotion obey different orders warns us not to establish a mechanical causal sequence between affect and the sensations and emotions that follow; nevertheless, if affect can be studied through its effects, those effects impact on sensation and emotion, which in turn can impact on reasoned argument" (p. 230).

The movements that guide this work are then to appreciate the fluidity, unpredictability, and ephemerality of mnemonic assemblages, delving into the actualizations of its virtualities when describing empirical topographies. We will then travel through the entanglements of sensorialities and corporealities, flows and things – the unpredictable and preconscious responses, and the processing of those that can culminate into reasoned arguments.

When reflecting on mnemonic assemblages, we do not attempt to account for representations of the past; rather, we emphasize its generative presence, "evoking their sensorial qualities, their life processes, to conjure up the interweaving of materials, bodies, things, and substances in motion, to reignite their affective power" (Hamilakis, 2014, p. 13). Being attentive to affectivity

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[48] Labanyi, in conversation with Massumi, elaborates "Brian Massumi defines affect as intensity – an arousal that can be measured physiologically but which happens so fast that consciousness cannot register it. Once a conscious response kicks in (half a second later, according to neurological research), we are in the realm of sensation (awareness of the physical experience, for example, of fear) and, following shortly after, emotion (the reflective acknowledgment 'I am afraid'). Emotion is thus, in practice, an amalgam of feeling and thought – though the element of judgment involved in sensation and even affect makes it difficult to call them entirely 'thought-free'. It is hard to find a vocabulary to talk of the kind of judgments made by affect in that half second preceding conscious response: this is a kind of 'thinking' done by the body and not the mind. All of them involve judgment in some way; sensation and emotion are felt consciously; and emotion forms a further continuum with reason in that both are forms of conscious moral thinking. As a neurological response, affect involves the brain but not consciousness (2010, p. 224).

[49] We are trying to point out here that emphasizing the precognition of affect not necessarily involves a dismissal of the discursive, at the same time being aware that is not merely through discourse/representation that we perceive the entanglements between affect and emotion.

enables an understanding that our capacities to affect and to be affected are enriched within the entanglements of a multiplicity of heterogeneous bodies; but also calls for a different relationship between memory, perception and temporality since, as Bergson underlines, "there is no perception which is not full of memories" (Bergson, 2002, p. 115) and, he elucidates, "perception is never a mere contact of the mind with the object present; it is impregnated with memory-images which complete it as they interpret it"(p. 151). In this perspective, we have to highlight that when visiting and exploring those places of memory, we are already impregnated with memory-images and perceptions, interfering in our interaction with those places even though we are not completely aware of that – what we can call 'cultural baggage'. Also, as ANT advances a sensibility towards the material-semiotic enactments of those associations grounded in empirical case studies, descriptions of these human and nonhuman entities will reflect my fieldwork experiences and translational displacements.

2.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, our effort was to understand *how matter comes to matter*, interweaving the contributions of a diverse and interdisciplinary literature that has influenced more-than-human and more-than-representational approaches in the humanities and social sciences. We situated our research under the rubric of 'new materialisms', calling attention to the agentic capacities and affective forces of matter in revitalizing 'the political' and re-energizing the international.

Adopting a sensibility towards the sensuousness of matter and its agentic capacities, we proposed a bricolage of concepts provided by actor-network theory, assemblage thinking and affect theory, offering provisional and generative connections to describe mnemonic assemblages. This was a tentative and experimental move that combines philosophical stances and empirical endeavors to broad agency beyond consciousness and towards a 'thing-power', acknowledging that we remember and forget with and through other bodies. In recognizing matter's agentic capacities, we did not intend to replace humans with nonhumans, or to argue that assemblage thinking was 'the safe way to escape conventional theories' or a 'better alternative' to *explain* the world. Our work was not about debunking, but *gathering*. In this perspective, we did not intend to

advance a purely nonhuman or total abandonment of the representational, overcoming the role of language, ideas, texts, meanings and discourses but to argue in favor of the emergent relations composing the political – an exchange of human and nonhumans alike, underlining the inextricability between the somatic and the cognitive in our encounters with matter/things.

We also highlighted the interstices between body and mind through a discussion on affectivity. As such, I have expressed a need to address the interconnections between matter-memory-affect, grasping both its virtualities and actualities. In this regard, we explored the virtual as a vitality, a potential that expands the forces and intensities in unpredictable entanglements, but we also stressed affect's capture as sensation and emotion since they are important to describe my encounters with semiotic-materialities in places of memory. In the next chapter, we begin to explore these affective encounters with room 28 and machetes, trying to address how I came to reflect on matter's affective power looking into my inner bodily responses.

3 Encountering affective materialities: room 28 and machetes

"(…) no one has yet determined what the body can do, that is experience has not yet taught anyone what the body can do from the laws of nature alone ... the body itself, simply from the laws of its own nature, can do many things which its mind wonders at".

Benedict Baruch de Spinoza, The Ethics, 1996 [1677][50]

3.1 Introduction

In the last chapter, we engaged with the literature on affect and emotion, exploring some insights in order to understand the role of materiality in enactments of memory and the potentialities of affective forces in post-genocide memorial places. Being presented theoretically, we turn to how I came to (re)think material-semiotic composites in mnemonic assemblages. Thus, we explore affectivity as I understand it – as a generative force and unpredictable effect of my engagements with it. With this, I want to highlight the potentialities of matter and how they can affect memory, both individual and collective. The chapter is devoted to describing how places, things, and matter can contribute to show the power of materialities affecting our daily lives. The next section discusses the desacralization of a religious retreat center into a violent space; and the third section describes the ritualization of an ordinary tool used in agricultural work into a weapon of genocide, contributing to an a/effective assemblage of killing. Those two assemblages reflect on my everyday encounters (during fieldwork) with a room and a tool, trying to grasp the entanglements of matter, memory, and affect.

In exploring room 28 and machetes, I have three main concerns in mind. First, to present how I became interested in researching matter's agentic capacities in a self-reflexive movement embedded and embodied in semiotic-materialities that address the entanglements of affect, sensation, emotion and reasoned argument. Second, to show how a room and tool are not merely stable and fixed materialities but vibrant and mobile in a constant process of becoming within

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[50] Spinoza apud Hamilakis (2014, p. 111).

multisensual encounters that affect memorialization. Third, to describe the dynamics of violence during the genocide following things (a room and a tool) rather than focusing on the chronological singularities of 'historical facts' to provide some background. I believe this move can account for the vitality of semiotic-materialities in their provisional spatiotemporal configurations while exploring the tensions between history, myth, memory, and memorialization.

3.2 No sacred places: blood, bullets, holes, and jerry cans of gasoline

Centre Christus, in Remera, Kigali, is a jesuit retreat center and one of the first targets during the genocide. The center was pivotal in promoting human rights and ethnic reconciliation. In 1992, Father Chrysologue Mahame, the Superior of the center, helped to create the human rights organization *Association des Volontaires de la Paix* (AVP) and took part in several mediations between the government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) (Aguilar, 2009, p. 26). Just before the genocide, in February, the center was a place of refuge for those fleeing from Gikondo after Martin Bucyana's murder, president of the Coalition pour la Défense de la République et de la Démocratie (CDR)[51] (Melvern, 2006, p. 150). Religious actors at the center played a fundamental role in supporting non-violence ideology and dedicating to advocate human rights, using religious corollaries to seek reconciliation and peace[52]. Especially in deeply religious societies like Rwanda, these prophetic messages worked as holdbacks in propagating hate speeches and large-scale violence[53].

Due to the role of these religious actors in pursuing ethnic reconciliation and the political force and major influence of the Christian churches in Rwanda, those leaders who were not aligned to the Hutu ethno-nationalist agenda were killed, eliminating any possible resistance[54].

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[51] Extremist Hutu party.

[52] See Hayward, S. 'Averting Hell on Earth: Religion and the Prevention of Genocide', United States Institute of Peace, 2010. Available at: http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/sr248.pdf [accessed January 17, 2017].

[53] See Longman, Timothy. 'Christianity and democratisation in Rwanda: Assessing church responses to political crisis in the 1990's'. In: *The Christian Churches and the democratisation of Africa*, edited by Paul Gifford; Leiden; New York; Köln: Brill, 1995; Longman, Timothy. *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

[54] Despite depicting this spiritual retreat as a place that advanced peace and ethnic reconciliation,

In *Conspiracy to Murder*, Linda Melvern depicts how the massacre in *Centre Christus* occurred:

> "On the morning after the crash, shortly after 6.30 a.m., as mass was being held in the chapel, three Presidential Guards burst in. They ordered the sister in charge to get the register to enable them to see who was staying there. The soldiers separated the Rwandans from the Europeans staying at the centre. After carefully scrutinizing identity cards, the soldiers directed all Rwandans into room 28. An officer arrived and told his men to lock the door of the room. A survivor hiding in the library heard two loud explosions and automatic weapons fire. When the door was opened later that day everyone inside was dead" (Melvern, 2006, p. 150).

In what is portrayed as the very beginning of the genocide not even religious leaders were spared. The violation of this place of sanctuary, a spiritual retreat, was a symbolic rupture with the sacred. The perpetrators ignored the religious rituals and beliefs during the killings, suspending their respect for God in order to keep slaughtering those who represented a threat.

Some of the perpetrators described how they avoid praying during the killings, others highlighted how God allowed Satan to take control, and there were also some perpetrators that confessed praying in silent and asking for pardon. However, a more radical view, like the one described by Léopord in 'Machete Season'*,* emphasized total disregard towards faith and God:

> "LÉOPORD: 'Through killing well, eating well, looting well, we felt so puffed up and important, we didn't even care about the presence of God. Those who say otherwise are half-witted liars. Some claim today that they sent up prayers during the killings. They're lying: no one ever heard an *Ave Maria* or the like, they're only trying to jump in front of their colleagues on line for repentance. In truth, we thought that from then on we could manage for ourselves without God. The proof – we killed even on Sunday without ever noticing it. That's all'" (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 147).

Places of sanctuary are immediately connected to care and protection, serving as shelters for victims of war seeking comfort and relief – a 'safe h(e)aven' in this case[55]. Particularly because churches can be understood as sites of caring and also because they functioned as refuges during the ethnic massacres

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not all places and religious actors were committed to these goals. On the contrary, a huge amount of church leaders were involved in the genocide and many churches functioned as primary killing fields. See Longman, Timothy. *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009; Des Forges, Alison. *Leave none to tell the story*: Genocide in Rwanda. New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999; Gatwa, Tharcisse. *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900–1994*. Bletchley: Regnum Books, 2005; Spijker, Gerard van 't. The Churches and the Genocide in Rwanda, *Exchange* 26 (3), 1997, pp. 233–54.

[55] I am deliberately using a combination of 'safe haven' and 'Heaven' to illustrate a sacred/celestial place of refuge.

against Tutsis in the 1960s, it was expected that victims would be safe there. In 1994, that was not the case. Once a place of reclusion, worship and devotion, churches became the main site of slaughter during the genocide. According to the African Rights report[56], "more Rwandese citizens died in churches and parishes than anywhere else" (African Rights, 1995, p. 865). It was not uncommon to see churches being converted into slaughterhouses. As a perpetrator describes, churches were no longer a place of respect for God, but a target when searching for people to exterminate since victims search for them in despair.

> "ALPHONSE: '(…) they [victims] were waiting for death in the calm of the church. For us, it was *no longer important that we found ourselves in a house of God*. We yelled, we gave orders, we insulted, we sneered. We verified person by person, inspecting the faces, so as *to finish off everyone conscientiously*. If we had any doubt about a death agony, *we dragged the body outside to examine it in the light of heaven*'" (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 141, my emphasis).

Centre Christus is only one of many sites of massacres that took place all over the country. Within it, room 28 is where the materiality of this act rests[57]. A few days after my arrival, I experienced my first *umuganda*[58] – which occurs on the last Saturday of every month – when a woman of the staff was washing room 28. Remains of blood, holes of bullets and grenades recount vividly the genocide and were a significant part of this assemblage.

Room 28 was the first space of violence I encountered in Rwanda. A space emerging from the relations among vestiges, bodies, and environments (Waterton; Dittmer, 2014). A room invested with a spiritual aura before the genocide, and afterward converted into a killing site. When I asked a nun why the room was always empty and clean, she told me: "we need to clean in order to protect it from the heavy atmosphere of violence; nobody will ever occupy this room again, it is now only maintained as a remembrance" (Nun, 2011. Personal communication, Kigali, 23 July). Emptiness was exactly what I sensed when staring at the front

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[56] African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance*, revised edition. London: African Rights, 1995.

[57] 'To rest' here must be understood as 'to be located or be in a specified place'. Not to be confused with the state of being motionless, since I am advancing here the agentic capacities of materialities.

[58] Umuganda can be translated as "coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome" (RGB, 2017). It is part of the 'Governance and Home Grown Initiatives', which are programs and policies that take into account aspects of Rwandan culture and traditional practices to establish its development programs. Umuganda occurs every last Saturday of each month and is a mandatory community work for those between 18 and 65. The changes in practices of umuganda will be discussed in the next section of this chapter.

door – not only related to general objects of adornment but as a feeling. A fragment of something there was and no longer is, but also throbbed in a very peculiar vibration. It was like a pulsating latency with all the affective force of the absence's presence. Looking into the bloodstains on the walls and the grenade holes one can almost feel the aura of death and despair; it is not easy to put in words the presence of violence in such absence.

This place of memory was different, especially because it was not intended to be a site for remembrance, and due to its focus on absence instead of presence. There was nothing inside the room to characterize it according to its prior function – bed, mattress, or bed linen –, nor as a memorial site. There were no bones or plaques with the names of those killed during the genocide; there was only an empty room with vestiges of blood and grenades. The materialities, though present only in traces, entangling with a narrative of the killings affected my senses, evincing a discomfort each time I passed in front of the room. I saw the room opened only once, but future encounters were already immersed in this first one.

A sense of loss was immediately felt when I stared at the lady cleaning it. Observing how she meticulously washed the place, the water seemed to be sanctifying it again. The very act of cleaning in the day of *umuganda* was emblematic and the community work she was doing went far beyond ordinary cleaning, it was an act of purification. She was purifying and memorializing in solitude, but in the name of the community. With this image in my mind, I think I could capture the importance of *umuganda*.

Room 28 embodies the tensions between the *absence* of plaques, bones or any objects of adornment and the *presence* of the vestiges of what was once there; the *intimacy* of a room in a place of spiritual retreat and the *collective* character of the killings; the *sacred* atmosphere of a Jesuit center and the *profane* tone of the mass violence; the attempt to *erase* the violence of the past marking the room and the *maintenance* of it as a place of remembrance; the *material* remains of a violent event and the *sensorial* experience of reviving it.

Room 28 and its vibrant materiality contribute to broadening our concept of agency in considering performances of memory, since it used to be an ordinary place transformed into a killing site, with no plaques/signs or human bodies inside

it[59], producing memory beyond spaces traditionally designed for memorialization. Assembling new elements, room 28 is a dynamic space[60], calling attention to ambivalence and to the 'in the making' feature of memorialization, complicating dichotomies such as public/private; past/present; emotional/physical; exceptional/mundane. In this sense, we can say that room 28 is in a constant state of becoming, always entangling new elements co-producing it within its relations with one another (Waterton; Dittmer, 2014, p. 125). The place transforms itself through its entanglements (things, people, environment, narratives) and also transforms me while interacting with it. Neither room 28 nor myself (a human body) can be perceived as rigid entities, but "something that is remade, however minutely, by entering into assemblage" (Ibidem).

Although the killings and the vestiges of the event can be seen in room 28, the place is kept closed. Instead, to memorialize the victims of the genocide, a place was constructed in the back of Centre Christus, where people can pay their respects and mourn them. A small place with a purple plaque in the entrance was written: "Abazize génocide yo muri Mata 1994" – Victims of the genocide of April 1994.

Figure 1: Memorial to the victims of the genocide of 1994 – Centre Christus, Remera (photograph by author – August 2011).

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[59] Memorialization in Rwanda is deeply connected to the materiality of the human body.
[60] In the next chapter we will address the relation between space and place, calling attention to movements, interactions, and enactments in a process of becoming.

The place had no artificial light, only the sunlight illuminated a small monument made of concrete displaying the names of the seventeen victims killed at Centre Christus. Through the windows, we can see the small forest in the back and the open space of the spiritual retreat center in the front, with birds and cows wandering around. It was definitely a peaceful place, even though permeated by past violence.

Figure 2: Monument for the seventeen victims of the genocide at Centre Christus (photograph by author – August 2011).

I recall noticing that while the plaque in the entrance referred to the victims of the genocide of April 1994, another plaque in the monument mentioned specifically the victims of the genocide against the Tutsi in 1994. It was written in the monument: "A la memoire de nos frères et soeurs victims du genocide contre les Tutsi au Centre Christus, le 7 Avril 1994"[61]. This difference in naming is relevant since "the genocide against the Tutsi" can avoid the claim of a double genocide, in which both Hutu and Tutsi are alleged to have died in genocidal killings. Furthermore, the victims of Centre Christus were both Hutu and Tutsi,

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[61] "To the memory of our brothers and sisters victims of the genocide against the Tutsi at Centre Christus, April 7, 1994" (my translation).

but while the latter was killed due to their ethnicity, the former was killed due to their moderate political positions, advancing the ideal of reconciliation.

While some places keep their original function, still working as churches, spiritual retreat centers, convents, and schools; other places are enacted as memorial sites. This is highly dependent on the actants that are constantly doing a hard work to sustain them as memorial sites, as ordinary places or a combination thereof. The terms 'memorial sites' and 'memorial places' can be used interchangeably; however, especially because in Rwanda memorial sites usually refer to formal and national-level memorials, we will understand them as specific and physical locations purposely constructed or designed as national sites for memorialization. Conversely, memorial places are broadly understood and apart from museums, memorials, and monuments, they can encompass ordinary places such as churches, streets, schools, buildings that carry the remains of past memories.

Centre Christus is at the same time an ordinary place and a memorial place, since it still functions as a spiritual retreat center, with masses being celebrated regularly to the community, and also has a small memorial in the back to honor the dead. However, it is not a public, formal or national-level memorial, only the people frequenting the Centre are aware of its existence. In this sense, we will not call it a memorial site, but an informal/underprivileged place of memory that are neither granted national-level nor intentionally designed as a public memorial.

Whereas Centre Christus has a space to memorialize the victims (though not a public one), another religious place – that I visited in 2011 and where massacres happened during the genocide – lacked any initiative towards memorialization[62].

The *Monastere Notre-Dame de L'annonciation* is a Benedictine Monastery located in Sovu, Southern Province, close to Butare. We were already traveling for some time when we arrived in this monastery located in a small rural community. I remember seeing many cows, huts, children playing and a huge forest when we were coming close to the place.

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[62] Until the date I visited the place in July, 2011.

In this monastery and adjacent health center approximately 8,000 Tutsis were killed. On April 17 of 1994, the genocide was already escalating countrywide and many Tutsis tried to seek refuge in the convent (Des Forges, 1999, p. 411). The place was full of people: people of the staff, relatives of the staff, people who were living in the convent since the beginning of the genocide, and newcomer refugees. The Mother Superior of the Monastery, Sister Gertrude, divided them into groups and sent the new refugees to the health center, alleging she had to guarantee the normal functioning of the place. Fearing the convent would be attacked if the Tutsi remained, Sister Gertrude asked soldiers and militiamen for help to remove them (Ibidem).

The first major massacre occurred in the morning hours of April 22, in which civilians and militiamen with machetes, guns, clubs, and grenades attacked the refugees at the health center (Rettig, 2011, p. 196). In the afternoon, the militiamen sealed the doors of the garage with a barricade and burned alive the Tutsis, assisted by Sister Gertrude and novice Maria Kizito who provided the jerry cans of gasoline to ignited the flames (Rettig, 2011, p. 196; Edmonson, 2009, p. 65).

In the second phase of the massacre, the militias were searching for those Tutsi who had escaped the initial attempts. Sister Gertrude also helped in this phase forcing thirty Tutsis, mainly employees of the convent and their relatives, to leave the convent compound. They were subsequently killed (Rettig, 2011, p. 197). Sister Gertrude also wrote a letter to the burgomaster, on May 5, complaining she had asked the communal authorities to deal with this problem and there were still Tutsis inside the convent. She asked for his cooperation, which he gave in the afternoon of May 6. According to Des Forges,

> "Sister Gertrude reportedly ordered all sisters who were protecting displaced persons in the convent to put them out immediately. She talked of the need to protect the convent and she warned that she would force the departure of any who did not go of their own accord. That afternoon she went to get the burgomaster, who came in his own vehicle with communal police. The police forced the displaced persons to leave the convent, reportedly stealing from them in the process. Of those expelled, many were killed, either immediately or en route to their homes" (1999, p. 412).

Figure 3: Road to the Benedictine Monastery in Sovu; (photograph by author – July, 2011).

I arrived at the monastery in the evening of July 28th, 2011 coming from Murambi Genocide Memorial. We spent just one day at this site, but it was enough to have a glance on the vivid memories of the genocide. Despite being immersed in the literature of the genocide and having read several testimonies depicting churches as killing sites, I was not aware of the infamous case of the Benedictine nuns of Sovu at that time[63].

Reunited in a circle at the garden outside the convent building, our group shared thoughts, questions and stories we encountered that day – a usual practice since day one of the fieldwork in 2011. Normally, we did not describe the stories that had a great impact on us *in situ,* but sometimes we could not escape

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[63] For some news reporting the case of the Benedictine nuns of Sovu and their trial in Belgium, see, for example: Simons, Marlise. Mother Superior's Role in Rwanda Horror Is Weighed. The New York Times, June 6, 2001 (retrieved March 9, 2018 from: https://www.nytimes.com/2001/06/06/world/mother-superior-s-role-in-rwanda-horror-is-weighed.html); Castle, Stephens. Nuns convicted of mass slaughter in Rwandan convent. Independent, June 9, 2001 (retrieved March 9, 2018 from: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/nuns-convicted-of-mass-slaughter-in-rwandan-convent-9227307.html); Osborn, Andrew. Belgium puts nuns in dock for Rwanda genocide. The Guardian, April 17, 2001 (retrieved March 9, 2018 from: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/apr/17/warcrimes); Haworth, David. Nuns jailed for aiding massacre of 7,000 Tutsis. The Telegraph, June 9, 2001 (retrieved March 9, 2018 from: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1311884/Nuns-jailed-for-aiding-massacre-of-7000-Tutsis.html).

discussing our impressions exactly where the atrocities happened. The Benedictine Monastery in Sovu was not exactly an exception as we already had similar experiences in other locations, but it was the most difficult place to do it since the nuns were passing by while we were talking.

Erik, the leader of our group, explained to us what happened during the genocide alternating with some interventions based on his play "Maria Kizito". We gathered close to a pile of wood collected to fire the oven in the kitchen where some nuns were preparing our meal. I recall seeing the wooden oven cooking bread while I was passing to sit for dinner. It was heavy to eat after hearing the stories that two nuns of that monastery provided jerry cans of gasoline to burn the Tutsi seeking for a safe place to hide.

During dinner, my thoughts were away from the conversations of the group, I kept thinking about the gasoline provided by the nuns. Some of them were serving our food while I looked them in their eyes, unsuccessfully trying to discover if they were involved in some way – as victims, as perpetrators, maybe both. I kept thinking about the logistics and the dynamics of separating people to then lock them and put fire on human bodies. It was a difficult night. My partner and I could not sleep, so we spent some time whispering our impressions to one another in order to avoid being listened by the nuns. We were tired from the hectic journey, but I was also agitated with all that information on jerry cans of gasoline. Looking outside, through the window, I tried to put myself in the nuns' place, searching for a 'good reason' why they would help killing their fellow Christians. There were so many different ones that I just abstained myself from that moral question – I think I was already too immersed into the logic of the genocide.

Early in the next morning, I woke up with the singing of the nuns. It was supposed to be something celestial or divine, yet it was a little macabre and I felt very disturbed since I was aware that the nuns continued the regular activities of praying and singing even during all the atrocities happening in the monastery.

After having breakfast, we gathered in a circle to discuss "Murambi: the book of bones" with the author, a Senegalese novelist called Boubacar Boris Diop. Interestingly, both the play 'Maria Kizito'[64] written by Erik Ehn and the novel 'Murambi' presents contradictions in memorializing the past. Even though

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[64] See Edmonson, 2009 for a more detailed analysis considering the aesthetic features of the play.

they are not addressing the role of memory directly, both present the main character confronted by the impossibility of either/or logic concerning the roles of victim/perpetrator in post-genocide relations. In the play 'Maria Kizito', the objects gain a blurred feature, transforming milk into blood, bread into pieces igniting a fire with gasoline in a disturbing combination of ordinary and grotesque. As Edmonson (2009) highlights, "violence infiltrates and ultimately distorts these ordinary objects, causing the everyday and the extreme to blur and overlap as the act of mass murder becomes routine" (p. 69). Kizito traverses many roles at the same time as a bystander, a murderer, and a survivor, complicating clear-cut categories. She can be perceived as a person who stood by doing nothing to impede genocidal killings; she can be featured as a perpetrator of genocide who helped to kill Tutsis providing the jerry cans of gasoline; she can also be considered a survivor who did everything she did in order to survive. She definitely inhabits an in-between space, always in friction, always becoming something else. And yet, recognizing this in-betweenness does not empties or disregards her responsibility/guilty, but emphasizes the impossibility of setting her into a fixed category of perpetrator or victim, addressing the multisensual encounters with materialities flirting with the unexpected.

In Diop's book, Cornelius, a Rwandan teacher coming back from exile and aiming to write a play about the genocide, was soon affected by the discovery his father was involved in the killings in Murambi. Entangling a multiplicity of narrative voices, the book entangles victims, perpetrators, witnesses and bystanders' stories of genocidal atrocities in a way that demands the reader to critically reflect on definitive and unambiguous accounts of what is the truth about genocide, who is to blame, or why exactly these atrocities happened. In this perspective, the reader can engage creatively with history and imagination, opening up the possibility of connecting to the dynamics of genocide as lived experience. As pointed out in the introduction, writing fiction/novels is a promising political practice, since it opens new possibilities not even considered or regarded as too dangerous in the context of post-genocide collectives.

I find both performances and novels as great alternatives to explore multisensual encounters, focusing on the unsettled, the potential, the experimental. In combining imagination, myths, history and memory, *Maria Kizito* and *Murambi* appeal to the senses and emotions in a creative engagement

that made us reflect on other possible configurations. It is flirting with this appeal to the senses that I explored memorial places, describing my visceral and sensuous encounters with semiotic-materialities in post-genocide Rwanda. Thus, I suggest, following Adey (2008) and Waterton and Dittmer (2014), to pay closer attention to the ways in which memorial places – "their buildings, settings and internal fixtures, along with the interpretative tools they employ – provoke a range of experiential and affective potentialities that afford, in turn, all kinds of movements and feelings" (p. 127).

3.3 Machetes: ritualizing everyday objects in an a/effective killing assemblage

The first time I saw a man with a radio on his arm and a machete in hand beside me, I was shocked and paralyzed. I was already aware of the genocide dynamics in Rwanda, and all the testimonies of survivors came into my mind; I felt afraid. My first response to that encounter was to feel threatened, only afterward I realized the anachronism in my application of a past configuration to something happening in the present. I was not there at the time of the genocide, but the image of a person holding a machete haunted and affected me profoundly.

The machete is embedded in meaning and affect, so it helps to shape a variety of identities and memories – individual, collective, and political (Munteán; Plate; Smelik, 2017, p. 7). Through sensuous experiences with materiality we can almost 'feel the past', highlighting how those materialities can help to form, transform and deform memory. The affective aura of materiality in memory enactments calls attention to the necessity of blurring old divides such as natural/cultural, inanimate/animate, and passive/active, arguing for an approach that could recognize the political effects and the role of affect and emotions in memorialization practices.

Figure 4: Rwandan peasants carrying agricultural tools (photograph by author – July 2011).

Portraits of the genocide in Rwanda commonly display images of extreme physical violence – machete wounds and scars, eviscerated bodies, piles of skulls, and mass graves. Approximately 800,000 corpses in 100 days[65] in what was possibly the fastest genocide in history. As Barnett emphasized, "the Rwandan genocide (…) has the macabre distinction of exceeding the rate of killing attained during the Holocaust" (2002, p. 1)[66]. There were no gas chambers, or heavy automatic machinery that could kill many at a single time. Instead, a few firearms and improvised weapons – nail-studded clubs[67], hoes, spears, and machetes – guaranteed the efficiency of the killings. Quick deaths were uncommon; cruelty, technique and severe violence were ordinarily incorporated in the killings and shaped by images, myths and metaphors in particular ways according to the victim's background [68].

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[65] UN estimates. „Statistics", SURF Survivors Fund. Available at: http://survivors-fund.org.uk/resources/rwandan-history/statistics/ [accessed April 18, 2017].

[66] According to Barnett, 333⅓ deaths per hour, 5½ deaths per minute (2002, p. 1).

[67] The perpetrator used to nickname the club as *Ntampongano y'umwanzi*, meaning "no pity for our enemies (Nishimwe, 2012, p. 36). Tested to the Limit: A Genocide Survivor's Story of Pain, Resilience and Hope.

[68] The entanglement of these different forms of violence and the everyday life of the collective will be addressed later in this section. For more details see Taylor, Christopher C. 2002. "The Cultural Face of Terror in the Rwandan Genocide." Pp.137-178 in Alexander Laban Hinton

Despite massive literature on the genocide in Rwanda, little has been written[69] on this everyday object and weapon[70] of murder – the machete. Not originally a weapon, this object was a tool used in agricultural work. According to the 1984 National Agricultural Household Survey, 83% of rural households owned one or more machetes at the time of this survey (Verwimp, 2006, p. 7). In this sense, 'barbaric tribes' or 'ancient hatred between savages' in no way explains the use of machetes as a weapon, rather, availability of this device, technique to manage the material, and human use of it make it possible.

Given the high cost of firearms and the availability of these tools, the military authorities exploited the dense administrative hierarchies to guarantee massive participation in the killings and proposed a civilian self-defense programme. The authorities offered incentives to the participants and instructed civilians to use machetes, spears and other tools to help with this task (Des Forges, 1999, p. 10-11).

Former administrative practices – like *umuganda[71]* and security patrols – were transformed into mechanisms for eliminating 'the enemy' (Des Forges, 1999, p. 8). The historical roots of umuganda come from a Rwandese configuration of the collective, in which voluntary communal labor was adopted to accomplish a goal or solve a problem, emphasizing values of social responsibility and collective assistance (Uwimbabazi, 2012, p. 2-3). The practice of *umuganda* changed according to the political background. In the pre-colonial era, the communal labor was voluntary and for socio-economic mutual benefits. But, it became a labor for the benefit of the colonial administration in the early 1900's (Midgley et al, 1986, p. 17). Dominated by political interests, the well-being of the collective was undermined in the post-colonial government when *umuganda* became compulsory in 1974, leading to more control and exploitation by those in power (Pottier, 2006, p. 513). During the genocide, *umuganda* became

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(Ed.), Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

[69] A few exceptions on this topic are Meijer & Verwimp, 2005; Verwimp, 2006.

[70] We are articulating a specific translation of the machete from an agricultural tool to a weapon of genocide. But this could also apply to all the tools used during the genocide that are not small arms or light weapons (SALW). These weapons could include: machetes, clubs, hoes, hacks, spears, stones, hammers; but are not restricted to it.

[71] Umuganda can be translated as "coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome" (RGB, 2017). For more on the practice of umuganda, see Penine Uwimbabazi "An Analysis of Umuganda: the Policy and Practice of Community Work in Rwanda".

a metaphor for a communal work to expurgate the Tutsi targeted as enemies from Rwanda, losing the former value of social mutual benefit and togetherness.

Even metaphors of violence were included in the tactics for the slaughter. A new vocabulary emerged as a daily practice to refer in codes to the killings, and ordinary objects acquired new functions. Among those, the machete was the elected to play that role. Familiarity with the blade, weight and movement made it easier for farmers to accomplish their work. "For us, the machete was what we knew how to use and sharpen. Also, for the authorities, it was less expensive than guns. Therefore, we learned to do the job with the basic instrument we had" (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 38). Fulgence's testimony, a genocide perpetrator, highlights how a massive popular participation was facilitated due to the widespread use of agricultural tools.

During the genocide, the killings were often referred as *akazi kacu* (our work) and required the *ibikoresho* (tools) to play this task. Tutsis were called 'tall trees' in a clear reference to the stereotype of their height. 'Cut down the weeds', 'clean the bush' (*gutema ibihuru*) and 'go to work' (*gukora*) were metaphors to wipe out the Tutsi and to finish the work started in the revolution of 1959[72] (Taylor, 1999, p. 140-142; Mafeza, 2016, p. 124). This dynamic of work was ritualized in hectic machete movements, enacting an everyday tool as a weapon and image of the genocide in Rwanda.

Historical processes were enacted by myths, narratives and symbolisms to the point of being impossible to detach them from each other; they are inextricably entangled, so the impossibility to clearly separate an event from its inner myths, narratives and symbolisms[73]; or history from imagination. The Revolution of 1959 was no exception with references to the royal sacred drum (*kalinga*)[74], cattle breeding, milk drinking, Hamitism[75], arrogance, malice and

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[72] The revolution of 59 or *muyaga* – which means 'a strong but variable wind with unpredictable destructive guts' (Prunier, 1997, p. 41) began with a series of attacks to Tutsi houses in protest after the alleged murder of the Hutu sub-chief of the Party of the Movement and of Hutu Emancipation (PARMEHUTU) by Tutsi activists from the Rwandese National Union (UNAR) (Prunier, 1997, p. 48). It was a period of transition from Belgium colonial power with a Tutsi king to a republic dominated by Hutu, with a lot of political parties following ethnic lines, culminating in extreme ethnical violence.

[73] See Alves (2011) to a more detailed description of those myths, narratives and symbolisms and their role in legitimizing the extermination of the Tutsi in Rwanda.

[74] A symbol of the Tutsi monarchy, the *kalinga* occupied a central political position. It was common to attach the genitals of the Tutsi enemies to the *kalinga* to emphasize the victory and superiority over them (Adenkule, 2007, p. 136). Negative references to the royal drum were

beauty of the Tutsi – all of those were connected to alleged characteristics that every Tutsi possessed, so referring to those symbols were common in practices of ethnic violence during massacres. Cows, milk, drums, and supposedly Tutsi physical traits were then the materiality of an enemy that must have been killed for the sake of the collective.

Adalbert and Jean-Baptiste, perpetrators interviewed by the journalist Jean Hatzfeld, described how those metaphors were habitual in everyday relationships, helping to perpetuate distrust and opposition.

> "ADALBERT: 'Basically, Hutus and Tutsis had been playing dirty tricks on one another since 1959. That was the word from our elders. In the evenings, Primus [beer] in hand, *they called the Tutsis weaklings, too high and mighty*. So Hutu children grew up asking no questions, listening hard to all this nastiness about Tutsis. *After 1959 the oldsters jabbered in the cabarets about eliminating all the Tutsis and their herds of trampling cows*. (…) All through his youth, a Hutu could certainly choose a Tutsi friend, hang out and drink with him, *but he could never trust him*. For a Hutu, *a Tutsi might always be a deceiver*. He would act nice and seem obliging, but *underneath he was constantly scheming*. He had to be *a natural target of suspicion*'.
> JEAN-BAPTISTE: 'Hutus have always *reproached Tutsis for their great height and for trying to use this to rule*. Time has never dried up that bitterness. In Nyamata, (…) people said that *Tutsi women seemed too slender to stay in our hills*, *that their skin was smooth from their secret drinking of milk, that their fingers were too delicate to grab a hoe* (…). They [Hutus] would also murmur that a Hutu with a Tutsi wife, like me, was trying to show off. They took pleasure in spreading the most unlikely rubbish so as to drive a thin wedge of discord between the two ethnic groups. The important thing was *to keep a distance between them and try to aggravate the situation*. For example, on the first day of school the teacher had to call out the background of every pupil, so that the Tutsis would feel timid about taking their seats in a class of Hutus'"(Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 216-217, my emphasis).

Based on colonial cultural mythology, new symbols and metaphors substituted the traditional ones not destroying them, but strengthening by adding the dynamics of modernity (Prunier, 1995, p. 40). In this sense, a retrieving of former associations in a network embedded in new entanglements generated a new network due to translational displacements, enabling the conversion of human beings into nature.

During the genocide, Tutsis were usually depicted as plants – trees, weeds, and bad seeds –, or as animals – snakes (*inzoka*), cockroaches (*inyenzi*) –, dehumanized and converted into 'mere elements of nature'. With this movement it

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constant during the Revolution of 59 and during the genocide in 94 to argue against the possibility of a return of the Tutsi monarchy.

[75] I am referring here to the Hamitic myth, in which the Tutsis were coined as a superior race, descendants of the biblical king David, and therefore distinct from the Hutu negroids. This myth will be explored in greater detail in chapter 5.

was possible to normalize genocidal violence, turning human beings into nature and domesticating execution as everyday work. There was no exceptionality, quite the opposite – ordinary tools propitiated everyday practices of elimination in what was coined a community work.

Being used to the machete on daily basis and mastering the technique was an advantage and facilitated the introduction in this new activity, as Élie highlights:

> "ÉLIE: 'The club is more crushing, but the machete is more natural. The Rwandan is accustomed to the machete from childhood. Grab a machete – that is what we do every morning. We cut sorghum, we prune banana trees, we hack out vines, we kill chickens. Even women and little girls borrow the machete for small tasks, like chopping firewood. Whatever the job, the same gestures always come smoothly to our hands. The blade, when you use it to cut branch, animal, or man, it has nothing to say. In the end, a man is like an animal: you give him a whack on the head or the neck, and down he goes. In the first days someone who had already slaughtered chickens – and specially goats – had an advantage, understandably. Later, everybody grew accustomed to the new activity, and the laggards caught up'" (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 37).

To become a ritual, the practice requires apprenticeship and repetition. In the beginning, the authorities – usually soldiers from the Forces Armées Rwandaises (FAR) [76] and *Interahamwe* [77] – guided the first steps, providing training and guidance on how to kill with a machete, but later the perpetrators developed their own methods according to their backgrounds (Hatzfeld, 2005, p. 36). The 'work' routine usually started at 10 am and ended at 3 pm, so that they

[76] Rwandese armed forces of the Habyarimana and Interim governments until the collapse of the government and the end of the genocide when the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a rebel army formed from exiled Rwandese Tutsis, took control of the country. During the civil war and the negotiations of the Arusha Accords (a peace agreement between the FAR and the RPF) in 1993, the FAR received French training assistance and, possibly without realizing it, trained the MRND and CDR militiamen – Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi (Prunier, 1997, p. 165). See Des Forges, 1999; Prunier, 1997; Melvern, 2004 for more on the French role on genocide. The Interim government was created in the beginning of the genocide after the assassination of the President Juvenal Habyarimana on April, 6 of 1994 and of the Prime Minister Madame Agathe Uwilingiyimana on April, 7 of 1994. Jean Kambanda was the Prime Minister of the Interim government until the end of the genocide.

[77] Usually translated as 'those who work together' or 'those who attack together', it was a militia formed originally by the youth wing of the MRND party, then expanding to any civilians killing Tutsis. According to Prunier (1997, p. 401-402), "it was the first civilian militia, officially created for tasks of social interest having to do with *umuganda*. They started to take part in killings as early as 1992 and were later the main perpetrators of the genocide". There was another smaller, but still prominent civilian militia called *Impuzamugambi*, translated as 'those who have the same goal', which was aligned with CDR party. Both Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi shared the same main goal and worked together to eliminate the Tutsi. They were formed by the impoverished youth with little formal education, who saw this as an opportunity to work for the nation, combining ethnic pride, prestige and a sense of belonging. See Des Forges, 1999; Melvern, 2006.

had time for pillaging (p. 62). More than a mere euphemism, the carefully chosen words offered a combination of cooperation and civic duty to the unemployed masses. As Prunier highlighted, "(…) their name [Interahamwe] is a reminder both of the virtuous vocabulary of cooperative *umuganda* and in a more nasty way of the slogan of the 1959 massacres, '*Tugire gukora akazi'*, 'Let us go and do the work' (1997, p. 402).

The machete, being more natural, accelerated the 'work of extracting the bad seeds from the earth'. A work that was initiated in the past with the revolution of 1959 and perpetuated with the aid of another crucial element in this assemblage: genocidal propaganda, inciting the Hutu masses to use machetes to eliminate the Tutsi. Fake, fictional and exaggerated news, compelling radio broadcasts, influent journalists, lists of names to be executed, and popular music were all elements working to inflame ordinary civilians to kill their compatriots in a systematic manner.

Concerning radio broadcasting, two major radio stations contributed to genocidal propaganda: Radio Rwanda, the official radio station of the government that was closed under the Arusha accords barring the dissemination of hate propaganda; and Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), a private radio station established by extremists surrounding Habyarimana to substitute Radio Rwanda with a more popular appeal. An extremist newspaper, *Kangura*, literally meaning to 'wake others up', also supported the genocidal propaganda. It was established in May of 1990, sponsored by RTLM party and edited by Hassan Ngeze. The newspaper is widely known for its extremist bias against Tutsi and sensationalist news and articles calling to ethnic hatred.

On the cover of the December 1991 issue of Kangura, below the ironic title "Tutsi, Race of God", a picture of former president Grégoire Kayibanda, the first hutu leader after the independence, and a machete was shown with the question: "What weapons can we use to defeat the *Inyenzi* once and for all?" The final question asks "What if someone brought back the Hutu Revolution of 1959 to finish off these Tutsi cockroaches?" (Des Forges, 1999, p. 62).

Figure 5: Issue 26 of Kangura Newspaper[78].

Both Kangura and RTLM portrayed all the 'progress' achieved with the revolution of 59 as being under threat from the RPF and Tutsis in general. Thus, they were relying on specific memories of a past as an ideal to be secured, condensing past and present and "calling on Rwandans to re-enact the do-or-die moment of 1959" (Thompson, 2007, p. 94). In constantly enacting their entanglements, a specific network can hold the patterns of links stable, preventing the network from dissolving, and then it can be transported and transformed enacting a new network, which can be now used for other purposes.

The oppressed farmers developed methods to manage covering all Tutsi population, not even children were to be spared. A sense of togetherness and friendship between perpetrators arose; they liked being in their gang (Hatzfeld,

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[78] Issue 26 of Kangura Newspaper available at: https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/9315/iwacu_pub_kangura_no26.pdf [accessed April 8, 2018].

2005). This mentality of togetherness was guaranteed by killing, pillaging, drinking and singing with each other during and after the marshes, and essential to transform *umuganda* in a social obligation for all 'true Rwandans' (Bonnier et al, 2015, p. 7).

The sense of doing a work for the sake of the majority (*rubanda nyamwinshi*) was precisely what Kangura and RTLM tried to emphasize inflaming the Hutu masses to solve, once and for all, the problem of the Tutsi threat. For this, they rely on invocations of work combining existing appeals to development and democracy with communal labor as a strategy of national survival (Thompson, 2007, p. 96). Intense and violent opposition by various political parties preceded the genocide – not only along ethnic lines but also within them[79] –, so it was necessary to co-opt the opposition and promote Hutu ethnic solidarity.

It was to this Hutu solidarity that RTLM was referring to when the radio station played the songs of Simon Bikindi[80], one of the most popular musicians in Rwanda. Considering Rwandan oral tradition and the development of a recollection of historical events, traditions, laws, and proverbs by memory, oral literature was (and still is, though in a smaller degree) a vital part of Rwandan culture[81]. Poems, myths, proverbs, folk stories, songs were all elements connecting history, memory and identity from pre-colonial times until today (Adekunle, 2007). In this sense, music was a way to bring back history and reaffirm an identity and, consequently, a very effective mechanism of mass persuasion, playing a huge role in inciting the population to eliminate the Tutsi.

Bikindi was known for its use of powerful lyrics, folk stories and proverbs combined with catchy melodies. Mingling past and present through the use of these cultural elements, Bikindi songs were highly confrontational of the monarchy and preached the independence. A relevant detail here is that the monarchy was dominated by Tutsis under the Belgium colonial rule and, after the

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[79] Particularly the case of the extremist Hutu party CDR with other parties, like PSD (Parti Social Démocrate) accusing some members of being an *ibyitso* – an accomplice of the Tutsi. For the specifics of the event see Prunier, 1997, p. 162.

[80] Although Bikindi's guilty and trial were permeated by controversies concerning his intentions to incite the Hutu masses to kill the Tutsis, it was a clear intention of RTLM to use his songs with this goal. Simon Bikindi was convicted of incitement to genocide on December, 2 of 2008 and sentenced to 15 years imprisonment by the ICTR. See McCoy, 2013 for more details on the controversies regarding Bikindi's songs and intentions.

[81] See Adekunle, 2007, chapter 3 for a more detailed account on Rwanda oral traditions.

independence, replaced by a republic dominated by Hutus. According to Jason McCoy, Bikindi's lyrics could be interpreted in multiple ways due to the allusions, metaphors, proverbs, and parables (2013, p. 9). The author then highlights that (…) while one could infer from the songs a noble message, many listeners instead heard a narrative that implicated all Tutsi as devious, foreign invaders while championing the majority Hutu as the good, native defenders of their homeland" (McCoy, 2013, p. 10). Precisely because there is no aprioristic agency of an entity acting alone, we need to follow all the actants composing such assemblage of Bikindi's popular music to describe how it can be considered as playing a role in the genocide, which will depend on the process of translation.

Especially the song *Intabaza* (the alert), commonly known as *Bene Sebahinzi* (the descendants of the father of farmers), urged the Hutu to be aware, vigilant and to find a solution to restore peace in Rwanda, stressing the benefits of the 1959 revolution that should be carefully maintained, so that it never returns to Rwanda for the sake of the great majority (*rubanda nyamwinshi*). *Intabaza* describes an apocalyptic situation, in which help is needed from the *muhinzi* (farmer) to rescue the *abagesha*[82] (those who harvest with a knife) (Mbonimana; Karangwa, expert report prepared for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), case ICTR-2001-72T, 2006). As Mbonimana and Karangwa (2006) explain,

> "The situation is catastrophic, and the account begins with nightmares of scarcity and calamity being visited upon Rwanda. One of the signs is that '…the cocks are no longer crowing and the hens are no longer laying eggs'. In addition to the natural disasters, Kalinga, the royal drum, the emblem of the monarchy is restored, decorated as usual with Hutu genital organs. Everywhere, parents are weeping, while the children are unclaimed wandering orphans. Spears will be used to kill, and in all regions ill-feeling has crept over the descendants of the Father of the farmers (the Hutu) who are tearing one another to pieces" (Mbonimana; Karangwa, expert report prepared for ICTR, case ICTR-2001-72T, p.17).

As stated in the expert report prepared for the ICTR concerning the role of the songs of Simon Bikindi during the genocide, "(…) song is a mirror in which present and future generations find the picture of the society described, revealing its political, economic or social realities, or simply all three at once"

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[82] Bikindi invented this term from the verb *kugesa,* to harvest with a knife (Mbonimana; Karangwa, expert report prepared for ICTR, case ICTR-2001-72T, p. 18).

(Mbonimana; Karangwa, expert report prepared for ICTR, case ICTR-2001-72T, p. 6-7). In this sense, music was enacted as an important actant that, along with other entities, generated political effects.

In *Twasazareye* (we bade farewell), Bikindi retrieves former patron-client relations through *ubuhake* and *ubureetwa* – while the first consisted in the cattle loan of the patron to his client in exchange for services, the latter is a type of servitude relationship for land occupation, but both were practices adopted during the colonial period and generally perceived as a coercive relationship, servitude regime or forced labor by Hutus[83] – and merits the Revolution of 59 for ending these harsh conditions of monarchy and colonialism (McCoy, 2013, p. 178), encouraging the young generation to be grateful for those heroes who fought against it, specifically mentioning Mbonyumutwa, Kayibanda, and Habyarimana[84].

Akabyutso (the awakening), commonly known as *Nanga Abahutu* (I despise Hutu), criticizes the Hutu, especially the younger generation, who are arrogant, selfish and disrespectful, renouncing their identity as Hutu (McCoy, 2013, p. 187). Possibly referring to partisan violence between Hutu in the months prior to the genocide, Bikindi could have been subtly implying to unite and combat the Tutsi instead of waging a war against one another.

In describing the lyrics of some songs and its appeals to past memories entangled with folk stories, myths and proverbs, we are not seeking to judge Bikindi's intention to incite genocidal violence; rather, we want to describe, as far as we can, all the elements composing this mnemonic assemblage, in which music was a relevant part, and show the cultural/material inextricability. As a daily activity, music was everywhere in Rwanda, in both private and public spaces (Adekunle, 2007, p. 134), therefore, it is a common way of expression and entertainment. For this reason, it was a significant component of collective mobilization during the genocide, making references to past elements, like forced labor and suffering under the Tutsi monarchy, and projecting it into the future in the case of a RPF winning. Music then combines discourse, materiality,

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[83] For more details on these (and other) patron-client relations, see Newbury, 1988; Mamdani, 2001; Alves, 2011.

[84] Dominique Mbonyumutwa was officially the first president of Rwanda following the abolition of monarchy in 1961. He was succeeded by Grégoire Kayibanda, the first elected president of the republic. Juvenal Habyarimana overthrew Kayibanda in a military coup in 1973. All of them were Hutu.

technology, affect and emotions. There are many human and non-human elements intermingling – instruments crafted with materials, human performance, machines and technology that can amplify the sound, enzymes producing feelings – in a material-semiotic congregation of entities.

In this ritual of purification, everyday tools, myths, metaphors, songs were more than only elements to torture and kill the Tutsi, they were part of a specific Rwandan cosmology. Indeed, the methods of torture and killings were inextricably enacting an analogy of the individual body with the body of the collective. As Christopher Taylor addresses in *Sacrifice as Terror*, techniques of cruelty – like impalement, evisceration of pregnant women, forced incest, forced cannibalism of family members, breast oblation of women, killing victims at roadblocks, and throwing them into rivers – were entangled with social and natural life and, particularly, with bodily fluids and flows[85] (Taylor, 1999, 99-149).

Shifting to an almost molecular scale, the ab/normality of bodily fluids of an individual was seen as corresponding to its community health or sickness. If blood, breast milk, semen or menstrual blood were not flowing regularly, it meant not only physiological but also social illness. In this regard, the methods of torture and violence employed during the genocide showed a preoccupation with the "movement of persons and substances and with the canals, arteries, and conduits along which persons and substances flow: rivers, roadways, pathways, and even the conduits of the human body such as the reproductive and digestive systems"(Taylor, 2015, p. 10-11). By erecting barriers and roadblocks, the perpetrators blocked the path (*guziba inzira*[86]) and controlled the flows, disrupting its normality. According to Taylor, "barriers were ritual and liminal spaces where 'obstructing beings' were to be obstructed in their turn and cast out of the nation (1999, p. 131).

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[85] Although we cannot claim that all Rwandan citizen share this perspective, especially because medicine in Rwanda is highly pluralistic, the presence of metaphors and symbolic associations of bodily fluids and flows in collective enactments were constant, therefore, many people can share this view. Taylor (2015, p. 3) also emphasizes that these symbolisms were not conscious and explicit, but covert. Notwithstanding, we should point out that these analogies are less common nowadays than they were in the past, particularly in monarchical times.

[86] While the noun *isibo*, which derives from the verb *gusiba*, means a flow, centering on the idea of living beings in movement; the verb *gusiba* means to obstruct, erase, or eliminate, centering on the idea of blockage. *Gusiba inzira* literally means 'to block the path' in Kinyarwanda (Taylor, 1999, p.125).

Rivers were a way to use the flow to 'excrete' the Tutsi, sending them back to their supposed land of origin. Rivers then played an important role to restore and purify, to sanitize the nation. Nyabarongo was the main river where Tutsis were thrown after being cut by machetes, particularly because it flows towards Lake Victoria, the source of the Nile River[87]. By the same token, pit latrines were also used to discard the body of Tutsis dead or alive.

Violent practices that manifested a concern with reproduction were also frequent, especially the body parts responsible for producing the fertility fluids (Taylor, 1999, p. 140). Mutilation of the penis and breasts with machetes, impalement of Tutsi men from the anus to the head and women from the vagina to the head, and rape of Tutsi women[88] were methods constantly used to avoid the reproduction of the Tutsi (Taylor, 1999, p. 137; Malkki, 1995, p. 90; Alves, 2011). Many pregnant women were mutilated in the womb to forcibly remove the fetus and coerced to ingest them (Malkki, 1995, p. 91; Bernadette, 2011[89]); others were obliged to take part in incestuous practices (Taylor, 1999, p. 141).

For being conducted outside marital bonds and for non-procreative purposes, rape and other forms of sexual violence are seen as immoral by Rwandan society, further marginalizing the victim of such practices. Usually, the perpetrators conducted such acts in front of relatives, friends, and neighbors in order to destroy the victim's bond to the community. 'Unconventional' methods were used during sexual violence, especially the use of sharp objects on the genitals. As Nowrojee (2005) emphasizes,

> "Women were not just raped behind closed doors, they were raped on the streets, at checkpoints, in cultivated plots, in or near government offices, hospitals, churches and other public buildings. They were raped to death using sharp sticks or other objects. Their dead bodies were often left naked and spread-eagled, with nearby pools of blood and semen, in public view" (p. 2).

Although addressing particularly cases of rape against Tutsi women, the above passage shows how everyday objects and spaces, bodily parts and fluids

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[87] As Tutsis were perceived as descendants from a Nilotic tribe according to the Hamitic myth, it was not uncommon to throw their bodies into Nyabarongo River to 'send them back home'. The flow of this river will be described in the last chapter of this dissertation.
[88] See Alves, 2011 to a more detailed account on rape of Tutsi women during the genocide of 1994.
[89] Personal communication, August 2011.

entangled with each other to expose the sickness of the collective. In this sense, the *exceptional* violence of the genocide was in accordance with an *ordinary* logic of conceptualizing these as 'obstructing beings' and, therefore, purging them from the body (politic), dehumanizing and transforming those bodies into icons of asociality (Taylor, 1999, p. 101; 111; 141).

Due to the extreme cruelty of genocidal violence, where killings and mutilations occurred mainly through machetes, survivors have to live – even 24 years after the genocide – with indelible scars, not only physical[90] but also psychological. Most frequently endorsed somatic symptoms include headache; hiccups; genital, back, or abdominal pain; hearing loss; and loss of speech (Munyandamutsa et al, 2012, p. 1758); while the psychological symptoms usually involve recurring vivid memories or nightmares; outbursts of anger; feeling of numbness; and depression (Neugebauer et al, 2009). These symptoms are closely related to posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, the most common disorder addressed by survivors is *ihahamuka*[91], in which the key symptom is shortness of breath.

According to Hagengimana, many survivors complained of airway-passage *blockage* – a sensation of a lump in the throat, feelings of choking and shortness of breath – and it can also be accompanied by other symptoms, like palpitations, nausea, or dizziness (Hagengimana; Hinton, 2009, p. 210). As already pointed out, the regularity of the flows had an important resonance with the life of Rwandan community during the genocide, orienting the methods of torture and killing used. After the genocide, *ihahamuka* is the expression of distress that closely relates to a blockage of the flow.

The traumatized body interrupts the regularity of breath's flow in a state of fear that is closely related to past memories – individual or collective –, which can result in a new trauma. As Hagengimana and Hinton underline,

(…) shortness of breath may be brought about by the memory of any event marked by blockage, such as passing through one of the innumerable roadblocks where so much killing occurred (Taylor 1999:130), or being encircled and entrapped – with thousands of others in close, asphyxiating proximity – at churches and other governmental buildings, then attacked. Conversely, thinking about these traumas in blockage imagery may bring

[90] I provide a more detailed analysis of physical scars and its relation to collective memory in the next chapter.
[91] *Ihahamuka* can be translated as 'without lungs' and can be characterized as the shortness of breath by fear.

about shortness of breath (Hagengimana; Hinton, 2009, p. 212).

Ihahamuka presents then an entanglement of affect, sensations, emotions, and the cultural correlation of flow regularity with health.

Words, matter, things, (human) bodies, sensations are all actants in this material-semiotic assemblage, showing how an ordinary tool was converted into a weapon during the genocide and the way it still impacts on practices of remembrance, not only individually but collectively. An interview conducted at Ineza[92] in 2011 with Bernadette[93] – a survivor of the genocide – reveals the way this ordinary tool still stirs past memories.

> "F: Do you know any former perpetrator? Can you say if he/she is committed with the general goal of reconciliation?
> B: Yes, I know some of them. They are being released and many others are speaking in the *gacacas* about what happened, how and when they killed our families. It has been difficult to live side by side with them. (…) Some ask for forgiveness, others just pretend they didn't do anything. There are people who do this with their hearts, they were truly possessed by an evil spirit when committing such atrocities, but others just ask for pardon because this will probably diminish their penalty[94]…I mean if they show remorse and act like fostering reconciliation, you know? *We can never know if this person can catch his panga[95] again and finish what they started in 94. I remember seeing so many young boys blowing their whistles with their machete in hands, dancing and singing together like it*

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[92] *Ineza* in Kinyarwanda means 'to do something good' or 'something beautiful and good'. Ineza cooperative was created in 2004 (officially established in 2006) as an organization submitted to the American NGO We-Actx (Women's Equity in Access to Care and Treatment) to help women with problems related to the genocide – the main one being to provide HIV/AIDS treatment for survivors. Initially, they raised money from donations, however, as the income was very inconstant, they invested in sewing materials so they could make handbags, wallets, cloth dolls and sell the products to the population, raising funds for the program and providing not only medical care, but also economic and social empowerment. The cooperative also serves as a space for continued emotional healing from the trauma of mass murder and rape, physical injuries, loss of family members, and domestic violence. By providing both emotional support and a means of financial independence, Ineza combines a model of grassroots economic development that produces quality of life gains on both a material and psychological level. Ineza website: https://inezacooperative.wordpress.com/

[93] Fictitious name.

[94] She was referring to the Gacaca courts when perpetrators could receive lower sentences if the person was repentant, confessed their crimes and asked for forgiveness in front of their community. Gacaca was a mechanism of transitional justice adopted by the government to deal with the vast number of perpetrators that were awaiting trial after the genocide. Gacaca was then developed as an alternative to deal with this overload adopting a restorative approach. It can be poorly translated as "grassroots justice", and generally the trial was taken under an old tree in the grass. The courts were headed by *Inyangamugaya* or "people of integrity", usually elders who were suggested and elected by the local community (Burnet, 2008, p. 175; Clark, 2010, p. 67). As Corey and Joireman emphasize, people of the community were not just spectators, but actively engaged in the trials contributing with testimonies and could have influenced the trial and consequently the verdict (2004, p. 83-84).

[95] Generally, Rwandans use the word *panga* to refer to the machete. However, the word machete is being used more often nowadays, especially when Rwandans express themselves in English or with Westerners in general.

was a celebration. I even recognized some of them at the time, but it was not safe to approach them because they were part of a group attack (*Igitero*)[96].

F: How to deal with past memories since it is still very intense after all these years? I mean, how to balance too much memory with too much forgetting and avoid constant suffering?
B: It is really hard for me to recall those days because it was like seeing hell! *I can't forget what I saw and it haunts me until today. I used to feel a lot of pain, I had severe headaches, I lost so much weight and bad dreams were more constant. Now I am feeling better, but you can never forget something like this [genocide].* I saw dead bodies of men, women and children all over…[Bernadette's voice trembles and she starts to cry] *The atrocities were beyond anything I could ever imagine…can you imagine someone cutting a mother's fetus and obliging her to eat it before killing her?* It was just madness all over! *They [perpetrators] did it [the killings] using machetes and clubs, not with guns, you know? Machetes were their primary weapons, and they are everywhere! It is a normal tool used in agriculture. But after the genocide it has been difficult for me. I saw my husband and my son die and almost all my relatives were hacked to death with that blade. It has now another meaning for me.* I think one day I can be used to it again as I was before the genocide, but *it takes time because the images and sounds are still very vivid in my mind.* The only way to deal with these horrific memories is praying and moving on, sharing our experiences with my friends here [at Ineza] helps a lot, we support each other and this makes us stronger" (Bernadette, 2011, personal communication. Kigali, 01 August, my emphasis).

The horrific recollections emphasized by Bernadette – mentioning everyday tools, images and sounds still vivid in her memory, physical and psychological pain – point to memory as an embodied and mediated[97] enactment of the past that blurs the rigorous distinctions between past/present, natural/social, material/cultural, somatic/psychological, and personal/collective.

Places and things are then enacted in our encounters with them, they do not carry already-made meanings applicable to any environment, but highly dependent on their connections. In this regard, places and objects of memory are transformative as it is the experience of encountering them. Hence, "there is an agentic relationship between [places, things] and visitor, which through affective energies shape the envisioning of environment, meanings and futures" (Waterton; Tolia-Kelly; Watson, 2017, p. 3).

Both room 28 (Centre Christus) and machetes focused on how a material-semiotic orientation can help to understand mnemonic assemblages traveling through the rich and heterogeneous synergies of striving entities. It is important to emphasize that the material as the ideational are equally relevant to understand the effects of those gatherings. The conjoining of materialities and semiotics enables a

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[96] According to Charles Mironko, *Igitero* (plural: *Ibitero*) can be translated as a group/mob attack. It comes from the verb *gutera*, which means to launch, assault, attack (2004, p. 51).
[97] Mediation here should be understood as something (an actant) that transforms, translates, and modifies the elements involved in the enactments of memory within an assemblage.

wide range of possibilities for describing the collective, so I am sensitive to the assemblages in perpetual formation – and transformation, deformation, conformation –, letting actants express themselves instead of trying to explain already made interactions. Such reading defuses any aprioristic power, size, scale to actants in an assemblage, so that metal blades, techniques, myths, music, blood, and humans are all full-blown mediators. Every aspect of life, from everyday to institutionalized practices were embedded in material-semiotic entanglements, blurring clear and hierarchical divides.

The effects of these entanglements are our focal point, especially describing recalcitrances, ambiguities and the unexpected character of the assemblages. As Mol emphasizes, "the question [is] not where the activities of actors come from, but rather where they go: effects are crucial. Not goals, not ends, but all kinds of effects, surprising ones included" (Mol, 2010, p. 255).

3.4 Conclusion

In exploring a multitude of actants knitting together and forming provisional spatiotemporal configurations in assemblages, I was trying to grasp the ongoing flux of things (and memories). Nevertheless, I am aware that there is always much more going on than we can actually apprehend (Dewsbury, 2010a). In such engagements with the volatilities of places and things, I tried to show that a machete could be enacted as a tool used in agricultural work, a weapon of genocide, a memorial artifact in museums/memorials, and a trigger of traumatic memories. Similarly, room 28 could be enacted as a regular room, a place of spiritual retreat, a place of execution, a room to be kept clean, a location to think on affect and research-related trauma, a non-intentional memorial place. They are always unfolding in unpredictable ways due to their entanglements, so they are emerging due to its connectivities.

This chapter aimed to insert the reader into affectivity through my very first visceral encounters with semiotic-materialities in post-genocide Rwanda. For doing so, I proposed to dwell on affect and its captures while looking into a human body's (my own body) responses to such encounters with striving entities inside and outside our bodies. Neurons, nerves, blood, muscles, bones, skin and how they can affect our senses, emotions, and self-reflexivity are all important

elements in assembling a human body. Cognition is only one part of such complex and emergent dynamics of joint action that enables us to think about and interpret an event, but many things already took place in our body when we were not aware of that (Thrift, 2008; Massumi, 2002). Consciousness is a partial and imperfect reflection of the totality of our experience (Nørrentranders, 1998), making us provide fractional understandings of events happening in the world (Dewsbury, 2010a). According to Dewsbury, "the world in the present tense is always other than its representation, of what we know of it; it is always in excess and outside of representation and all horizons of calculability" (2010a, p. 150).

The focus in then on *experience*, thinking it through as I experience those visceral and sensorial encounters with things and places. While looking to my bodily responses, I did not intend, in any way, to take the place of genocide survivors or even to compare my experiences with theirs; I was only trying to think seriously on how matter can be important to understand our own bodies and how they affect and are affected by memories, aiming to grasp what happens with O/other's bodies. In sum, I mobilized my own body – understood here as an assemblage and not an autonomous or independent body – in order to make connections with others and the world (Park-Kang, 2014, p. 365).

Drawing on these negotiations between body and mind and recognizing how we are always and already in action, I emphasized how places are enacted in *co-fabrication* and not stable or fixed sites awaiting interpretation. Bodies, objects, environments, technologies, narratives, and memories interweaving in what can be termed a becoming place – always provisional and under construction. As Waterton, Tolia-Kelly and Watson (2017) suggest, exploring places of memory "becomes less about 'ways of seeing' centered upon anthropocentric values, and more about giving power to the thing itself and making space for resonances not before encountered" (p. 4). Within this orientation, in the next chapter, we will turn to address memorial places, suggesting they can be viewed as an interweaving of bodies, spaces, and practices in which affective engagements with intensities, agencies and capacities co-create the place (De Nardi, 2014).

4 Bones, bodies, and narratives: national-level memorials as spaces of friction

"Evidently, memory functions by different modes, whether it is carefully orchestrated or floods over us, whether it is felt to inhabit commonplace actions, treasured sites or discarded goods"

(Lorimer, 2007, p. 93)

"This is a world between potential and determination, between what has happened and what could, a world captured in the tension of its present tense of becoming, a not yet enacted moment where we meet and greet ourselves in the affect that inspires action"

(Dewsbury et al., 2002, p. 439)

4.1 Introduction

The philosopher Edward Casey once wrote that "in the case of memory, we are always already in the thick of things" (2000 [1987], p. xix). That is to say, we are surrounded by ever-changing and complex events often going on several levels at once, which makes memory and memorial practices impossible to be restricted to a singular spatiotemporal configuration. Moreover – and especially relevant to this work –, it involves a wide range of actants connected by intricated networks. As Casey goes on explaining, "(…) every fiber of our bodies, every cell of our brains, holds memories – as does everything physical outside bodies and brains, even those *inanimate objects that bear the marks of their past histories upon them in mute profusion*" (Ibidem, my emphasis).

Presenting a phenomenological approach of remembering, Casey (2000 [1987]) acknowledges that memory always exceeds the scope of the human, recognizing nonhuman entities as important actants; nevertheless, the author's focus is on *what do we do when we remember*, delving into the negotiations of the human body and mind (p. xx). Although we benefit from Casey's many contributions, especially concerning place memory and body memory, we suggest the adoption of a more-than-human and more-than-representational approach concerning places of memory, attentive to multisensual encounters and their unexpectedness in mnemonic assemblages. In short, we disagree that objects are 'inanimate bearers of past histories in mute profusion', claiming their agentic

capacity, lively energy, and vitality as actants.

We usually try to simplify (or tame) memory in stable representations of the past, but its elusive character sheds light on the uncertainties that permeate memory gatherings. As Zehfuss (2007) underscores,

> Memory is always threatened. It is liable to change as soon as we think about it. It is its very precariousness and ambiguity that highlights the tension between the notion of memory and such claims to knowledge about the past – memories – as are offered with considerable certainty in political debate. This contradiction is at the root of the potential of memory to draw our attention to the uncertainties with which we live. At the same time, it is perhaps this precariousness that provokes the desire to agree and share 'a' memory (p. 227).

Our attempt in this chapter is to explore those uncertainties through the flux of bodies, places, and practices, in which various subjectivities intermingle transforming national-level memorial sites. Thus, following Golanska (2015), we suggest engaging with those memorials not exclusively relying on meanings and emotions, but also on affects and sensations, combining narratives and representations with lived experiences. In this regard, we want to explore several 'registers of memory' (Lorimer, 2006), being then photographic, textual, embodied, in order to grasp the sensuousness of matter.

While the previous chapter presented the productive force of affect, focusing on sensorial and visceral encounters with places and objects that were not originally of memorial relevance; this chapter continues in this affective pathway, but *now emphasizing more carefully designed memorial sites* – Kigali, Murambi and Bisesero.

We will begin with a theoretical engagement on memory and memorialization, examining the main contributions of social sciences in general, and the discipline of IR in particular, regarding the central topics of the chapter: collective memory; memory and temporality; memory and materiality; and places of memory.

The next section discusses the *constitutive relation between matter, memory, and place*, showing how those places change and unfold through their entanglements and controversies. We argue, following Tsing (2005), that these memorials are *spaces of friction*, subjected to transformations, deformations, and conformations negotiated through the work of actants.

In order to compare the different modes of memorializing the genocide in

Rwanda, we will address these memorials through a *cosmopolitan gaze*, a *dead gaze,* and a *native gaze* respectively; also emphasizing movements ranging from a more stable to a more volatile design, without fixing them into only one possible configuration. We chose to devote each section to a memorial site as a whole instead of dividing by theme or objects/things to pursue three goals: 1) to help to situate the reader in the spatiotemporal horizon I was immersed during my encounters with these materialities, engaging more actively with the heterogeneous entanglements of practice (Latham and Conradson, 2003, p. 1901); 2) to call attention to the dominant narratives within these places but, at the same time, showing how materiality can perform and resist dominant discourses; 3) to explore the more linear, homogeneous and ingrained character of memorialization in these national-level memorials when compared to unintentional memorial places.

Despite focusing on carefully designed memorials and the desire of securing a dominant narrative, this chapter emphasizes memorials as spaces of both conformity and contestation, being shaped by the wide array of human and nonhuman actants transforming them. In this sense, cultural traditions, archives, representations, technologies, environmental elements, materialities, and sensations contribute to conceiving memorialization as a process of becoming – always complex, multiple and fluid. It is our goal to underline the ambiguities and resistances to a (provisionally frozen) dominant narrative with a focus on materialities; and also the overlappings and nuances through the memorial guide – the cultural mediator of the genocide. In addition, this chapter will also discuss the movements of *transnationalization and delocalization of memory* through the analysis of the application to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) world heritage site and the process of digitalizing memorials in virtual tours.

In exploring such memorial sites we will obviously address representations and the symbolic; however, we want to go towards *more-than-representational* accounts, emphasizing "the lived present as an open-ended and generative process" (Harrison, 2000, p. 499) and amplifying sensory, bodily and affective registers in our encounters with materialities.

4.2 Memory ecologies: escaping individual x collective memory reductionism

Myths, commemoration performances, monuments, state-based narratives in national memorials, oral traditions, personal testimonies, and everyday experiences are all significant practices to be considered in the processes of memorialization in post-genocide Rwanda. They can produce what is generally referred to as *collective memory*, despite the problematic character of this conceptualization[98].

Since the concept was developed by Maurice Halbwachs (1980 [1950]; 1992 [1925]), we have been witnessing an increasing interest in how do we remember (and forget) the past. The term 'collective memory' has been widely used by researchers on memory studies, addressing the competing and contrasting issues that permeate the processes and practices towards remembrance. Due to the multiple and contrasting engagements with the term, it is argued that the concept has not been successfully operationalized (Olick, 2007, p. 85; Hirst; Manier, 2008, p. 183), with disagreements even when definitions are clearly stated (Winter; Sivan, 1999; Wertsch, 2002, p. 34) and when the 'collective' character of memory is being discussed (Gillis, 1994, p. 3; Hirst; Manier, 2008, p. 183).

Scholars have suggested different modalities of inscription and transmission, focusing on the analytical distinctions between individual, social, collective, public, cultural, communicative memories[99]. But the main debate is the one between individual x collective memories. Some authors refer to 'collective memory' as an imprecise metaphor, stressing the inappropriateness of the term to treat a fundamentally individual phenomenon (Fentress; Wickham, 1992, p. 1; Funkenstein, 1989). According to Amos Funkenstein, "consciousness and memory can only be realized by an individual who acts, is aware, and remembers.

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[98] See Cattell; Climo. Social Memory and History: Anthropological Perspectives, 2002, p. 4-5 to the wide variation on the conceptualization of collective memory.

[99] See Funkenstein, 1989; Casey, 2004; Assmann, J. and Czaplicka, J., 1995; Assmann, A., 2006; Welzer, 2001; Breyer, 2007 for a comprehensive distinction between these (sub)types of memory. A wide range of other terms – such as long-term, short-term, intentional, non-intentional, biological, psychological and so on – could be added in combination to these previous terminologies to clarify as much as possible what authors want to emphasize when discussing memory. However, it is not in the scope of this dissertation to dig deeply on it, since our main goal is to account for the unremitting flux and transformation of memories and memorialization, inextricably addressing all kinds of entanglements on memorial places.

Just as a nation cannot eat or dance, neither can it speak or remember. Remembering is a mental act, and therefore it is absolutely and completely personal" (1989, p. 6). Others go even further, arguing for the abandonment of the concept altogether (Gedi; Elam, 1996).

Since we usually relate memory to something lived and stored in our minds, being recollected with a stimulus in the present, it is comprehensible that the concept of collective memory can cause such estrangement pointed out by Fukenstein (1989). Nonetheless, there are alternative and less bifurcated interpretations that amplify memory's scale and temporality, arguing for an intricate and mutual relationship between individual and collective memory. As Halbwachs pointed out even the most personal memories are always already permeated by the social framework (1992, p. 40). As he states, "no memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections" (p. 43). It is in social groups that an individual acquires its memories. Also, it is in the society that individuals recall, recognize, and localize their memories (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 38). A family gathering, a reunion with friends, a meeting with a neighbor is where we share our memories; "their memory comes to the aid of mine and mine relies on theirs", and this recollection is made externally (not in some nook of the mind in which individuals alone have access) (Ibidem).

As Aleida Assmann noted, these encounters with the collectivities that an individual is a part – family, neighborhood, society, state, culture – overlap and intersect within the individual, incorporating such memories in various ways (2006, p. 211). The author argues, that individuals acquire these memories "not only via lived experience, but also via interacting, communicating, learning, identifying, and appropriating. It is often not easy to determine where one type of memory ends and another begins" (Ibidem). In the same vein, Casey underlines that "the primary locus of memory is found not only in body or mind (…) but in an intersubjective nexus that is at once social and collective, cultural and public (2004, p. 21).

Paying attention to these individual-collective relations, and the ways in which such interactions can shape our memories, I recall an interesting encounter with a Rwandan boy, focusing not only on the many collectivities he was immersed in but also on the material-semiotic traces he interacted with when

remembering. After guiding us throughout the Nyamirambo market[100], he shared some of his daily-life activities at school. He talked about his friends and how he loved to play soccer, but we got curious regarding his experiences with the genocide and if he knew what happened since he was only twelve at the time we had our conversations. So, we decided to ask him:

> "F: What do you know about the genocide? Did you study this topic at school?
> I: [Nodding positively with his head]…we read in the books, and also because I go to commemoration events, but my mom already told me the stories…[He explains in a professorial tone] Well, it all began on April, 6 of 1994 when the airplane that was carrying both the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi was shot down. Immediately after that, there was a massive slaughter of Tutsis. A lot of people died just in a hundred days, including my father [He starts to cry uncontrollably]"[101]. (Innocent, 2011. Kigali, August 1st, personal communication).

This excerpt of Innocent's experiences with the genocide illustrates how we remember with and through other (human and nonhuman) bodies. These bodies can be books, the teacher at the school, his friends, his mom, speeches and performances during the commemoration events, photographs, wreaths, and mass graves at memorial sites, and curious foreign interlocutors. Moreover, and especially relevant to this research, it is the intertwining of all those bodies with Innocent's own sensations and emotions that makes memory a fusion of bodies, places, and practices in multi-sensual encounters with semiotic-materialities.

Innocent's experiences with the genocide bear meditation since he was not born yet at the time of the event and all the things he claimed to know were all transmitted to him from others. In this sense, one can think of it as postmemory (Hirsch, 2008) when there is a massive connection with the traumatic event and previous generation's remembrances that we can call it memory and that, under extreme circumstances, such memory can be transmitted to those that did not live the event, amplifying its temporality. Pointing to the inherent contradiction of this

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[100] Part of the group (myself and three other women – all under 25 years old, and not married) decided to explore Nyamirambo market, in Kigali, to buy some souvenirs. We encountered this twelve-year-old boy there, Innocent, when I was trying to buy fabric exclusively made for married women. The vendor did not speak English and Innocent offered to help us negotiate with the sellers. We introduced ourselves and spent the whole afternoon together, talking about life and costumes in Rwanda. We were based at Centre Christus, in Remera, and he said he lived nearby and would like to go home walking with us. On our way back, we talked about his daily life at school and it was in this context that we asked him how he came to know about the genocide.

[101] We immediately tried to console him, apologizing and hugging him. He continued to cry for a few moments, but then, rubbing down his tears, he said it was a good thing to share this with us. And that he would like to see us again at the mass in Centre Christus, which we did on the next days.

phenomenon, Hirsch suggests considering postmemory as "a structure of inter-and-trans-generational transmission of traumatic knowledge and experience" (2008, p. 106). This can be the case of Innocent's memories; however, it is worth noting that the killings in Rwanda did not stop abruptly in 1994 and several people have been murdered afterward the genocide (Prunier, 1997, p. 358). Although it is not possible to determine the exact context of his father's death and if the man was actually his father, Innocent's experiences were shaped by daily-basis encounters with actants involved in collectively remembering and forgetting the genocide, and it is not merely an individual recall of the events. As Kleinman and Kleinman argue, "experience is not limited to the isolated person but is shared across persons (…). Social experience interrelates social suffering and subjective suffering not as different entities but as an interactive process (1994, p. 712).

It is because memory exceeds the individual and is completely embedded in social practices and processes that collective memories can last for many years, crossing generations (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 82). However, it does not mean that such memories of the past are stabilized, or unchangeable; on the contrary, they are constantly transformed by the activity of such collectivities maintaining them. As Halbwachs (1992) highlights, the past is not kept unshaken, but reassembled on the basis of the present, reconstructing "an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch, with the predominant thoughts of the society" (p. 40).

As Hoskins (2016), Olick (2008), and Winter (2006), we also recognize that 'collective memory' can be a term that encompasses too many practices and processes, being loosely used, "suffering from its voluminous and sprawling application to describe and position an array of alleged group rememberings and circumstances" (Hoskins, 2016, p. 350). In this regard, Winter (2006) suggests the adoption of 'collective remembrance' as "it points to time and place and above all, to evidence, to traces enabling us to understand what groups of people try to do when they act in public to conjure up the past" (p. 5); this concept, he argues, emphasizes agency, activity, and creativity (Winter; Sivan, 1999, p. 9).

We advance here, corroborating Olick's (2007) and Winter's (2006) argument, *collective remembrance* as a sensitizing term, aware of the "wide variety of mnemonic processes, practices, and outcomes, neurological, cognitive, personal, aggregated, and collective" (Olick, 2007, p. 34). In this regard, collective remembrance refers to the ways in which individuals, *in association*

with other bodies (human and nonhuman), engage in acts of remembrance, encompassing autobiographical and public narratives and their relationship with space and time.

Remembering is always accompanied by forgetting. Forgetting is not a defect or deficit practice "but a valued activity that is as strategic and central a practice as remembering itself" (Zelizer, 1995, p. 220). In the same vein, Torgovinick argues,

> "Such adjustments and ellipses are not so much a lapse or a failure of cultural memory, as they are commonly conceived; they are not even, properly speaking, an erasure or a forgetting, two other common conceptions. Instead, they form an *integral and crucial part of how individuals and groups construct temporality—the ineffable part of memory itself, necessary for memory's very shape*" (Torgovinick, 2005, p. 2, my emphasis).

Zehfuss (2007) also underscores that remembering and forgetting are not opposing binaries, but dependent terms; in order to forget one has to remember, and in order to remember, one has to forget (p. 63). She aptly points out that "the problem is not so much whether to remember or to forget but rather *how* to remember" (p. 63-64, emphasis in original), since memory is about a past that is being produced as ours and therefore it is "inextricably linked to representations of who we are" (p. 64).

This movement then involves not only the past but also the present (and the future). Such emphasis on how past experiences are reframed into meaningful representations forces us to think on how present demands necessarily inform which aspects of the past will be represented in official narratives.

By its very nature, in attempting to recount history, official narratives are designed to record events in a linear, non-problematic, and unison way[102]. On the other hand, what Liisa Malkki (1995) called 'mythico-histories' are more nuanced, flexible, and full of controversies and overlappings. As Malkki states, it is "not accurately described as either myth or history, (…) comprising a set of moral and cosmological order stories" (p. 54). As Malkki goes on explaining, mythical here is not being used in the sense of being false or invented, but "concerned with the ordering and reordering of social and political categories" (p. 55). As any attempt on collective remembrance of past struggles to presentist

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[102] I am not suggesting that official narratives are non-controversial, but arguing they are created to represent the collective, presupposing a homogeneous community.

purposes, tensions, controversies, and frictions inevitably permeate this negotiation between the desires of homogeneity and historical accuracy, and the more encompassing and nuanced character of mythico-histories, typical of memorialization efforts.

As memorial practices are crucial in rebuilding societies plagued by the legacy of violence and its reconciliation process, a wide number of scholars have turned their attention to memorial sites and commemoration events in Rwanda, emphasizing different aspects of memorialization. Erin Jessee (2017) presents a detailed account on national-level memorial sites in Rwanda, addressing transformations in these sites over the years of fieldwork, especially underlining the changes in narratives. The author also encompasses the lived experiences of memorial guides, showing how it complicates the official narrative. Annalisa Bolin' piece (2012) on dark tourism and the materiality of death in genocide memorials addresses the moral conflict western visitors face due to their encounters with the materiality of bodies, emphasizing the ways in which visitors follow proper rules related to adequate emotions and lessons to be learned while experiencing the memorials. De Yeaza and Fox (2013) point to the importance of memory committees and organizations promoting memorialization efforts as a way to facilitate reconciliation, offering an alternative to top-down approaches in memorial sites. Dumas and Korman (2011) explore not only national-level memorial sites but also other memorial spaces that have risen as a result of family or local community initiatives, pointing to the difficulty to combine material reminders of violence (focused on bodies) with a national reconciliation policy.

In different ways, all these authors point to the existence of a top-down official state narrative, which can be resisted or adapted if we look into the experiences of people instead of focusing solely on nation-building. While these efforts are relevant to account for the transformations, ambiguities, and contradictions in places of memory, none of the authors above describe the agentic capacity of materialities in transforming these places, although some put emphasis on materiality; or describe their own reactions when visiting these places, disregarding sensorial and affective encounters. A notable exception is Jessica Auchter's work (2014)[103] on the role of sensorial encounters, inextricably

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[103] Auchter's contributions will be discussed further away in this section.

connecting corporeality and spatiality, underscoring her own bodily responses and of many other visitors in these sites. While providing alternative repertoires to rethink practices of memorialization concerning different functions (purpose) and forms (ways of doing it), the authors above do not discuss the role of semiotic materialities in assembling non-intentional or unexpected places of memory in Rwanda, focusing only on carefully designed memorial sites. Meierhenrich and Lagace's study (2013) on tropes of memory carries some similarities with our research, focusing on transformations in underprivileged sites of memory and how these can grasp more spontaneous and less coordinated responses to loss, "since most remembering and forgetting is done through the textures of everyday settings, in contexts frequently invisible and often mundane" (p. 289). The authors present twelve [104] tropes of memory approaching them through empirical vignettes, calling for a micropolitical turn in the study of social memory and underlining the polyphonies of the memorial places in Rwanda. We corroborate the authors' initiative to delve into spontaneous and mundane settings, but we argue this should be accompanied by an important move towards the agentic capacities of materialities if we want to stress the unremitting flux and transformation of memories (and matter), recognizing uncertainties and ambiguities in ecologies of human and nonhuman entities[105].

Recently, many scholars in IR have become interested in the way traumatic events, identity, and memorialization practices intersect expanding the scholarship with an engagement to what Jenny Edkins called "the traumatic dimension of the political" (2003, p. 9). Duncan Bell (2006) reflects mainly on the link between memory and politics focusing on the construction, reproduction, and contestation of national identities, but also a concern with the impact of communal and transnational memories in world politics (p. 3). Maja Zehfuss (2007) offered remarkable insights concerning sites of memory and the constant negotiation between remembering and forgetting through a reflection on novels of war. Resende and Budryte (2014) analyze the international dimension of trauma and memory, challenging nation-centered accounts of memory construction. Jessica

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[104] The tropes of memory explored by the authors are: vulnerability, invisibility, language, order, erasure, resistance, anonymity, modernity, nothingness, community, remains, and time.

[105] While this movement towards transformation, contingency, and becoming permeates the entire dissertation, we will discuss in further details the unexpected character of memory gatherings in the next chapter.

Auchter's work (2014) explores the relationship between haunting and politics through the analysis of statecraft performances concerning memorialization.

Due to a long-standing concern with war and conflict, IR scholars working with memory usually argue that collective memory is a constitutive part of statecraft. While I can agree that the politics of memorialization is deeply embedded in statecraft, I do not intend to adopt a state-centric approach as this only accounts for a small part of the complex and dynamic processes of collective remembrance.

The authors above contribute to expanding the ways in which we relate memory and the political. Moving away from trauma as a merely individual phenomenon within a strictly psychoanalytical approach, they encompass the social dimension of trauma, relating it to practices of statecraft without overemphasizing and oversimplifying the dynamics through the state[106] as the only actor that coopts and manipulates collective memory with political usages of the past.

While some focus their analysis on memorial sites and highlight these places have to be considered beyond representation, acknowledging them as sites of storytelling (Edkins, 2003), they do not delve into affect, failing to account for the sensorial and visceral encounters with materialities within these places of memory. We argue then for the necessity of recognizing the agentic capacities of a wide range of actants, focusing on the power of associations in a material-semiotic approach.

Despite recognizing the contribution of the authors discussed above, this research is more in accordance with Jessica Auchter's work (2014), presenting a new-materialist inclination and exploring the human-nonhuman intractability in memory enactments. While we both discuss memorialization practices focusing on the dead body, and adopt some kind of ethnographical orientation, Auchter (2014) is concerned with the implications of memorialization practices captured by the statecraft project; this work is focusing first and foremost on the agency of human and nonhuman actants in mnemonic assemblages. Whereas this research departs from the everyday, focusing on the power of associations and considers

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[106] In this dissertation we suggest that the state should be conceived as the outcome of enacted assemblages involving human and nonhuman entities, like telegrams, policy reports, drones, passports, and so on.

statecrafting as secondary; her work focuses on power relations, departing from the state already in place to analyze the consequences for international politics.

In bringing the dead to the fore we both want to explore other possibilities of what constitutes a political subject. Going beyond either/or logic, I corroborate her concern with those that are dead and alive, person and thing, absence and presence at the same time. Precisely because "they do not conform to the standards of visibility and intelligibility often cited as a precondition for entrance into a political community" (Auchter, 2014, p. 3) that this research aims to show the contributions of dead bodies' matter to practices of memorialization.

Apart from many similarities, our work seems to differ in relation to the agentic capacity of matter. While recognizing the power of matter/things/objects, she seems to acknowledge only the power that is attributed to them, overemphasizing human agency while underestimates the potential of action or vitality of matter, as if they were always already disposed to be shaped. According to Auchter, "Memorials can have tremendous power in the sense that such *power is attributed to them. They are just things*; objects, spaces, structures, *until they are imbued with some sort of social meaning* related to the conception of the event" (2014, p. 50, my emphasis).

When calling attention to discourse and power relations shaping practices of memorialization, we need to be careful not to equate action with human action. This means we have to be aware of the constant flux of things and the possibility of matter to act independently of human action, claiming their own agency through their ambiguities and recalcitrances; not as passive recipients of action or completely restricted to human's intentionality. With this movement, I do not intend to deny humans attribute meaning to objects/things/matter and imbue them with agency through the act of their making and use, but this is not the only way they acquire agency and motion. Neither I suggest equating agency with equivalence; I propose recognizing the asymmetries in terms of intensity or affective forces, and not aprioristically along a human-nonhuman divide. I believe these are important insights to account for memory and memorialization beyond humans and beyond representation.

Attending to the interplay and fusion of individual and collective remembrance, and how these are always embedded into negotiations between materialities, representations, sensations, and practices, we embrace Hoskins'

(2016) concept of *memory ecologies*. According to Hoskins, memory is produced through connections, shaped as individuals and groups encounter and interact with objects, interfaces and others, in a (provisionally) frozen spatiotemporal configuration" (2016, p. 355). It is the consortium of the material and cultural environment with cognition and emotion that illuminates the emergence of remembering and forgetting (Brown and Hoskins, 2010). Adapting Scollon and Scollon's (2004) methodology of nexus analysis, Hoskins and Tulloch (2016) call attention to the multiple connectivities that orient an exploration on remembrance and affirm that it requires "the mapping of semiotic cycles of people, discourses, places, and mediational means" (p. 255) that shape memory in constant transactions with the environment.

In this sense, we propose an understanding of remembering and forgetting as *necessarily produced by and within encounters between the material, the discursive, and the experiential*. We emphasize *in-betweenness as the locus of a never-fixed status, where things rub against each other in a movement that goes away from being and towards a becoming-in-the-world*. In this chapter, we aim to explore the *in the making* feature of these networks of associations unexpectedly transforming memorialization focusing on national-level memorial places to underscore the fragility of these spaces of friction.

Memorial sites in Rwanda are promising places to study the agency of things. First, memorials are full of materialities – bullet holes, purple signs, identity cards, machetes, nail-studded clubs, blood, bones, shoes, clothes, catholic rosary beads, flowers, and corpses – attempting to provide evidence of the genocide, recalling the past through vibrant matter. Second, in Rwanda, they are frequently the resting place of many human bodies buried in mass graves. Third, they are places where visitors are affected by the constant negotiation between matter, human and discourse. Moreover, it involves affect transmission, understood as the power to mobilize in an affect economy[107]. For example, how to use affect to create empathy for the victims of the genocide and mobilize international aid (Ibreck, 2013). Fourth, memorials are frictional spaces in many senses, they are intentionally fabricated but can also be unexpectedly shaped; they are an attempted account of the past, happening in the present with future intents,

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[107] See Ahmed, Sara. Affective economies, Social Text, issue 79, vol 22, n. 2, 2004, p. 117-139.

as Kontopodis (2009, p. 5) argues, "the past will be born"; they are places designed to aim at reconciliation and healing that also encircle trauma[108] rather than reducing it; they are assembled by local, national, and international initiatives. Fifth, they claim for genocide prevention universally. Finally, the encounters with informal/underprivileged memorial places [109] helped me to analyze memorialization beyond anthropocentrism, state-centrism, and rationalism.

Especially in the context of mass atrocities, the will to remember goes along the desire to keep places that carry the ruins of the traumatic event. They are assumed to account for what happened in the past, attempting to situate and secure the memories of past struggles. These places can be the genuine remnant space of violence; places where the original uses are resignified; newly constructed places for memorial purposes (or a combination thereof). As De Ycaza and Fox (2013) point out,

> "Creating spaces and rituals of memorialization, including photo displays, war murals, body maps, timelines of events, memory walks and walking maps, allows for the preservation and transmission of memory through a physical place, oftentimes where violence has occurred, in order for victims to reclaim the space and memory of the atrocities that took place" (p. 357).

In all cases – spontaneous, resignified, carefully designed –, these places are embedded in materialities that help to account for the 'realness', 'situatedness', and 'indelibleness' of the past events. By deploying the residues/traces/spectrums of trauma on the landscape, memorial places arouse the senses, revealing and lingering the pervasiveness of trauma in affective encounters. These materialities are not only vehicles for representing some events of the past; they are also potential intensities that affect other bodies through multisensual interactions. As already emphasized, they are not passive, disposed

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[108] See Edkins, Jenny. Trauma and the Memory of Politics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

[109] I am referring to informal/underprivileged places of memorialization as those that are neither granted national-level genocide memorials in Rwanda nor intentionally designed as a memorial; examples of informal/underprivileged memorial sites are room 28 (already discussed in previous chapter) and Nyabarongo River (to be discussed in the next chapter). There are eight national-level genocide memorial sites in Rwanda: Kigali, Bisesero, Nyamata, Ntarama, Nyarubuye, Murambi, Nyange and Rebero. The last two were recently upgraded to national-level genocide memorial sites. See Nkurunziza, Michel. Two Genocide memorial sites upgraded to national level. The New Times, April 11, 2017 (retrieved February 6, 2018 from: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/210491/).

to be shaped by humans, but actants, or sources of action (Latour, 2004, p. 267). According to Freeman, Nienass, and Daniel (2016):

> "They are not merely repositories for memory, separate from the human and activated by human desire to pour memory into their material form for retrieval, reminiscence, or forgetting – objects are not just storage systems, nor external hard drives. Rather humans, objects, and memories are bound up with each other in their material presences, creating assemblages made of persons, things, and traces of the past – what we think of as 'mnemonic assemblages'" (p. 5).

In this sense, it is important to analyze remembering and forgetting with, through, and within material traces, sensory experiences, things that affect and bodies that shape collective remembrance. Matter points to presence and absence in an overwhelming way. Images, smells, textures vibrate in order to attest the vitality of the material (Bennett, 2010). Being official memorial sites or everyday places where traumatic events occurred – such as streets, buildings, and rivers – the vitality of matter does not abandon memory. It is often the material world that sparks an involuntary memory in this encounter at random. Therefore, we will emphasize the intricacy between matter, memory, affect, and politics through the analysis of three national-level memorial sites in the next sections, and a non-intentional place of memory in the next chapter.

It is not my intention to judge which kind of associations are more appropriate regarding memorialization practices; I just want to provide a broader repertoire to (re)think 'the political', sniffing the actants' trails in mnemonic assemblages. In other words, I want to explore the way events are remembered, bodies, bones, and blood enact and are enacted, lives affecting and affected. Like many other scholars, I am interested in the politics of (collective) memory, but focusing on how materiality can be affective in enacting memorial places. Therefore, the focus of this work is not on the state as the central and/or solely relevant actor in analyzing practices of memorialization. The research works through the whole network, in tracing the assemblages that can enact and permit that we visualize such statecraft practices towards memory. In this sense, we do not depart from the state, or the individual, but from the network and the many actants that put these assemblages into motion. Being humans and nonhumans, these actants will be followed to describe the associations in a memorial assemblage that makes us (re)think agency, subjectivity and natural/social divide

(Latour, 1993).

4.3 Becoming place: memorials as spaces for frictional encounters

Dedicated to the cultural production of their pasts, monuments, buildings, museums, memorials, public displays, commemorations, historical figures and so on (Hoelscher; Alderman, 2004) irremediably connects memory to places, producing what we generally call 'places of memory'. Although we previously addressed places that were not purposely constructed with a memorative call, in this chapter we will focus on carefully designed memorials. It is worth mentioning that while referring to 'memorials', we do not exclude the possibility of a combination with commemorations, monuments, buildings, museums, and other specificities of the Rwandan case – like mass graves – composing them.

In exploring memorials as spaces of friction, we suggest delving into the relational interactions between places and bodies, focusing on practices always already entangling personal and collective; meaning and experience; material and semiotic; past and present; local and global. Thus, we propose an understanding of places of memory that embraces the vitality of matter and sensoriality, focusing on movements of friction generated from such interactions.

Notwithstanding the concept of *lieux de mémoire* was coined while discussing the idiosyncrasies of French memory and national identity, it would be impossible to overtake the contributions of Pierre Nora (1989) to discuss the ways in which memory interwoven with spatiality. As Nora argues, "memory attaches itself to sites" (p. 22) and we now need these sites "because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*" (p. 7). Thus, places of memory arise due to a substitution of collective memory by the processes of globalization, massification, and mediatization, in which 'real memory' is been substituted by history. As the author puts it, "we have seen the tremendous dilation of our very mode of historical perception, which, with the help of the media, has substituted for a memory entwined in the intimacy of a collective heritage the ephemeral film of current events" (1989, p. 7-8).

In this sense, he argues, we no longer have real environments of memory, or lived memory, but representations of the past, or a reconstructed history (p. 8). By virtue of a deritualization of our world, *lieux de mémoire* make their

appearance and arise from the sense that there is no spontaneous memory, so we need to produce, manifest, establish, construct, decree, and maintain them (p. 12). And it is precisely this 'push and pull' between memory and history (deforming and transforming memory) that produces places of memory (Ibidem). Nora's contributions shed light on a fragmentary and contestatory nature of remembrance (Whiters, 1996) and its capacity for metamorphosis (Charlesworth, 1994) since it is "multiple and yet specific; collective, plural and yet individual" (Nora, 1989, p. 9); and self-referential, but also "forever open to the full range of its possible significations" (p. 24). As Nora states,

> The *lieux* we speak of, then, are mixed, hybrid, mutant, bound intimately with life and death, with time and eternity; enveloped in a Mobius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile. For if we accept that the most fundamental purpose of the *lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial (...) - all of this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs, it is also clear that *lieux de mémoire* only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications (1989, p. 19).

Therefore, memorial places are always embedded in movements of friction, trying to make static what is volatile; assigning a temporal linearity to something that is discontinued and intricate; establishing locality to movement; seeking to transform into something palpable what is a spectrum – an attempt to (re)capture and control what is eternal flux, stabilizing it and (b)ordering it to function as planned.

In struggling to come to terms with the past, places of memory can establish and legitimate specific histories and identities, particularly in times of conflict and political change (Forest; Johnson, 2002; Till, 2003). Moreover, they give tangibility and familiarity to the past (Azaryahu, 1996; Foote, 2003), "serving as touristic destinations, civic gathering places, and setting for everyday activity" (Dwyer; Alderman, 2008, p. 167), transforming the distant past into an ordinary landscape. In such encounters, personal, local and global stories, narratives, and practices interconnect producing transformations.

Enacted by the encounters and rubbing interactions of semiotic-materialities, (transitory) memorial configurations – being they of conformity and/or contestation – can be described as frictional (Tsing, 2005; Björkdahl *et al.*,

2016). Drawing on Tsing's conceptualization of friction[110] as transient and arising out of encounters (p. xi), we propose to understand it as a force put into motion by the interaction of two or more bodies that both performs and resists such messy, unstable, unexpected, and productive encounters. These can be called messy encounters since they involve a wide range of heterogeneous actants intermingling – human and nonhuman, material and semiotic, local and global – that constantly alters a provisional configuration, contributing to shaping memorialization in unexpected ways.

For Tsing, friction emphasizes the unexpected and unstable aspects of local-global interactions, interconnected through awkward encounters (p. xi; p. 3-4). She offers two examples to stress friction as the grip of encounters: "A wheel turns because of its encounter with the surface of the road; spinning in the air it goes nowhere. Rubbing two sticks together produces heat and light; one stick alone is just a stick" (p. 5). According to the author, "heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power" (Ibidem) and such interactions are important due to their contribution for understanding movement, cultural practice, and agency (p. 6).

As Björkdahl *et al.* (2016) highlight, the local-global dynamic does not operate predominantly into one direction and is not always a conscious process; rather, adoption, adaption, co-option, resistance, and rejection can be from the local to the global and vice-versa (p. 6). Moreover, in most cases of friction, multiple processes occur at once, with some actants complying while others resist, or some adapting while others reject (p. 7). As the authors point out, "it is this multiplicity that gives friction its unpredictable and contingent nature" (Ibidem).

For Cresswell (2014), friction is a social phenomenon with its own politics, slowing, stopping, and enabling the mobility of people, things and ideas (p. 114). According to the author, "mobility is often impossible without friction. Friction makes things happen" (Ibidem). Cresswell suggests heat as the by-product of friction, an energy or warmth producing mobility as elements rub together (Ibidem), transforming and granting visibility to the often smooth or

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[110] Although Tsing's ethnographical work focus on the forestry industry in Indonesia and how local-global dynamics are transformed through awkward and messy encounters, we find her conceptualization of friction compatible with our effort to grasp the transformations in memorial places in Rwanda, emphasizing the intertwining of materialities, discourses, and lived experience and how they contribute to altering collective remembrance in unexpected ways.

hidden space of flows.

In the case of national-level memorials in Rwanda (Kigali, Murambi, and Bisesero), friction refers to the rubbing between personal, local, and global; and between matter, discourse, and experience. As we shall see, the entanglements and controversies unfolding from these rubbings can destabilize/reconceive previous scales and temporalities, as the application for UNESCO world heritage sites and the virtual tours will demonstrate; and also disrupt previous narratives and memorialization efforts with an emphasis on the agentic capacities of materialities in conjunction with discourse and technology. Moreover, the encounters will stress friction as lived and felt, exploring affective, sensible, and embodied registers of memorialization. Therefore, friction should be understood as simultaneously physical, cultural, discursive, material, embodied; as intensities of circulations, uncertainties and relational affects (Wilson; Hannam, 2017).

Memories are evocative; they *evoke sensorial and visceral engagements, frequently transporting us to specific spatiotemporalities*. A pervading taste, a warm touch, an image of suffering, a sound of despair, and a smell of decay are all memory stimuli that connects us to places and make us "feel the past" in the present. The past-present connection is strengthened by and constantly renewed through our encounters with things/objects and places, emphasizing the materially embedded, affective, and enacted character of memory and memorialization. If we can say that memories may transport us to other places and times, it is also accurate to affirm that specific places and objects may recall certain memories and the (un)pleasant sensations attached to those experiences. In this sense, matter, memory, and place are fully intertwined and such encounters felt within the body through somaticities and cognition. In constant movements, a body in contact with heterogeneous actants strikes back through unpredictable responses, receiving and giving back in a process of action always permeated by affectivity.

Although memory, space, and place can be addressed through many different points of view, we are particularly interested in the intersections between these terms entangling individual and collective remembrance of the genocide in Rwanda, tackling not only the physical location of the memorials but also, and more importantly, the spaces in which memories are being negotiated and manifested in and through the body.

In short, we are interested in addressing memorials *materially*, exploring

how a space full of materialities is assigned to function as a landmark with the purpose of collectively remembering the genocide in Rwanda; as *enacted in practices*, considering both meaning-making and world-sense-making. In this regard, we will analyze the process of negotiation between different narratives (and provisional stabilizations through the work of actants), also considering the multiplicity of senses and the embodied character of memory and memorialization. Thus, we propose an engagement with memorials that goes beyond representation, taking experience, the sensorial realm, and the affective materialities and atmospheres of these spaces into account (Tolia-Kelly; Waterton; Watson, 2017, p. 1).

Following Massey (2005), we want to call attention to movement, interaction, and enactment in a relational way of conceptualizing space and place. As the author stresses, there are three elements worth mentioning:

> "First, that we recognize *space is a product of interrelations*; as constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny; Second, that we understand space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; *as the sphere in which distinct trajectories co-exist*; *as the sphere therefore of coexisting heterogeneity*. Without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space. If space is indeed the product of interrelations, then it must be predicated upon the existence of plurality. Multiplicity and space are co-constitutive. Third, that we recognize *space as always under construction*. Precisely because space on this reading is *a product of relations-between, relations which are necessarily embedded material practices which have to be carried out, it is always in the process of being made*. It is never finished; never closed" (2005, p. 9, my emphasis).

In adopting this conceptualization of space, we want to suggest that even though the national-level memorials of the genocide in Rwanda are purposely designed and physically bounded, they are always in a process of becoming, disrupting the idea of a fixed narrative being recalled into a stable site. Much more than a physical location where the collective memory of the genocide is represented, memorials have space for multiplicities, contradictions, performances and the unexpected.

Massey (1994) emphasizes space as socially constructed and the social as spatially constructed. She argues that places are not points or areas in a map, but spatio-temporal events (2005, p. 130). Therefore, places are always weaving together ongoing stories, a process of space-time in which the layers of our meetings intersect and affect each other (p. 139) – an unfinished business (p. 131). In this regard, places do not have a preconceived coherence but require

negotiation, and this refers to the ways in which any possible accommodation, anyway always provisional, can be reached or not (p. 154). Conceiving places as heterogeneous associations (p. 137) enables us to keep the space open to the ever-contested character of our being-together (Donald, 1999 apud Massey, 2005, p. 142), and this is what makes them political. She goes on arguing that "what is special about place is precisely that throwntogetherness, the unavoidable challenge of negotiating here-and-now (…); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman" (p. 140).

In a similar vein, Dovey (2010, p. 6) states that "place is an inextricably intertwined knot of spatiality and sociality", calling attention to *place-as-becoming*, and breaking with essentialist, fixed, and static notions of place. Such a dynamic ensemble of people and environment contributes to an understanding of memorial places as always already open to the frictions between material, representational, experiential, personal, local, and global. Her Deleuzian-inspired conceptualization suggests thinking *place as assemblage*, avoiding "the reduction of place to text, to materiality or to subjective experience" (p. 17). According to Dovey, "place is an assemblage that stabilizes dwelling but also encompasses lines of movement and processes of becoming" (p. 23).

To account for stabilization/destabilization, she identifies two types of spatial properties that are *necessarily mixed*: an *striated space*, "where identities and spatial practices have become stabilized in strictly bounded territories with choreographed spatial practices and socially controlled identities" (p. 21-22); and a *smooth space*, "with movement and instability through which stable territories are erased and new identities and spatial practices become possible" (p. 22). These two enfold into each other; they should not be seen as separate but only exist in a mixture. In this sense, the meshing of heterogeneous actants can territorialize a spatio-temporal configuration, but only a fragile one since an increasing on internal heterogeneity or the destabilization of spatial boundaries indicates deterritorialization (DeLanda, 2006, p. 13).

In adopting such conceptualization of place, both materialities and meanings are in flux, entangling into each other and unfolding through enactment. Thus, places combine spatial practices, meanings and the intensity of experience (Dovey, 2010, p. 24). This combination is what she calls a 'sense of place', an intensity constituted through experience and not reduced to signified identities (p.

26); "it is the intensity that is most strongly linked to the sense and affect of place – the intensity of sunlight; the buzz of conversation; the whiteness of the walls; the vastness of the sea; the sound of birds; the smell of coffee" (Ibidem). Operating prior to cognition and meaning, affect is what permits us to experience the encounter with a place before analysis can turn it into a proposition (p. 25). Encountering such intensities reveal the potency of places, emphasizing the lived experience rather than reducing it to an assumed essence or to social construction (p. 17).

Constituted out of relations, places here are conceived as open and provisional, forged out of its connections with other places and bodies (human and nonhuman), "privileging routes rather than roots" (Dovey, 2010, p. 5). In order to better describe the fluxes in memorial places, we turn our eyes to the weaving together of multiple (and divergent) trajectories, to the movements of territorialization and deterritorialization in such assemblages, and to the sensations and affect when experiencing those places.

Trading in different modes of gatherings and embedded into heterogeneous materialities, contrasting discourses, and multiple practices, memorials are the *loci* where space-place relationships are being negotiated – a space where memories are always being produced, challenged, transformed, and discarded. Memorials are places where a physical space is designed with the purpose of remembering – displaying signs, plaques, monuments, photographs – so, its location/placement is also a relevant feature, impacting on its visibility, accessibility, symbolic elements, and relationship with other landscape features (Dwyer; Alderman, 2008, p. 168); where materialities, discourses, and technologies are being disputed, settling provisional spatiotemporal configurations; and a place for encounters with sensorialities, where the experience of remembering and forgetting can be felt on the body.

As places of mourning, remembrance, commemoration, reconciliation, and education, memorials have a complex relationship with space and time. They are an attempt to situate and bring some sort of (b)order to the events being memorialized, taming them in specific spatiotemporal configurations to provide an explanation of past events that honor the memory of the victims, also looking into the future with initiatives to promote genocide prevention and reconciliation. However, as products of 'relations-between', they are always being disrupted and

transformed, opening spaces for alternative readings – or what Massey calls "a simultaneity of stories-so-far" (2005, p. 9). As places of memory, they are sites for *both conformity and contestation*, possessing "an official meaning, but informal references may be attached to them, enforcing, neutralizing and even counteracting the original intention" (Nas, 1998, p. 547). So, despite the appearance of stability/fixity in space and time, memorials are always subjected to the work of heterogeneous actants, better seen as an open conduit, which also bears the traces of deeper stories that may or may not become apparent in this process of remembering and forgetting.

To better understand memorial places, Dwyer and Alderman's (2008) propose we pay close attention to three metaphors – text, arena, and performance. We endorse their argument, stressing the complex interactions among them. As *texts*, memorials bring to the fore a diversity of 'authors' and 'readers' who partake in the process of writing, reading, erasing, and interpreting the stories being told in which meaning is produced in a dynamic way. The authors suggest memorials take the appearance of a palimpsest, mingling past and present elements in a process of "over-writing, embellishment and erasure" (2008, p. 169); and can also be considered a symbolic accretion "as different historical meanings are layered onto them, thus challenging the notion that these symbols have a final, established meaning" (Ibidem).

As *arenas*, memorials expose the debates and political struggles surrounding what should be remembered, how events must be memorialized, whose memories are important and visible in this process, and for what purpose those memories are being recollected. To sum up, the conflict regarding which narrative will predominate necessarily implies the establishment of a political order. Thus, the dominant narrative is not only a consequence of social power but also a resource for achieving it (p. 171).

As *performances*, memorials serve as a stage – literally and figuratively – for ceremonies of commemoration, protests, historical re-enactments, rituals (and so on). In this sense, bodily performances are constitutive practices of remembering-forgetting and are crucial to memorials since this engagement help "shaping landscapes and the meanings attached to them" (p. 174). While the authors state those metaphors are not mutually exclusive, *we emphasize they should be necessarily taken together* since the three metaphors account for the

contingent, disputed, and enacted character of memorialization practices, underscoring them as both spaces of conformity and contestation that unfolds through their entanglements and controversies. Moreover, they contribute to *an understanding of place as material, representational and experiential*.

Generally speaking, all national-level memorials I visited in Rwanda (Nyamata, Ntarama, Kigali, Murambi, Bisesero, and Nyarubuye) combine characteristics of being at the same time a text, an arena, and a performance in their own way. While Nyamata, Ntarama, and Nyarubuye were churches and Murambi was a technical school under construction before being transformed into memorials; Kigali and Bisesero were purposely built as memorial sites. Being ordinary places before the genocide, the first memorials usually carry stronger marks of writing, erasing, and accretions since they now have to function as memorial sites. Kigali and Murambi are the ones in which the arena metaphor is better applied since the first was targeted by grenade attacks in contestation of the way the genocide is being memorialized, and the second was subjected to many controversies surrounding the display of corpses (Vidal, 2004; Dumas & Korman, 2011). All national-level memorials are embedded in performances, with ceremonies and rituals being celebrated, especially during the mourning period. However, we would like to add another connotation to the performance metaphor and consider memorial guides as mediators of the genocide, emphasizing their role in enacting those spaces[111] – and this gesture is better portrayed in Bisesero memorial.

This last metaphor is particularly relevant to the research since we aim to account for the sensorial and visceral encounters with other human and non-human bodies. So, we are interested not only in the way memorials are being represented but also how people, interacting with semiotic-materialities, help to enact those places. Encountering, experimenting, sensing memorial sites and vibrant matter are central practices to a sensitive account of remembering and forgetting and contributes to what Casey (2000) calls 'body memory' – or "how we remember in and by and through the body" (p. 147). When referring to body memory, we are not addressing habits, but the traumatic dimension of memory

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[111] All six national-level memorial sites have guides to walk visitors throughout the memorials. While Kigali offers an audio-guide as an alternative, allowing visitors to do the tours in their own pace, Bisesero is highly dependent on them, being almost impossible to understand the history of the place without a guide since it has no plaques or signs specifying its particularities.

and how it is imprinted in the body leaving a (physical and/or psychological) trace that is not easily erased; how we remember past events using the body (the mind is necessarily part of it); and how we experience the environment both somatically and cognitively with our senses. In short, we aim to discuss "the intersections between memory, embodiment, representation, materiality and the psyche" (Till, 2008, p. 101).

Attempting to grasp the interactions and intersections of social space and the space of the body in studying the trauma of political violence in China, medical anthropologists Arthur and Joan Kleiman (1994) examine how the space infolds into the body and how the bodily responses outfold into social space (p. 711). The authors highlight that the mind-body dichotomy and reductionism makes it difficult to understand this relationship as an "enacted assemblage of interconnected cognitive, affective, and transpersonal processes" (p. 719).

Entangling the physiological with the psychological, body memories are among the very last to fade away, being constantly (re)lived in daily-basis and permeated by social experience. Kleiman and Kleiman argue that these sociosomatic processes are the intersection where "social relations affect (and are affect by) blood pressure, heart rate, and respiration, and social loss and demoralization contribute to illness and disease" (p. 712). An example of such sociosomatic processes are the corporeal responses to genocidal rape in which the victim of sexual violence carries both physical and psychological wounds, affecting not only the individual body but also the social since the stigma of rape implies on their ostracization from the community. Due to this marginalization, they are usually abandoned by their families and endure severe financial problems, making even harder to take care of the wounds and diseases related to the violations[112]. A victim of sexual violence during the genocide in Rwanda shared her experience of being a rape victim and how it is still painful to live with the wounds after so many years.

> "It is difficult [being a rape victim]…they [perpetrators] took everything from us. I lost a child, my husband, many relatives, and also my own body. I felt so much pain, I still suffer a little bit due to the injuries, and because those wounds will never go away even if they seem to be healing. I have scars on my body due to the beatings. I also have scars in my private parts and those are the ones who seem to never heal because it was too painful

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[112] See Alves, 2011 and Mukamana and Brysiewicz, 2008 for a detailed account on stigmatization of women victims of sexual violence during the genocide in Rwanda.

for me…I mean, it is not only the physical marks, they impacted on my whole life…(long pause), it is very difficult to live with them. But I am healthier now, I am getting better, I have people to share my experiences [she is referring to the other women victims of rape at Ineza] and this makes me feel better" (Bernadette, 2011. Personal communication, Kigali, 01 August).

Bernadette emphasized 'wounds that never seem to heal' as the ones that entangle the private and the social; the physical dimension of wounds is not the most painful part of violations, but the marginalization and affliction of being a rape victim in a patriarchal society. As Kleinman and Kleinman (1994) maintain, the social spaces of institutions and the body-self interweave, joining norms to sentiments, social meanings to cognition, social relationships to psychobiological responses (p. 712).

Another woman described how the memories of the past still impact on her social life, emphasizing her bodily responses to those memories:

"I stopped going to church [since the genocide], it was too painful to come back there. It was supposed to be a sacred place, the priests were supposed to help us, but it was like being in hell. Every time I pass by a church, I become in distress, my body shakes, and I start seeing what I saw in those days. It is not a pleasant experience, but I cannot control it, so I've been avoiding going to church. I still pray to God, but I prefer to do this alone. I talk to Him, I pray for Him to make me understand why we were abandoned. It is not easy to live like this, but I am getting better, I'm also seeing a counselor and sharing my experiences with my friends to work on this" (Josette, personal communication. Kigali, 01 August 2011).

Josette's memories and psychobiological responses intersect with her relationship with the Catholic Church; not only a specific and localized place but as an institution, since its role in perpetuating the genocide is widely known.

It is to these entanglements between places and bodies (my own body, other peoples' bodies, and nonhuman bodies) that I now turn, focusing on such encounters to address how memorialization necessarily involves generative forces distributed across bodies in a meshwork of entities unfolding. More than fixed sites awaiting interpretation, memorials are assembled through connections and mobilities enacting provisional spatiotemporal configurations.

4.4 Encountering frictional-materialities: performing and resisting dominant narratives in Rwanda post-genocide memorials

Figure 6: Map of three genocide memorials in Rwanda: 1) Kigali Genocide Memorial Center, in Kigali; 2) Murambi Genocide Memorial, in Nyamagabe; 3) Bisesero Genocide Memorial, in Karongi. Map created by author using Mapme; August 07, 2018.

4.4.1 Kigali Genocide Memorial Center (KGMC)

I visited Kigali Genocide Memorial on two occasions. The first time was in late July of 2011; the second was during the official week of mourning in 2014.

During those hundred days of the mourning period – the length of the genocide, from April 7 until July 4 – many commemoration events are celebrated around the whole country. Kigali Genocide Memorial is the place where the main event of the annual commemoration starts, ending at the Amahoro Stadium. On the 20th annual commemoration of the genocide at Amahoro Stadium, huge widescreens were transmitting live the Rwandan President Paul Kagame, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and other heads of state from all over the world lighting up the flame of remembrance at the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center and marking the start of the mourning period.

Before arriving at Kigali Memorial, the Kwibuka flame of remembrance (*Urumuri Rutazima)* was kindled by elder survivors using a traditional method of fire making, passing the flame to two 20-year-olds and initiating a nationwide tour, which comprises 30 stops between January and April (Kwibuka 20)[113]. All national memorial flames throughout the country stemmed from this single flame (CNLG)[114].

A huge wooden structure designed in the shape of a flame with bamboo sticks and ropes (Figure 7) also figured as a crucial part of the commemoration event at the Stadium. '*Urumuri Rutazima'* is relevant in commemoration because it symbolizes the light of remembrance, resilience, and courage of the Rwandan people; the light of life; a pathway of triumph over anger and depression illuminated by the flame, and the spread of it towards a brighter future (Kwibuka 20).

Figure 7: 20th commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi (photograph by author – April 2014).

The event at the Amahoro Stadium was intense. Horrifying screams coming from the audience interrupted a minute of silence for the victims of the genocide against the Tutsi and a survivor's testimony. The screams were so loud I

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[113]Available at: http://kwibuka.rw/ [accessed February 21, 2018].
[114]Available at: http://www.cnlg.gov.rw/ [accessed February 21, 2018].

could barely pay attention to the testimony, I felt like something bad was going to happen every time I heard a scream. It was not an uncommon reaction during the mourning week. I also saw a woman screaming and wheezing close to the mass graves at Kigali Memorial.

The first time I went to Kigali Memorial, in late July of 2011, the atmosphere was serene and reconciliation was the word of order. The second time was more agonizing: it seemed like the genocide was still happening, people were visibly in pain and trauma. As it was the first week of mourning, businesses were closed, people were suffering and remembering their lost ones; it was too overwhelming.
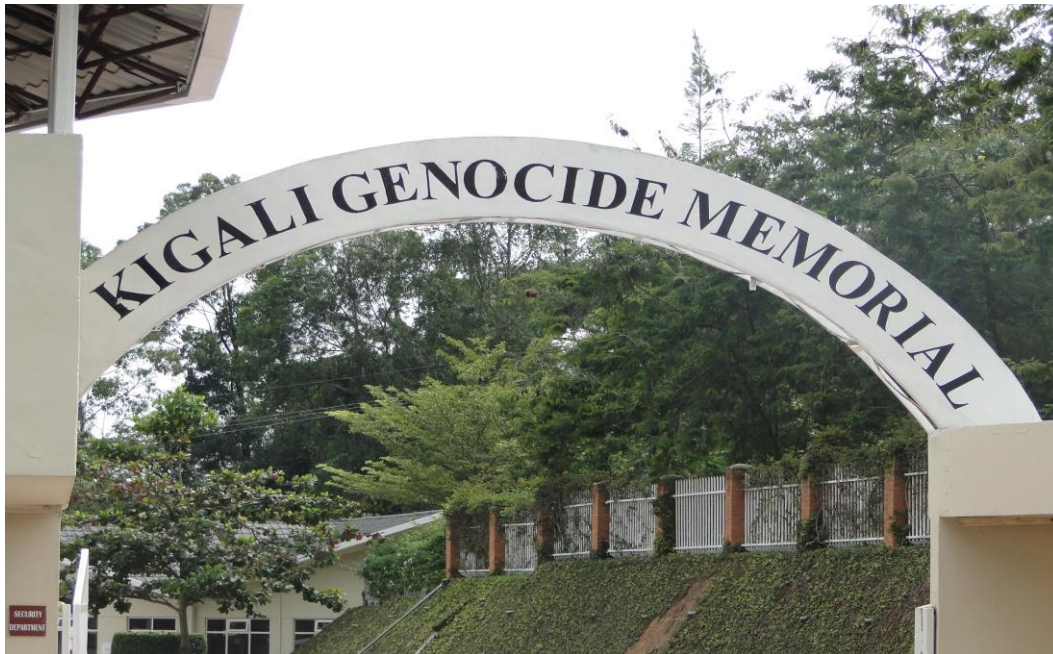
Figure 8: Main entrance Kigali Genocide Memorial Center (photograph by author – April 2014).

Being inaugurated on the 10th anniversary of the genocide, it is the main memorial to the genocide. Unlike the majority of national-level memorials – everyday sites where massacres took place – Kigali Memorial was not built at the time of the genocide, being purposely constructed as a site of memorialization afterward[115].

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[115] Bisesero Genocide Memorial was also constructed after the genocide as a site of memorialization; however, it can be considered a site of massacre due to its adjacency to the original place – the hill facing the memorial.

In order to create a national site of genocide remembrance, Kigali City Council donated the land and accounted for the maintenance of the building, while the British NGO Aegis Trust[116] was responsible for raising money and operate the memorial (Sodaro, 2018, p. 92). This public-private initiative means it is not only Aegis Trust that operates the memorial, but the place is also under the purview of the Rwandan government's National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG).

The museum permanent exhibitions, the mass graves, the memorial gardens, the documentation center (genocide archive) and an education

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[116] In preparation to open the UK's National Holocaust Center in 1995 as a warning from history, Aegis' founders were dazed by the genocide in Rwanda. The subsequent years were also filled by other mass atrocities, like the genocide in Srebrenica and the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. It was in this context that Aegis Trust was founded in 2000, with the aim to prevent genocide around the world. The Aegis Prevention Model has three phases: "Primary prevention – research, remembrance and learning about the past, creating community resilience against the risk of genocide in the future; Secondary prevention – evidence-based campaigns to stop mass atrocities in the present; Tertiary prevention – supporting survivors and communities to rebuild when genocide is past" (retrieved September 25, 2018 from: https://www.aegistrust.org/what-we-do/our-starting-point/). Aegis Trust sees a direct connection between education and prevention of genocide, so its memorialization efforts incorporate research, education, dissemination of information, and advice, in an attempt to learn from the past to prevent recurrence of mass atrocities. At the request of Rwandan authorities, Aegis Trust established Kigali Genocide Memorial Center in 2004 and continues to run it under contract to CNLG. CNLG is responsible for all matters related to the memorialization of the genocide, including the monitoring of content and form of genocide memorials. KGMC is the only genocide memorial run by Aegis Trust, although under the purview of CNLG. Aegis Trust is also responsible to manage Genocide Archive Rwanda, a project that comprises physical and digital archives with the aim to document and preserve the memory of the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda (retrieved September 25, 2018 from: https://www.aegistrust.org/what-we-do/activities/genocide-archive-rwanda/). The digital platform includes testimonies, videos, photos, documents, interactive maps, and also digital tours within genocide memorials, which is available at: http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Category:Memorials. Also, visit Genocide Archive Rwanda official website for more information and documents regarding the genocide: http://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome_to_Genocide_Archive_Rwanda. As Aegis Trust is committed to peace education, it has been developing, since 2008, a peace education programme where participants learn by doing. By 2016, the programme already covered 22 districts, through the Aegis-led Rwanda Peace Education Programme (RPEP) and the Genocide Research and Reconciliation Programme (GRRP). In 2014, Peace education was included as a crosscutting subject in Rwanda's new national curriculum. On February of 2017, Aegis Trust's new programme – Education for Sustainable Peace in Rwanda (ESPR) – was launched, supporting a curriculum change, embedding peace and values education in the classroom, while strengthening the skills of teachers through Peace Schools. This 3-year programme focuses on "four key agents of change: educators, young people, decision makers and researchers. It will promote critical thinking, empathy, trust and personal responsibility among educators and young people. The aim is to catalyse pluralistic and constructive exchange on genocide and peace building to improve policy and practice, and to promote social cohesion and sustainable peace in Rwanda" (retrieved September 25, 2018 from: https://www.aegistrust.org/new-aegis-programme-education-for-sustainable-peace-in-rwanda-launched-by-state-minister/). In this sense, Aegis Trust is not only involved in memorialization through designing panels and helping to provide a rich archive of the genocide but deeply involved in a broad conception of prevention that incorporates initiatives to transform education via curriculum change.

department compose the memorial complex. The museum is gloomy and dark, light is only provided to accentuate the materialities we can interact with. The path is more or less circular with corridors made of opaque brick walls, leading us chronologically through the past events. While bones, photographs, murder weapons, and victims' clothes account for the materiality of the genocide, the most notable are the wooden sculptures localized in a rotunda at the center of the museum and the stained glass windows.

Figure 9: Sculptures at Kigali Genocide Memorial Center (photograph by author – April 2014).

Twelve figures designed by a Rwandan artist, Laurent Hategekimana, depicted the moments before, during and after the genocide. Images of daily activities, images of suffering, and also expressions of hope intertwine in a very abstract design. The rotunda of sculptures calls attention due to its central position in the museum and the light that illuminates it. Apart from the direct smooth lighting, the rotunda is also illuminated by a stained glass window. This piece of art is called "The Way Forward", created by Ardyn Halter, son of an Auschwitz survivor. The image depicts some broken skulls at the base and a passage through a stair leading to a clear sky.

Figure 10: 'The Way Forward' by Ardyn Halter, 2004; 350 x 250cm; at Kigali Genocide Memorial Center.

The Israeli artist created one more stained-glass window, located in another corner of the museum towards the other rooms' main exhibition. In this one, called "Descent To Genocide", the broken skulls appear on the right side with machetes on the left side, the stairs are blocked with guns, and the sky is pulling down.

Figure 11: 'Descent to Genocide' by Ardyn Halter, 2004; 350 x 250cm; at Kigali Genocide Memorial Center.

While the written panels (with texts and photographs) explicitly refers to the genocide against the Tutsi, both artworks above – the rotunda of sculptures and the stained glass windows – do not make any reference to ethnicity depicting death, suffering, hope in very abstract terms, opening spaces to more flexible interpretations; for example, the Rwandan people in general as victims of the genocide, or the suffering as a permanent feature running away from reconciliation ideals. It also enables an understanding of genocide as a suffering for the whole humanity, not specifying a targeted national, ethnical, racial, or religious group, adopting a more transnational perspective. In this sense, local and global perspectives entangle with matter, discourse, and experience, enacting frictionalities that enable transformation through ambiguities and recalcitrances.

After exploring the museum in a chronological way through the panels addressing 'Before the Genocide', 'Genocide', 'Devastation', 'Reactions', 'After Genocide', and 'Long Term Consequences' – as the supposed pathway we should follow when visiting – I decided to stay a little bit in the area of the rotunda of sculptures to take some notes. While I was there, I saw a group of young Rwandans, guided by a woman leading them throughout the museum. She was mainly talking in Kinyarwanda, but she often shouts: "please stay together, do not

disperse!". I assumed she was a teacher conducting some activity with her students. One of the girls started to cry, and another wiped away her tears. The 'teacher' came closer trying to console her, but she was clearly in distress. Both went outside, and one more time the teacher said: "please stay together!". I have no way of knowing what exactly affected the girl, but based on other visitors' responses (and my own), I would say the whole traumatic environment of the museum affected her, arousing such bodily responses.

Just during the time I was visiting the museum exhibitions (approximately one hour), apart from the teenage girl, I saw two other people clearly affected from their engagement when visiting. The other one was a foreign woman visiting with her husband. They were right beside me, and he pushed the button to play a video depicting the dynamics of violence during the genocide. The content of the video is harsh, especially for those with a weak stomach: a child with a huge scar from a machete blow, a person sharpening the blade on a stone, and very graphic deaths and abandoned corpses. When the woman saw the scenes of killing at roadblocks she covered her eyes and hugged the husband, maintaining her eyes closed with her hands. She said: "Please let's just focus on the panels, those videos are too strong, Michael" (Fieldwork notes, KGMC, April, 2014). She was referring to the three videos that help to compose the museum exhibition in the 'Genocide' part. It is indeed difficult to watch them, but apart from the panels and videos containing testimonies and the dynamics of violence, there were glass boxes with bones and weapons used in the killings, bringing some extra tangibility to the moment.

Inspired by the Yad Vashem in Israel, and the National Holocaust Centre and Museum, created by the Smith brothers in the United Kingdom, Kigali Memorial evokes the universal character of the genocide and enforces the transnationalism of the memorial museum form to other cultures and contexts around the world (Sodaro, 2018, p. 86). Apart from the specificities of the genocide against the Tutsi, the memorial engages with genocide prevention and education not only at the local level but also globally.

The second part of the museum exhibition, 'Wasted Lives', is dedicated to accounting for genocide around the world: the genocide of the Hereros; the Armenian genocide; the Holocaust; the Cambodian genocide; and the genocide in

Srebrenica (Bosnia), and ethnic cleansing campaigns in the Balkans[117]. In Rwanda or elsewhere, KGMC urges visitors to take action in preventing genocide from happening. It appeals to "never again" as an effort that should be made globally, addressing the transnational flows of memory. In this regard, the memorial can be conceived as a model of cosmopolitan memory (Levy; Sznaider (2006), producing a transnational memorial imperative that circulates across (and beyond) national boundaries, shaping how different groups of people remember their own violent pasts and those of others in a global interconnectedness of genocide memory.

The most shocking part of the exhibitions for me was the last one, "Our Future Lost", devoted to the Rwandan children killed during the genocide, with photographs and plaques containing basic facts of their personality, likes and dislikes, and the way they were murdered. One plaque stated:

"Favorite toy: Doll
Favorite food: Rice and chips
Best friend: Her dad
Behaviour: A good girl
Cause of death: Smashed against a wall" (KGMC, 2014).

Compared to the other two parts of the exhibition, this room is more reflective and appeals to the senses. With minimal information and huge photographs of murdered children, it enacts an aura of fierce brutality. We can feel its affective force, eliciting psychosomatic responses. It was in this part that I saw the third visitor's bodily responses to his interaction with the museum. He was also a foreigner; we came together from the "Wasted Lives" exhibition part. We entered the room at the same time, though I was behind him. He froze. I almost bumped into him but managed to swerve. He then looked around (still in the same spot), murmured some words, and quickly left the room. He was definitely moved, yet paralyzed. Sensing the place and feeling the past through semiotic-materialities always evoke unpredictable responses, appealing to experience and meaning in interpreting the role of these engagements with practices of remembrance.

While my first and second visits were different in the affective responses they generated, the memorial changed very little in terms of content. In 2014, the

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[117] The panels depicted the general situation of conflict in the Balkans during the 1990's, but focused on the ethnic cleansing campaigns led by the Serbs in Bosnia – leading to the genocide in Srebrenica – and Kosovo, in what was denominated the process of Serbianisation (KGMC, 2014).

exhibitions were the same, but the memorial complex has changed, containing a recently inaugurated amphitheater and a permanent sculpture of the flame of remembrance. According to Hannah Lawson (2014)[118], the amphitheater shared the language of steps in the terraces of mass graves, bringing past and future together. She goes on stressing the dialectical elements coming together:

"The physical closeness adds meaning to this perhaps crucial element of the memorial site: the silence of the terraces, next to the gatherings and activities in the amphitheater; the presence of absence; the unspoken and spoken, together. It is said in Kigali that the genocide began with words, and only words can end its very dark shadow. We hope the Genocide Memorial Amphitheatre will make Kigali an internationally recognized place where a new language of acknowledgment and recognition can be spoken collectively" (Lawson, 2014).

There is also a masterplan to expand the complex, developing a new entrance and educational elements – which includes Kigali School of Genocide Studies and the African Center for Peace, that will provide a new design to the archives of KGMC (McCaslan; MASS Design Group)[119]. More than just a site for memorialization, Kigali Memorial is committed to genocide prevention globally. The memorial stresses the international threat of genocide ideology, being relevant transnationally. Furthermore, as Sodaro (2018) emphasizes,

"It is evident—from the international roots of the Kigali Centre and its inspiration in Holocaust memorialization, the international partnerships it engages in, the international visits and exchange by the museum staff to Germany, the United States, Israel and Poland, and its international ambitions—that the Kigali Centre is decisively part of what we might call the global "memory regime" (2018, p. 104).

Contrasting to other national-level memorials, Kigali is mainly dedicated to genocide prevention and education. For this reason, Genocide Archive of Rwanda has a collection of testimonies, video-recordings, photographs, documents, and interactive maps of the memorials. This archive is a way of digitally memorializing the genocide, providing a transnational circulation of memory and enabling new affective alliances. In combining memory and

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[118] See Lawson, 2014. Retrieved March 13, 2018 from https://www.ribaj.com/culture/after-the-genocide.
[119] John McAslan + Partners, Urban Designer and Landscape Architect. Retrieved March 13, 2018 from http://www.mcaslan.co.uk/the-initiatives-issue/kigali-memorial-centre/102. See also Mass Design Group for the details of the African Center for Peace design project. Retrieved March 13, 2018 from: https://massdesigngroup.org/work/design/kigali-genocide-memorial-african-center-peace.

technology, it reconceives scales and temporalities towards a trans-border effort to memorialize the genocide[120].

Approximately 259,000 bodies are buried in this memorial, the largest complex of mass graves of all memorials in Rwanda. Nevertheless, the bodies are not visible; only one part was opened with a glass wall showing coffins inside. Distinct from the other national memorials, Kigali memorial has only one section of its exhibition with human remains on display. More importantly, the bones are kept in smoked glass boxes with indirect light in an attempt to conjugate the necessity for evidence of the genocide with a decent burial for the victims.

As KGMC was constructed to be the main place of memorialization of the genocide against the Tutsi, it presents the most complete information with panels, photographs, touch screen videos, in a more scripted narrative of the genocide. The other memorials are more raw and dependent on the guides, focusing on the specificities of the events surrounding each site, with little formal information on the history of Rwanda more generally.

Although mainly focused on education, prevention, and reconciliation, Kigali memorial was targeted by two grenade attacks, in 2008 and 2009[121] during the period of commemoration, underlining the frictional character of memorialization and emphasizing this place as fragile and submitted to the constant negotiation of narratives. The memorial is filled with materialities, though some are more apparent than others in a process of conformity and contestation that sometimes ignores, silences, hides, and erases[122]. The bombings are symbolic in the sense that the memorial aims unity and reconciliation, but its existence produced spaces that contradict this goal.

4.4.2 Murambi Genocide Memorial

July 28, 2011 is still vividly carved in my memory. The day began with an immersion on the daily life of some students from the National University of

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[120] The transnationalization and delocalization of memory will be discussed in further details on section 4.6 of this chapter.

[121] See Karuhanga, James. One injured in grenade attacks on Gisozi Genocide Memorial, The New Times, April 16, 2009 (retrieved March 13, 2018 from http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/41259).

[122] At the time of my visits, there were no material vestiges of the grenades, or plaques indicating the location of explosions, not even as a way to condemn and repress such violent acts.

Rwanda, all orphans of the genocide. We sat in a circle, presented ourselves, and then we proceeded with questions about their life after the genocide. Questions on reconciliation, ethnicity, and forgiveness permeated our discussions and they explained to us how these things are interconnected. A young man emphasized his argument showing his arm: "This is not a Tutsi arm or a Hutu arm, it's a Rwandan arm" (Student A, personal communication, July 28, 2011). A girl also pointed to the power of forgiveness but stressed that it is not the same as forgetting: "What we endure should never be forgotten, but we need to forgive those who made us suffer because we need to move on" (Student B, personal communication, July 28, 2011). They described the role they had (and still have) in the life of one another and how they supported each other in "artificial families". Another guy explained carefully: "One student can be the mother and another one can be the father, the others will be the children; in that way we can help supporting many of us that seek for advice and comfort" (Student C, personal communication, July 28, 2011)[123].

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[123] See Association des Etudiants Et Éleves Rescapés Du Genocide (AERG) or Association for Student Genocide Survivors website for more information on how "artificial families" can help to overcome psychological trauma; financial problems; homelessness; lack of parental care; and difficulties with labour market insertion. Website: http://aerg.org.rw (retrieved February 4, 2018). See also Hayden, Sally. The 23-year-old with 24 kids: Genocide orphans form their own families, CNN, April, 24, 2014 (retrieved February 4, 2018 from https://edition.cnn.com/2014/04/24/world/23-year-old-24-kids-rwanda/index.html).

Figure 12: Murambi Genocide Memorial (photograph by Genocide Archive Rwanda). [124]

Our day continued with the group of students to Murambi genocide memorial, located in the Southern province, Gasaka sector, Nyamagabe district (formerly called Gikongoro). The scenery was of peace and beauty; the memorial lay in an open-ended low hill, surrounded by other hills full of green, singing birds, banana trees and some huts. As we entered the gate, our bus stopped in front of the main building, where a purple flag was hanging.

Purple used to be the color of mourning in genocide commemorations, but the color has changed to gray[125]. As stated by Jean de Dieu Mucyo, former executive secretary of CNLG, after conducting research on Rwandan traditions with elders and intellectuals, it was discovered that "traditionally, Rwandans were mourning their beloved ones by putting wood ashes upon their heads" and also that the purple color is a western and Catholic-based tradition used in ecclesiastic ceremonies. As "none among Tutsi were killed because of their faith, the color does not apply to the genocide against the Tutsi" (The New Times, 2013)[126].

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[124] Picture retrieved February 6, 2018 from: http://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Murambi_Memorial.

[125] I perceived this changing in colors of mourning when comparing first visits (in 2011) with the next visits (in 2014) to national-level memorials.

[126] See Musoni, Edwin. Genocide memorial: Change in colour for mourning, The New Times, April 1, 2013 (retrieved March 21, 2018 from http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/64436).

A young guide welcomed us and gave a scripted briefing of what happened during the genocide, highlighting disturbing aspects with intense comments. During the genocide, he explained, Murambi technical school was under construction. "Local authorities instructed the Tutsis fleeing from violence to gather at Murambi technical school where their safety would be secured; however, it was actually a plan to execute them more efficiently. Approximately fifty thousand people sought refuge at Murambi. On April 21st, Interahamwe and FAR soldiers attacked the school and exterminated around fifty thousand Tutsis" (Murambi guide, personal communication, July 28, 2011).

The tour began with the mass graves, where the guide explained that some bodies were reburied after being unearthed and approximately 848 bodies chosen to be kept on display. Those corpses - preserved in lime - make Murambi the most graphic of the six national genocide memorials I have visited during fieldwork.

Corpses seemed still in agony, filled with expressions marking their faces. Also, the fact that they were mummified emphasized their vitality; they seemed alive, yet they were dead. Clothes, hair, teeth, machete wounds and rosary beads contributed to providing a vivid account of the past. The rooms were carefully arranged: each had a thematic tone, representing in clear and accessible way what happened to those corpses – corpses with legs opened and vestiges of dresses and skirts, narrating the victims of sexual violence; corpses with machete wounds; corpses with amputated members; corpses of very young children.

After seeing the children's room, and going in and out from one room to another – all filled with laying corpses covered in lime –, I was nauseated. Clearly affected by those dead bodies, my bodily response was a reaction (both somatic and psychic) to the resemblance we share with them. I went outside to catch my breath and made a pause. While I was looking away from the rooms and focusing on the horizon, I saw a family on a hill close by. The children were playing, the woman was preparing a bonfire outside the hut, and the man was cutting sticks with his machete; then, he looked at me. I collapsed in tears.

The ordinary portrayal of the genocide in Rwanda kept disturbing me; there were no death camps, no gas chambers, no particular place or person to execute them, it was everywhere: family and friends chasing their own kin. While I was crying, one of the students came, putting her arms around me. She

whispered: "I'm sorry", apologizing for what I had to experience during this visit (Student B, personal communication, July 28, 2011).

It was the most shocking encounter with the physicality and materiality of the genocide I ever had at a memorial site. The bodies at Murambi capture the 'in-betweenness' of life and death, that moment when a body can be conceived as alive and dead at the same time. Past and present condensates, being hard to detach them. The liveness of those corpses can be felt in their positions, their flesh, hair, and teeth still remaining, their similarity with us. The killings were, most of the times, intimate and their final positions catch intensely this intimacy – arms above covering the head in an attempt to protect from an attack; mouths opened as if the person was shouting; a crack in the skull from a machete strike. As Jessica Auchter aptly underlines,

> "They disrupt all sense of temporality, because their death has already happened, yet we see them before their death has happened, but they are anticipating their own death. (…) They are frozen in an impossible moment" (2014, p. 65).

This impossibility of conferring a fixed temporality to those bodies is what makes them alive. They are both human and non-human matter. Their vitality lies not only on the previous status they used to inhabit (human beings) but also on their agency, vibrating through their instinct and emotions captured in the final moment, now as non-humans. Apart from the guide who overtly mentioned the genocide *against the Tutsi*, none of the corpses were identified by their ethnicity but by the way they died. I recalled discussing this particular observation with another member of our group; she said: "It is unquestionably different from other memorials in so many senses, but especially comparing with Kigali [Memorial], here I don't feel that need of overemphasizing Tutsi bodies". I had the same impression and added that a focus on their death enables a shared humanity, an identification with those bones and skulls as former humans regardless of their ethnicity (or nationality, or any other category that supposedly identify a person).

The tour continued to an empty hole in the ground, where it used to be a mass grave. We all looked at it and stayed silent, contemplating the affective force of absence; it was definitely not just an empty hole in the ground. It was the burial place of those victims – and not a decent one according to our view –, the final and sacred place where they rested after struggling to survive.

The guide elucidated that some mass graves were so full of people that the corpses took longer to decompose; they were too close to each other and the preservation of the bodies is also affected by the way in which they were laying in mass graves. According to Haglund, Connor, and Scott,

> "In a mass grave where the bodies are adjacent, the mass creates its own microenvironment affecting preservation. While the bodies at the edge of the grave begin to skeletonize, the bodies at the core of the grave preserve and can remain fleshed for years after deposition" (2001, p.58).

This was precisely the case of those mummified corpses we just saw laying on wooden tables. On the other hand, some bodies were so intermingled that it was not possible to identify a complete individual. As Haglund, Connor, and Scott emphasize, this dispersion can occur due to several factors, including: "(1) consumption and scattering by scavenging animals; (2) scattering and burial through agricultural activity; (3) disturbance by local foot traffic; (4) down-slope movement assisted by gravity and rain water, and (5) incomplete collection and reburial by local residents" (2001, p. 60). In such assemblage, organic matter, animals, environmental factors and human interference are all relevant actants blurring the natural/social divide.

On the back of the memorial, the guide showed us the places of other former mass graves, but this time they were not open. The most striking one exhibiting a plaque written: "French soldiers were playing volley here". Since the region was located in the former Zone Turquoise, created and controlled by French troops, the discovery of mass graves under the volleyball court illustrates the role of France in the genocide and the plaque registers a clear criticism of it. There was also a plaque near the entrance showing where the French flag was placed during Opération Turquoise.

Even twenty years after the genocide, during the commemoration event at Amahoro Stadium, President Paul Kagame criticized the role of France in the genocide. In the speech, there was no direct accusation of complicity, but the words were carefully chosen. To avoid any doubts, the use of the French words "*les faits sont têtus*"[127] with an emphatic pause in a speech conducted in English was enough to clarify the reference.

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[127] "Facts are stubborn" in English.

"Historical clarity is a duty of memory that we cannot escape. Behind the words 'Never Again', there is a story whose truth must be told in full, no matter how uncomfortable. (…) People cannot be bribed into changing their history. And no country is powerful enough, even when they think that they are, to change the facts. After all, *les faits sont têtus*" (Speech by President Paul Kagame, 20th Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi, Amahoro Stadium, 7 April 2014).

A room full of racks with wooden shelves in what was supposed to be a classroom was the next stop of the tour. Instead of books, the shelves exhibited a remarkable number of clothes of the dead. They were rotting and with mold, decomposing but also attesting the materiality of the lives they once belonged to.

Figure 13: Clothes on wooden shelves at Murambi Genocide Memorial (photograph by Genocide Archive Rwanda)[128].

We ended the tour where we were supposed to begin – in the main building, where freshly installed panels recounting the genocide had been inaugurated a month or two before our arrival. At that time, the museum did not have the disposition it has today, containing only panels in a similar vein to the ones at Kigali Genocide Memorial, both sponsored by the British NGO Aegis

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[128] Picture retrieved February 6, 2018 from: http://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Murambi_Memorial.

Trust[129]. The museum also had an old transistor radio on display, which was playing recorded messages of incitement against Tutsi: "the graves are not yet full" was the main slogan of the RTLM genocidal campaign. I stayed still for a couple seconds, just wondering how a survivor would react when pushing that button. I then realized there was a group of them with us, but they stayed outside the museum. I think it was the right decision. The centrality of this object to the genocide is noteworthy. As the main object to communicate with the masses, especially in rural areas, the radio was crucial in the process of widening and amplifying the involvement of the whole population in exterminating the Tutsi.

It was my first visit to Murambi, but not to other people of the group who debated overtly on their perception that a guiding narrative is under construction and the stories becoming less nuanced and more linear every year. I asked the person that had been several years at Murambi what changes he noted:

> "The first time I came here there was no guide or preparation, just those rooms packed with limed bodies, the stink was terrible and some of the windows bore the UN stamp. Other times when we returned years later, there was a guide – one of the few survivors – to receive us, he could barely speak and he had a divot in his forehead from a bullet. The third time we saw him, he was healthier and happier, he remarried and formed a new family. The plant of the place improved with different areas of exhibition and this year a museum with posters laying out a concise history of the genocide at large and details on what happened in this place. Our former guide is not here, but an energetic young man who tendered rehearsed paragraphs and guided us very responsibly and efficiently. Where once they encouraged pictures, now they are no longer permitted" (Erik, personal communication, July 28, 2011).

This passage points out important changes in spatiotemporal configurations of the memorial. If in the beginning the place was more like ruins of *in loco* violence and failed prevention, denounced by stinking corpses and UN stamps; nowadays, the memorial combines structured panel exhibitions and a young guide who offers efficient walking tours explaining the background and the dynamics of genocide. This change indicates a conversion of lived experience into structured narratives, with Rwandan youth occupying a central role. As noted by Erin Jessee (2017), this new generation of guides are "often English-speaking descendants of returnees, who had formal training in genocide studies or related fields" (p. 69). A point confirmed by a Rwandan student who was enrolled in a

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[129] While Aegis Trust runs Kigali Genocide Memorial Center under contract to CNLG, Murambi Genocide Memorial is run by CNLG that called upon Aegis Trust to design the panels of the small exhibition.

post-graduate course on Genocide Studies and Prevention at the time of my second fieldwork:

> "Young Rwandans who are being trained in Genocide Studies and Prevention or Peace Studies and Conflict Transformation are now replacing the survivors, who used to rely only on lived experience, offering a more prepared personnel to work in the memorials and filling this knowledge gap on genocide and post-conflict reconstruction; they [former memorial guides] were definitely not prepared for that!" (Student at University of Rwanda/Centre for Conflict and Management (UR/CCM), personal communication, April 08, 2014).

I recently made a virtual tour using the Internet to "return" to many of the previously visited places at Murambi[130]. I noted significant changes in the memorial: the museum – in spiral design now – presents a more comprehensive narrative, recurring to panels, objects, and videos in close similarity to the ones displayed at Kigali Genocide Memorial; there are also two rooms with smoked glass containing burial chambers in a more 'sanitized' way to provide evidence of the genocide; upstairs we can now find a film room; and outside there is a metal roof above the mass graves (probably to protect the coffins from water damage), fences with ribbons attached to it – where visitors can write messages and put them on display –, and a place where "*Urumuri Rutazima*", the flame of remembrance, lights up during the mourning and commemoration period.

4.4.3 Bisesero Genocide Memorial

This memorial is probably the most isolated of all national memorials. It is located up on the hill, surrounded by green valleys with a breathtaking view of Lake Kivu. The memorial is about 30 kilometers from the city of Kibuye, in the Western Province (formerly Kibuye Province, between Gisenyi and Cyangugu Provinces)[131].

The road to Bisesero is not easily accessible, especially during the rainy season – from March to May. Rocks, red soil, sticks, a hilly road, and a regular car (instead of a 4x4) made the trip uncomfortably anguishing, although this

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[130] Virtual tour at Murambi Memorial. Retrieved March 14, 2018 from: http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=Murambi_Memorial&gsearch=.

[131] In 2006, Rwanda's administrative restructuration changed the names of places at all levels, including villages. However, many people still refer to these places by its former names. As I am more familiarized to those former names, I opt to also mention them in a way to clarify the exact place during the genocide. For more on the practical implications of the restructuration see Thomson, Susan. Whispering Truth to Power: Everyday Resistance to Reconciliation in Postgenocide Rwanda. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2013.

feeling quickly vanished as soon as I saw the valleys and the sun at Lake Kivu. Going up to the hills I was very excited, surrounded by smiling people and the stunning beauty of nature and, for a couple of minutes, I forgot I was going to a genocide memorial. Nothing in that landscape reminded me death or the brutality of machete blows; on the contrary, I never felt so blessed for witnessing the beauty of life.

In the entrance of the memorial, there is an inverted *Arc du Triomphe*, resembling the horns of a cow. According to the guide, this is a reference to the cattle-breeding activity of the Abasesero – a community of pastoralist Tutsis that lived in the area – and also symbolizes the victory of life over death. At the time I went to Bisesero there was nothing written on it, but now it says: "*Urwibutso Rwa Jenoside Yakorewe Abatutsi Bisesero 1994*" (Memorial for the Genocide Against the Tutsi Bisesero 1994)[132].

After resisting for a couple months, approximately 50,000 Tutsis were killed fighting against the Hutu militias. The guide mentioned a turning point that helped to exterminate more Tutsis. According to him, when French soldiers from Opération Turquoise arrived at Bisesero, many Tutsis came out of their hiding places to ask for help. The soldiers said they would come back in three days for their rescue; however, as soon as they departed, Hutu militias resumed their work more vigorously. When the French came back, many days later, the vast majority was already killed (Bisesero guide, personal communication, April, 2014).

The guide highlighted the courage and resistance of the people of Bisesero. According to him, the uniqueness of Bisesero is due to the resistance of the human spirit that refused to die without fighting the evil. Merging suffering and resistance, the guide emphasized both the genocide against the Tutsi and the resistance of Rwandan people, focusing on the strength of people from Bisesero as fierce fighters – children, adults, or old people – united to endure violence.

Located in a hilly area, many residents strategically took refuge on top of the *Muyira* Hill, where they could see the enemies. Aware of their intention to fight the Hutu militias, many Tutsis from Kibuye joined them at Bisesero. They

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[132] I noticed this change when navigating Bisesero Memorial through the virtual tour available at: http://www.genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php?title=Bisesero_Memorial&gsearch=. Retrieved March 15, 2018.

used only stones and spears in the combats: an element displayed by a monument of a stone with nine spears, each representing a sector of Kibuye Prefecture[133].

Figure 14: Monument of the weapons of resistance (photograph by author – April 2014).

The memorial also has nine buildings, each one divided into clusters of three, distributed along a steep zigzagged pathway with half-walls restricting the passage to replicate the way victims had to ascend when fleeing from the Hutu masses and how it was difficult to resist.

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[133] Before the administrative reforms, Kibuye was one of the twelve prefectures (now provinces) of Rwanda. After 2006, the territorial reform unified Cyangugu, Gisenyi, and Kibuye Prefectures, forming the Western Province.

Figure 15: Pathway leading to mass graves at Bisesero Genocide Memorial (photograph by author – April 2014).

Bisesero was inaugurated on April 7, 1997, and, at the time of my visit, the memorial was being renewed and about to set a renovated place for mass graves; it was reopened on June 27 of 2014 (CNLG)[134]. During the tour, the guide underlined the memorial was not completed at the time of my visit due to lack of funds, pointing out to the necessity of modernization; although I thought the memorial was extremely powerful precisely because of its absences.

Bisesero seemed more dedicated to the particularity of the local, emphasizing its uniqueness in resisting the genocide than focusing on the universal character of genocide. It lacked any formal exhibition with panels or plaques. There was only bones and skulls of the victims in the rooms, but not carefully placed. They were lying on the ground inside a half-walled site wrapped by a tarpaulin to protect them from moisture. The guide explained to me that as soon as the memorial receives more money, it would exhibit the bones of the victims more properly in those rooms.

[134] See CNLG, 'US Ambassador in Rwanda visited Bisesero genocide memorial', September 4 , 2017 (retrieved March 15, 2018 from: http://cnlg.gov.rw/news-details/?L=0&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=2249&cHash=52e283f424e81ee3da52a65e70ec1ca2).

Figure 16: Skulls at Bisesero Genocide Memorial (photograph by author – April 2014).

There were also many coffins containing remains covered with a purple cloth, which were from the former mass graves. Up in the hill, there was a construction site. "These mass graves are being remodeled and extended to accommodate the remains of our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers", the guide said in a tone of relief (personal communication, April 2014). The former mass graves were not decent since environmental factors, such as humidity and rains, were damaging the coffins.

Figure 17: Mass graves being remodeled (photograph by author – April 2014).

On our way back, I noticed the guide walking with difficulty. He was limping due to an injury in his leg suffered during the genocide. While approaching the resting place of other victims of the genocide – a room full of skulls and bones with a corrugated metal roof near the entrance –, he stopped to show me his scars. I was puzzled by his role as a guide who experienced the genocide and carries a scar. The scar, a trait inscribed on his body as both individual and collectively relevant, called my attention since it functions as an indelible memory, inconsistent with the reconciliation ideal.

As Brent Steele argues, scars "are a 'mark' left on the body from an injury, a reminder that we have reached a particular level of vulnerability – our body resists something foreign to it, and builds up tissue around the mark as a defense" (2013, p. 7). Besides being a physical scar marking the wounded body at the individual level, it is also material evidence accounting for the horrors that produced it, having a role in collective remembrance. The wounds are not yet closed but presumably healed. The absence of the whole denounces what happened by the presence of the scar. In this sense, the scar figures as individual and collective; material and social; presence and absence.

In "The Strategy of Antelopes", Hatzfeld (2009) interviewed a survivor who describes the difficulty of living with an apparent scar in a post-genocide society:

"Cassius: 'At my age, of course I ought to prefer soccer games, action films, jokes and drinks with friends. But for me, pastimes are something different. **I think about 1994 every day, especially when I remember how I'm not like everyone else. I think about my hiding place, my wound, my dead family**. (…) I don't have any true friends, except a few survivors here and there with whom I can agree to talk about the genocide. Girls speak to me but not personally at all. I don't feel any attraction to them. I'd rather spend my spare time at the memorial than taking walks to flirt. I'm held tight by a lack of willpower. Girls like fancy talk, but me, I just don't feel in the mood to come up with those clever things (…). Still, I do believe that I'll get married someday, out of respect for my parents, on account of I'm the only survivor in my family and I don't want our line to die. For an African, that would be the deepest shame. **But it wouldn't be a good thing for me to marry a normal girl, with whom I couldn't properly share a survivor's feelings. Enduring weeks and weeks with a wound festering with wriggling insects is unimaginable for anyone who hasn't lived through it.** It's simply unacceptable. One can be helped and comforted, but being understood – that's something else entirely. **My scar is too noticeable. It stripes my head, it's eye-catching. I'd like to hide it; it messes me up. Even with a big herdsman's hat, I can't cover it. If my memory forgets a thing, some people say, 'Yes, he lost his mind, you can see that'. If I screw up, they tell me, 'Don't worry, my friend, it isn't you, it's that bad wound showing on your head'. Some folks may even whisper about me, 'No point in asking him what tribe he's from: it's drawn on his skull'. I think it's humiliating to be marked this way. You can be mocked anytime, you can be insulted when you meet up with the children of killers. I think it influences my distrust of girls, since they can "hush-hush" about my wound**. I'd rather stand aside, so it won't be noticed. (…) **There are survivors who want to forget a little, since they have stayed the way they're supposed to be. They don't forget anything, but they shorten their memories so they can look toward the future. They don't want to wind their lives around their memories.** Or they fear bothering and boring people by always telling what happened; they feel in the way, they're afraid of ending up unwanted, so they try to keep quiet. They feel they've lost enough already. Or they're terrified of the authorities and dread going against the new rules about correct behavior. They listen politely to the humanitarian advice. **They learn the proper manners for mutual understanding to avoid any reprisals. They hope for advantages and decide to adopt the politics of national reconciliation. But someone who's badly wounded just couldn't care less. He ignores manners, disdains all that hugging. He doesn't want to have anything to do with Hutus, refuses to watch those guilty people rejoining their families, weighing the bags of their harvests, pilling up goods. The first thing he sees in his new existence is his scar, and he thinks about the consequences that secretly come with it. He knows he must live with it all on his own. Wherever he looks, he finds the genocide, simply from guessing that everyone's eyes all around are on his survivor's scar** (Hatzfeld, 2009, p. 157 – 160, my emphasis).

Cassius' testimony highlights how the materiality of violence inscribed on the body of a survivor intersects with temporality, affecting collective remembrance. The scar is not merely a consequence of genocidal violence, but also, and more importantly, an indelible trace that disturbs Cassius and other people he interacts with in his daily-life precisely because it defies temporal containment; the scar cannot be confined to past events. In this sense, the material

persistence of the scar removes Cassius from social coexistence, making him a hostage of his own body – a body that is 'a place of memory' – standing aside to avoid displaying what Mbembe (2003) called 'the morbid spectacle of severing' (p. 35).

We ended the tour at the bottom of the memorial, near the monument of spears and stones. The guide was looking into the horizon when he said: "we can almost only focus on this [pointing to the stunning view of green hills with sunbeams illuminating Lake Kivu], right?! It is non-sense how violence can destroy such beauty" (Bisesero guide, personal communication, April, 2014). I paused just to contemplate the view and reflect on his words; we both looked into the horizon for at least a minute, silently. Then, he added: "I'm glad people like you are interested in coming from distant places to learn about what happened here; Bisesero doesn't receive many foreign tourists like Kigali or Nyamata memorials, it is too hidden and difficult to access through those rocky roads" (Bisesero guide, personal communication, April, 2014). His comment made me feel a little bit guilty or ashamed since I was there as a researcher, having some kind of strange pleasure in experiencing all those memorials. Pleasure here should be understood as the state of being gratified for having the opportunity to conduct research on these memorials. In the case of Bisesero, it can also be understood as a delight regarding the landscape surrounding the memorial. Nonetheless, they are genocide memorials, which necessarily makes them places of violence, death, and trauma; and, consequently, it is assumed such places cannot produce any kind of pleasure (apart from those that are deviant or perverse).

This encounter with other bodies (the guide, human remains, monuments, and other materialities) illustrates the complexities that permeate the operations of affect and emotion and how they are always interconnected. Try to untangle them is useless, but I can try to describe their interrelation by adjusting emphasis. While a focus on critical reflection censures my own pleasures, my mind judging and classifying me as guilty or ashamed; a focus on bodily sensations and emotions enables more pleasured encounters, freed from self-censorship.

4.5 Different modes of memory gatherings: cosmopolitan gaze, dead gaze, and native gaze

Comparing the three tours, the less scripted and focused on personal experiences was the one at Bisesero. The role of the guide in combining history with story in non-structured narratives emphasizes the role of lived experiences in memorialization, placing Bisesero in what we call a *native gaze*. Bisesero memorial is unique in various senses, but most important: it was the only memorial that emphasized resistance more than social suffering; official information in panels or plaques was completely absent, being necessary to rely on the guide to understand the design and stories surrounding the memorial.

Although we argue that all national-level memorial sites are opened to alternative views and overlappings, if we move from a more ingrained to a more volatile design, we can argue that KGMC is by far the one presenting a more structured narrative of the genocide with panels fixing it, being followed by Murambi (that combines both the structured narratives of panels with the guide showing vestiges of the genocide), and then Bisesero as the most grassroots of all memorial tours. This fixity of the narratives into formal and structured panels suggest an attempt to tame the flux of things (and memories) always revolved in its vitality; to pause time and (re)situate the past in the present, also framing it towards the future; and to localize provisional configurations into a specific place. Nonetheless, in a movement of perpetual becoming, memorials are prone to metamorphose, embedded in rhizomatic meshworks of different intensities that always enable new forms of remembering and forgetting. We argue that the encounters between memory, materiality, and affect can evoke other possibilities to memorialize, focusing on more-than-textual embodied experiences. In a similar perspective, Koselleck summarizes:

> "(…) the identities that a memorial is intended to evoke melt away – in part because sensory receptivity eludes the formal language presented and in part because the forms, once shaped, begin to speak another language than the one from which they were initially fashioned. Memorials, like all works of art, have a surplus potential to take on a life of their own. For this reason, the original meaning of countless memorials is no longer recognizable without recourse to inscriptions or other empirically comprehensible reference signals" (2002, p. 324).

Another relevant difference between the memorials concerns the way they address the mass killings in 1994. While Bisesero's guide sometimes referred to the event as 'massacres' and as 'the genocide in Rwanda', the guides in Murambi and the audio-guide in Kigali referred to it as 'the genocide against the Tutsi'.

Moreover, instead of underlining the suffering of people from the region, the guide in Bisesero emphasized the way people fought back with the weapons they had, constantly referring to the memorial as 'national resistance memorial'. In stressing national resistance, it opened space for broader conceptions, like the people of Rwanda in general as resisting genocide, and not only the Tutsis. Although the guide also constantly referred to the genocide *against the Tutsi*, it was not in a doctrinarian and categorical way.

Naming the event is not only about semantics but also profoundly political, since the words being used carry very different meanings. As mentioned by Mugiraneza (2009), and Dumas and Korman (2011), different expressions were used in the memorials to refer to the events of 1994. Nonetheless, with the constitutional reform of 2008 a standardization of the inscriptions can be observed, clearly identifying the victims from this point forward (Dumas and Korman, 2011, p. 34).

The tour in Murambi focused mainly on two aspects. First and foremost, the memorial emphasized the corpses of genocide victims, displaying them in a very graphic form as an attempt to provide evidence and avoid genocide denial – in what we termed a *dead gaze*. Second, it underlined the role of the international community in enabling this to happen by its inertia. Moreover, it condemned the role of France under Opération Turquoise in supporting the perpetrators and mistreating human remains. The guide in Bisesero also criticized France's involvement in the genocide, but the resistance of people gained prominence in the narratives.

Although all the memorials have the purpose to educate and prevent future genocide, the pedagogical strategies of Kigali Memorial are more co-opting, combining panels, affective elements, bones, mass graves, and educational features. The memorial points to the necessity of preventing genocide through education in a transnational approach. In this regard, it points to global efforts in at least two senses: First, concerning the necessity to recognize the destructive legacies of colonial and post-colonial interference, exemplified by the role of colonialism, racial theories, inertia of international community, and involvement of other countries. Second, it focuses on promoting education through researching on previous genocides around the world to avoid repetition, urging that "never again" should be a global moral obligation. By doing this, Kigali Memorial

underlines a culture of memorializing the genocide that transcends national borders, accentuating global responsibility towards prevention evincing a more *cosmopolitan gaze*.

4.6 Transnationalization and delocalization of memory

Apart from being a place to memorialize and mourn the victims of genocide; to prevent genocide denial displaying bones, clothes, testimonies, mass graves, and photographs that enable multi-sensorial engagements; and to educate the visitors claiming to the moral imperative of "never again"; KGMC distinguish itself from other national-level memorials due to its physical and *digital* platform of memorialization.

Aegis Trust in collaboration with CNLG created the *Genocide Archive of Rwanda*[135] in 2010. Originally, it was developed in response to the need for preserving and storing all the information collected in preparation for the inauguration of KGMC's exhibitions (Aegis Trust, 2018)[136]. The physical archive holds more than 1,500 audiovisual recordings and 20,000 documents and photographs available at KGMC complex. Whereas the physical archive is only accessible locally, the digital archive is available globally through an online platform containing more than 8,000 testimonies from survivors and perpetrators, videos, audio clips, photos and documents, material from TV and print media, and interactive maps of memorial sites (Ibidem). The digital archive was developed in collaboration with specialists from University of Texas Libraries and is being updated regularly. It aims to eventually contain copies of all recordings and scans of all documents and photographs held at the physical archive (Ibidem). The conversion of material documents into digital can suggest a move to refrain the ephemerality of memory, both concerning its elusive character and its material form (documents, photographs, and other data) preserving it from decay.

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[135] The archive was developed with assistance from Rwanda Development Board/Information Technology, University of Texas Libraries, University of Southern California Shoah Foundation Institute, Annenberg Foundation, and Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Genocide Archive Rwanda official website available at: http://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Welcome_to_Genocide_Archive_Rwanda.

[136] Retrieved September 28, 2018 from: https://www.aegistrust.org/what-we-do/activities/genocide-archive-rwanda/.

In such digital platform, humans, materialities, and technologies interweave amplifying the scope of memorialization. We argue that this initiative produces a transnational circulation of memory, enabling new possibilities of affective engagements globally and virtualizing the memory of the genocide in a movement of *delocalization*. In this sense, the memory of the genocide is no more confined to the local or national level and limited to its temporal reach, but expands in new global alliances that intensify mobility with no pre-established locality.

Digital archives – embedded in this local-global dynamic where 'here and now' can be felt and explored pretty much anywhere – allow people from all over the world to interact with such memories not only through accessing photographs, documents, and testimonies, but actually live the virtual experience of visiting memorials. But are the experiences of digital tours comparable to being physically present at the site?

In 360-degree virtual tours, visitors can explore memorial sites moving the camera to show whatever angle they want. The memorials usually display clothes, shoes, objects, bones, bloodstains, and photographs of the victims in a way to provide visitors an engagement with genocidal violence face-to-face and to educate future generations. As Haskins (2007) suggest, digital memory condensates modern archival memory with traditional lived memory "by combining the function of storage and ordering on the one hand, and of presence and interactivity on the other" (p. 402).

The tangibility of death and violence through encounters with semiotic-materialities offers a vivid account of the particularities and dynamics of genocide in each memorial. The three-dimensional tours capture the peculiarities of the places in greater details and stunning realistic images can give a sense of actually living the place. Nevertheless, digital tours do not allow touching, smelling, hearing, and tasting, losing a considerable part of interacting with the environment. Concerning the memorials sites so far uploaded into Genocide Archive of Rwanda, the tours could introduce recourses to auditive and improve haptic stimulations; present more than static panoramas; and enrich interaction with the surrounding landscape. In this perspective, we argue that although in virtual tours visitors' sensorial and visceral encounters are considerably

diminished, it does not exclude the possibility of affective responses in 'near-there experiences'.

Another aspect of the transnationalization of memory concerns the application (still in process) of Kigali, Murambi, Bisesero, and Nyamata memorials to qualify as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. In 2012, CNLG submitted the four memorials to the Tentative List underscoring their outstanding universal value[137]. Beginning with an emphasis on the role of colonialism in adopting divisionist policies that culminated in the genocide against the Tutsi, the justification calls attention to memorial sites as both "testimony to the intolerance of man facing his peer, and the symbol of a firm commitment so that genocide shall never happen again in Rwanda or anywhere else" (UNESCO, 'Genocide Memorial Sites: Nyamata, Murambi, Bisesero and Gisozi', 2018, my translation)[138]. It points out the idiosyncrasies of each memorial and how they contribute to fight the crime of genocide, crime against humanity, and genocidal ideology and denial, conceiving them as memorials of humanity.

In order to be included on the World Heritage List, "sites must be of outstanding universal value and meet at least one of the ten selection criteria" (UNESCO, 'Nomination Process', 2018)[139]. In this regard, the submission addresses two criteria:

> "(iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
>
> (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria)" (UNESCO, 'The Criteria for Selection', 2018)[140].

The former underlines a country marked by the extermination of more than a million people horribly killed in a hundred days. It points out the role of memorial sites in preserving material evidence of the genocide against the Tutsi

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[137] The application was submitted on June 15, 2012. The original document with the title "Sites mémoriaux du génocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Bisesero et Gisozi" (reference number: 5753) was submitted in French. The submission is available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5753/. Retrieved October 6, 2018.

[138] In the original: "Les sites mémoriaux proposés pour inscription sont, d'une part, le témoignage de l'intolérance de l'homme en l'encontre de son semblable et le symbole d'un engagement ferme pour que le génocide ne se reproduise plus au Rwanda comme partout ailleurs, d'autre part".

[139] The details of the whole process are available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/nominations/. [Accessed October 6, 2018].

[140] Available at: https://whc.unesco.org/en/criteria/ [Accessed October 6, 2018].

and illustrating the process of exclusion of a population group. Moreover, the memorials are relevant to Rwanda and to the international community, serving not only as a real testimony of what happened but also as a way to prevent genocide from happening again. For this reason, the document underlines its educational function in presenting to future generations what exactly happened, consequently contributing to peaceful coexistence and respect for human dignity (UNESCO, 'Genocide Memorial Sites: Nyamata, Murambi, Bisesero and Gisozi', 2018).

The later criteria highlights how genocide memorial sites are places of collective memory for the whole humanity since, on the one hand, they symbolize the intolerance of man leading to the extermination of a group of Rwandans, the Tutsi; and, on the other hand, a place of commitment to prevent genocide from happening again in Rwanda and elsewhere, claiming for the moral imperative of "never again". Furthermore, the memorials are associated with a living tradition in which Rwandans and foreigners go, especially from April to July, for meditation. Throughout this period, a flame is lit at Gisozi as a hope of life for the survivors and a beacon to live in a world without genocide for current and future generations (Ibidem). Hence, the submission focused on how these memorial sites are relevant not only to Rwandans but a *heritage to humankind*, affirming they not only memorialize but also educate and prevent genocide around the world. In suggesting a common importance for present and future generations of all humanity, the document aims to transcend national boundaries, emphasizing memorial sites as a heritage of outstanding significance to the international community as a whole in a movement of transnationalization of genocide memory.

To be considered a World Heritage Site it is necessary to justify its outstanding universal value by demonstrating its integrity and authenticity and providing an initial comparison with other similar properties in a wider global or regional context. Regarding the former, the document indicates that while Nyamata and Murambi were originally a church and a technical school (respectively) being converted into memorials, Bisesero and Gisozi were already erected as memorial sites. Apart from some rehabilitation in Nyamata and Murambi, the memorials are preserved in their original state, and all memorials exhibit tangible evidence of genocide – like objects used to kill the victims, clothes and other belongings of the victims – also preserved in their initial state.

In this perspective, the authenticity and integrity of the sites are attested by the material evidence they contain and preserve.

Concerning similar properties at the national level, the document points out that although they bear similarities with other memorials – especially Ntarama, Nyarubuye and Mwulire –, Nyamata, Murambi, Bisesero and Gisozi are particularly distinct due to the large size of graves in which victims are buried, the degree of conservation of evidence, and the resistance to genocide in the case of Bisesero. At the international level, the memorials are compared to the Yad Vashem Museum and Memorial in Israel, to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome) in Japan, and to Auschwitz Birkenau German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp (1940-1945) in Poland. After indicating their similarities, the documents underlines that Rwandan memorials display human remains, weapons used to kill them and victim's belongings; they are located in buildings that used to be everyday places, like churches and schools; they display the weapons of defense and resistance against genocide; they are located in many places throughout the whole country, attesting genocide was widespread.

After submitting to the Tentative List, the memorials will be nominated as "Sites mémoriaux du génocide: Nyamata, Murambi, Gisozi et Bisesero", then evaluated by the Advisory Bodies, and eventually await the final decision on its inscription by the intergovernmental World Heritage Committee. In the meantime, expert meetings can be conducted to evaluate the sites, such as the World Heritage Convention and Memory Sites Workshop held in Rwanda from 7 to 9 November of 2016. Following the discussions, recommendations were presented in a draft developed by CNLG and UNESCO:

> " (...) the need to form a steering committee to focus on the most appropriate way forward for the Sites of Memorial of Genocide; ensuring full legal protection and management for the sites; integrating genocide education into national curriculum; reaching out to new partners and donors for an interdisciplinary and inter-generational approach to memory heritage; and involving the multiple voices of local communities as well as the diaspora in site interpretation and safeguarding" (UNESCO, 2016)[141].

In this regard, to qualify as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, they will have to attend the parameters concerning the required infrastructure and adequate

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[141] Available at: http://whc.unesco.org/en/news/1585 [accessed October 6, 2018].

explanation of the genocide in Rwanda. We argue that in acquiring such 'adequate explanation', the memorials run the risk of standardization, also losing a significant character – the guide as the cultural mediator of the genocide –, especially in the case of Bisesero.

The inclusion of these memorial sites as World Heritage stirs sensible questions: how memories of a particular place can be of relevance to the whole humanity? How to avoid partiality if memories are always partisan in one way or another and embedded in politics? How the inscription of memorial sites as world heritage may end up fixing memorialization? All those questions were already considered by UNESCO World Heritage Committee[142] in previous nominations and call attention to the fact that memorialization is part of *highly dynamic processes and practices* of post-conflict reconciliation. In this sense, fixing memorial sites in relation to its outstanding universal value might raise inconsistencies since they were attributed such value at the time of inscription but are embedded in the always changing political reality of memorializing conflict (ICOMOS, April, 2018).

Decay, abandonment, alterations, and modernizations are all processes that impact on how we memorialize and must always consider the work of human and nonhuman actants intermingling and provisionally stabilizing a spatiotemporal configuration. In overlooking this, one risks missing how memorial work is never finished but always embedded in the unremitting flux of bodies, places, and practices.

4.7 Conclusion

We aimed to demonstrate that as carefully planned as it may seem, memorial places are never truly stable or totally coherent (Anderson and McFarlane, 2011) but subject to transformations, embracing a multiplicity of trajectories, opening 'other spaces' through awkward encounters (Tsing, 2005). We suggested that memorials can be conceived as spaces of friction, where narrative and representation intertwines with sensorial and affective encounters

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[142] See discussion paper 'Evaluations of World Heritage Nominations related to Sites Associated with Memories of Recent Conflicts' by the non-governmental organization International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, April, 2018). Available at: https://whc.unesco.org/document/167810 [accessed October 6, 2018].

with materialities, acknowledging the entanglements of meaning-making and world-sense-making concerning memorialization practices.

With this gesture, we sought to stress the flux of becoming, always aware to the fragility of things questioning frozen formations and addressing alternative views and forms of resisting that can also emerge from these processes of b/ordering. We argued that if we remove the dynamism and fluidity of space-time, we end up taking politics out of it.

In reorienting the focus of memory away from the reductionism of individual versus collective memory, we navigated through materialities, sensations, environmental factors, technologies (and so on), stressing their interconnectedness in memory ecologies (Hoskins, 2016). We also pointed to new affective alliances addressing movements of transnationalization and delocalization of memory.

While this chapter focused on more carefully designed memorial sites, exploring them as spaces of friction, and the way human and nonhuman forces can transform collective remembrance in unpredicted ways even when a place is planned with the purpose to secure a specific narrative; the next chapter will delve into the circularity of matter, emphasizing the unexpected through the flow of a river. Both chapters emphasize material-semiotic entanglements and the unpredicted character of memorialization, but while this focused on formal national-level memorial places, the next chapter will address a spontaneous place of memory – Nyabarongo River.

5 Political matter: streaming away disposable waste

The middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed. *Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines its banks and picks up speed in the middle.

– Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p. 25

5.1 Introduction

May, 1994. Human bodies began to arrive in Tanzania and Uganda, after traveling many kilometers, but these were not refugees. Approximately 40,000 bodies were taken out of Lake Victoria (Melvern, 2006, p. 220; Prunier, 1997, p. 263; Taylor, 2002, p. 160), coming all the way from Nyabarongo River in Rwanda[143]. Lake Victoria is the largest lake and largest inland water fishery in Africa, shared by Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya, with a catchment area of 194,000 km^2 extending to Rwanda and Burundi. Its shoreline is approximately 3,450 km long, with 43% located in Tanzania, 51% in Uganda, and 6% in Kenya (Lake Victoria Fisheries Organization - LVFO, 2016, p. 2). Apart from its economic role centered on a large fishing industry – the main activity generating income to the population –, the lake is important due to its domestic and industrial water supply, transportation, and hydroelectric power generation (Ibidem).

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[143] A detailed account on how corpses traveled from Nyabarongo River until arriving at Lake Victoria is addressed in the fourth section of this chapter. For some news on the arrival of corpses in Lake Victoria see: Lorch, Donatella. Bodies from Rwanda Cast a Pall on Lakeside Villages in Uganda, The New York Times, May 28, 1994 (retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/28/world/bodies-from-rwanda-cast-a-pall-on-lakeside-villages-in-uganda.html); Lorch, Donatella. Thousands of Rwanda Dead Wash Down to Lake Victoria, The New York Times, May 21, 1994 (retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/21/world/thousands-of-rwanda-dead-wash-down-to-lake-victoria.html); Giles, Tom. Media Failure Over Rwanda's Genocide, BBC, April 7, 2004 (retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/panorama/3599423.stm); Lamb, David. Rwandan Dead Glut the Waters of Lake Victoria, Los Angeles Times, May 29, 1994 (retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://articles.latimes.com/1994-05-29/news/mn-63667_1_lake-victoria); Bedford, Julian. Rwandan Slaughter Fills Lake With up to 40,000 Bodies, Independent, May 22, 1994 (retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/rwandan-slaughter-fills-lake-with-up-to-40000-bodies-1437961.html).

Figure 18: Map of Lake Victoria Basin (Kayombo & Jorgensen, 2005)[144].

In the 1950s, in order to boost the fishing economy, a non-native type of fish, the Nile Perch, was introduced since the endemic haplochromines were considered to be of little economic value (Anderson, 1961 apud Njiru et al, 2014, p. 71). However, this alteration in the ecosystem of the lake – combined with an increasing population in the basin stressing the environment – generated dramatic ecological changes that were better observed during the 80's and 90's (Ibidem), culminating in the extirpation of many species of haplochromine cichlids (algae-eating fishes), wide proliferation of water hyacinth, and the lake's eutrophication (LVFO, 2016, p. 2).

Degradation of the environment due to urbanization, unsustainable fishing practices, sewage, water hyacinth, and detritus and chemicals from industries impacted on the natural balance of the lake's ecosystem, consequently affecting not only the fishery market but all activities dependent on lake Victoria's watercourse. Around May 1994, these problems aggravated in an unexpected and

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[144] Map retrieved November 2, 2017 from: https://munin.uit.no/bitstream/handle/10037/7140/thesis.pdf?sequence=2.

unprecedented way, since another type of waste/pollution, streaming from abroad, arrived into the shores of the lake – dead bodies[145].

Apart from the previously discussed mnemonic assemblages, an infinite number of other assemblages could describe the interaction between human and non-human actants in memorialization practices in post-genocide Rwanda. Each assemblage described in this dissertation is following the trails of actants in motion in an effort to stress the collective work of semiotic materialities and political matter, but this one is particularly intriguing.

The main goal of this chapter is to discuss the human (or not-so-human) *body as reject*, interlacing with many other entities, but particularly streamed by the force of a nonhuman entity (Nyabarongo river), contaminating animals and the water of the Great Lakes region and presenting risks to (inter)national health and economy. Moreover, the stream of corpses carried by Nyabarongo and Akagera rivers contributes to a *transformation of memorialization practices in unexpected* ways, claiming for an engagement with the constant movement of *lively and generative matter*.

 In such assemblage, I will try to describe how bodies are affected and also affect other bodies, interacting and overlapping. Bodies acting as humans and nonhumans at the same time, always entangling the material and the discursive. Through this complex assemblage, I intend to follow the actants wherever they may lead, pursuing a flat ontology and traveling the material-semiotic geographies of memorialization practices.

While the previous chapter focused on the dead body as evidence of genocidal violence in national-level memorial sites, generating affect through its textures and its material presence in an engagement with the sensorial and the visceral; this chapter proposes a different engagement with dead bodies, emphasizing not only its vitality but its *circularity* in conjoining other bodies and *producing non-intentional places of memory*. In this sense, the dead bodies are not

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[145] The corpses pass through the border with Burundi (near Lake Rweru) and with Tanzania (near Rusumo Falls), arriving in Uganda (at Lake Victoria). Kenya was affected due to the economic impact on the fish market, but it was not possible to find register of human bodies arriving in Kenya. Usually, Ugandan traders sell their fish to Kenya and from there to overseas market, especially European countries (Keizire, 2004). Uganda was the most affected country, especially in Kasensero, Rakai district, where the corpses washed ashore, coming from Akagera River. Corpses were seen from Kasensero, southern Uganda, until Entebbe (see Lorch, The New York Times, May 28, 1994).

unearthed and located at a site designed for its memorialization[146], but its own motion generates alternative practices of memorializing the genocide.

In exploring Nyabarongo assemblage, we will travel through the natural flow of a river and stress the power of actants towards generative matter to show how its ambiguities and recalcitrances can transform memorialization, focusing on the political dimensions of matter's agentic forces. Six sections comprise this chapter. After this introduction, we delve into the literature on the dead body/corpse in order to disrupt the living human body as the only legitimate locus for agency, playing with the binary human/nonhuman and addressing the dead body as both human and nonhuman (pollution) - or *person-things*. The third section brings to the fore the agentic capacity of the Hamitic myth, exploring not only its effects regarding the politics of ethnicity in Rwanda but also how it contributed to understanding the violent practices during the genocide and the memorialization efforts afterward. The fourth section describes the motion of a river to emphasize memorial places as fluxes, focusing on matter circularity and its affects concerning memorialization. The fifth section addresses how the actants of Nyabarongo assemblage contributed to produce memorialization in an unexpected way, not only national but internationally, exploring the movement of the stream in creating places of memory that were traditionally occluded.

Symmetry, forces of nature, ordinary spaces, humans as waste, myth narratives, politics of dead bodies, circularity, memory in non-traditional sites: these are the why's for choosing to follow Nyabarongo River and describe those trails of associations. If not sufficient, the scenario where such assemblage becomes more apparent is a significant matter to IR scholars: the border.

5.2 (Dead) body matter(s)

The vitality and motion of bodies are the main focus of this research. Bodies are understood in a general sense as entities intermingling and forming associations. However, we are also reflecting on the affective and productive force of the human body and its entanglements, and how those can contribute to

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[146] The exceptions are the bodies exhumed from Malembo, Ddimo and Namirembe after 2009 in Uganda, when the government of Rwanda decided to concentrate the bodies removed from Lake Victoria into three memorials – Kasensero, Ggolo and Lambu. The details will be discussed in the fifth section of this chapter.

understanding memory and practices of memorialization. This chapter plays with the word 'body' and with the entanglements of matter within human and nonhuman bodies to address the impossibility of a clear-cut gesture when referring to corpses (dead human bodies). In short, we want to stress the agentic forces of matter looking into an assemblage of dead bodies.

Despite being central for virtually any account on security, violence, and conflict in IR, the dead body still remains marginal, at least from the standpoint of conventional security studies. For the dead body, in such perspectives, is seen as a consequence of violence and, thus, its affective force and political dimensions are erased. As Lauren Wilcox points out, they are "understood as *only* bodies" (2015, p. 2) and, consequently, conceived as passive entities purposely killed or as collateral damage. In this sense, they are relevant to politics only in relation to the failure or success they represent in providing security. As Auchter emphasizes, "the dead are often represented as simply a failure of the system: the dead citizen means that the state is not secure, while the dead famine victim indicates a lack of attention to adequate standards of health" (2016, p. 37-38). Objectified and manipulated, dead bodies have no part to play in those stories.

Conversely, the body has been the main focus on some critical feminist and post-colonial scholars, challenging this conception of the body as inert, a natural organism ready to be deployed by agents. Rather, bodies are understood as contingent, performative, political – a becoming body. According to Rosi Braidotti,

> "In the feminist framework, the primary site of location is the body. The subject is not an abstract entity, but rather a material embodied one. The body is not a natural thing; on the contrary, it is a culturally coded socialised entity. Far from being an essentialist notion, it is the site of intersection between the biological, the social, and the linguistic" (Braidotti, 1994, p. 238).

Although focusing on how bodies and embodiment are already political and generative, emphasizing the intersectional character of bodies, and producing transformations on how we understand subjectivity, feminist analysis usually centers on living bodies. Drawing on Foucault, critical feminists, especially postmodern strand, underline practices and policies that exercise social control and manifest power relations over bodies in what can be called body-politics. They emphasize the oppressive effects of disciplinary power on the bodies,

marking them as inferior and dysfunctional, and denying the right to control their own bodies. As Foucault maintains,

> "This power over life evolved in two basic forms; these forms were not antithetical, however; they constituted rather two poles of development linked together by a whole intermediary cluster of relations. One of these poles (…) centered on the body as a machine: its disciplining, the optimization of its capabilities, the extortion of its forces, the parallel increase of its usefulness and its docility, its integration into systems of efficient and economic controls, all this was ensured by the procedures of power that characterized the disciplines: an anatomo-politics of the human body. The second (…) focused on the species body, the body imbued with the mechanics of life and serving as the basis of the biological processes: propagation, births and mortality, the level of health, life expectancy and longevity, with all the conditions that can cause these to vary. Their supervision was effected through an entire series of interventions and regulatory controls: a biopolitics of the population. The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed" (1988, p. 139).

While we appreciate such contributions and partake on the relation between body politic and body-politics, the focus of this research is not so much on the insertion of the natural life of individuals into the calculations of state power, centering upon the sovereign's right to let die for the sake of the system's order. Rather, we are concerned with the agentic capacity of the dead body and how matter can, within its entanglements, be politically relevant. In this sense, our focus is not quite on the *living dead* (Mbembe, 2003) and the sovereign power decisions upon who can live and who must die within an anthropocentric and state-centric optics; but on the *dead living*, showing how a more distributive agency can enact vibrant materialities and transform the political, opening space to an ecology of human and nonhuman entities in which the *vitality of dead bodies* can be considered. And such vitality is not only related to the fact they used to be humans and possess rights even after their deaths but that *their materiality circulates in a continuum of multiple and controversial flows, unfolding in an ongoing process*. It is precisely their ambiguity, multivocality, or polysemy that Verdery (1999) identifies as the most important properties of dead bodies. As the author maintains, "[human] remains are concrete, yet protean; they do not have a single meaning but are open to many different readings" (p. 28). The possibility of different readings is due to the circularity of dead bodies' matter conjoining other entities and enacting a specific assemblage. What is crucial here is the way dead bodies were not waiting to be mourned, lying inert in cemeteries or burial places, but in frantic motion due to their interaction with

other entities. Those dead bodies were not former human beings with names in funeral rites; they were nameless bodies becoming pollution across borders. Dead bodies in Nyabarongo assemblage affected neighboring countries due to their agency and motion. As a Ugandan actor, whose relatives were in the smoked-fish business at the time of the genocide, summarizes: "corpses can actually do things, they are the reason why many people I know, including me, stopped eating fish in Uganda for, at least, a year. The whole fish market was in ruins in 94; fishes were feeding on those human bodies, they [fishermen] found human hair inside them" (Paul, personal communication, August 06, 2011).

But do dead bodies really matter? Whose dead bodies matter? How their agency and circularity can be politically relevant? We already began to address these questions in previous chapters, showing how human remains, mingling with other entities, can produce an affective force resisting but also coping with dominant efforts of memorialization in official memorial sites; now we turn to a striking travel into mobility and circularity, exploring its unpredictability not only regarding practices of memorialization but also the consequences for the international management of corpses and its impact on health and economy abroad. The bodies here are *stubborn* in the sense that they *do not conform, but transform and resist* any attempt to obstruct their agentic forces, making a difference in the course of events and impacting on memorialization practices even more than 24 years after the genocide.

For dead bodies usually are conceived as inert, it could be difficult to grasp their agentic forces. However, we should consider that even after death many processes are still happening in conjunction with other entities in a contingent transformation affecting and producing many unexpected effects. Looking into the Rwandan case after the genocide, dead bodies in decomposition can contaminate the soil or water and spread diseases, especially those there are contagious. It can also help leading forensic anthropologists, through a "reading of body matter", to solve crimes - a fundamental practice in large-scale massacres and genocide. Dead bodies can make us adjust practices of victims' identification in exhumations, alter burial rites, invest in preservation, mourning and memorialization, and rethink everyday relationship with animals (mainly dogs). While the first transformations can be more easily comprehended, the last is not that straightforward and deserves a pause for further appreciation.

After the genocide, Rwanda was filled with dead bodies everywhere, but predominantly close to roadblocks, latrine pits, churches, schools, and rivers. As we already discussed in previous chapters, this was not coincidental but a combination of myths, machetes, techniques, elements of nature, folk stories, radio broadcasts (and so on), in material-semiotic efforts deployed to exterminate Tutsis. A combination of machete blows; open-limbed dead bodies in piles on the street; tropical climate; body decomposition and putrefaction emitting gasses, attracting insects, mites, and other animals contributed to transforming how Rwandans interact with dogs. When those discarded corpses encountered starving dogs under no supervision, they were turned into dog food. The smell of flesh of an unattended corpse attracted dogs scavenging on human remains, making people feel disdain for them. During the genocide, dogs were killed by UN soldiers (Gourevitch, 2015, position 1841 of 4763 - Kindle version; Rucyahana, 2007, p. 123). As they were not allowed to act under enforcement powers (Chapter VII of the UN Charter), UN soldiers are criticized for only shooting dogs during United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) mandates[147].

It is not uncommon to hear testimonies where survivors recount seeing their relatives' bodies being eaten by dogs – a disturbing image that still impacts on the relationship with these animals. Helen, a survivor of the genocide, shares some memories of the massacres and how dogs affected her.

"I was only sixteen when I witnessed the genocide. My entire family was slaughtered in the massacres of 1994. (…) Everyone knew that something terrible was going to happen. When the time finally came, the attackers came running into our houses, screaming and singing songs about how they were going to kill us. (…) I did manage to climb and hide in a nearby mango tree. They didn't see me. (…) At one point I saw my mother try to run away. She made it out of the door, but they killed her under the tree with machetes. (…) When the killing was done, they pulled all the bodies out of the house and into the courtyard. I couldn't recognise anyone. They were all cut up. (…) I stayed hiding in the tree for many hours. I was numb. I couldn't think. Then the wild dogs arrived. They were moving the bodies around, scavenging for food, eating the people. I couldn't bear to watch, so I climbed down from the tree and ran" (Helen, 2009 – Survivors Fund[148]).

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[147] See also 'Shooting Dogs', a 2005 film shot in Kigali, with many survivors as part of the production crew and with minor acting roles (Cieplak, 2010, p. 52), that focuses on UN peacekeeping forces abandoning approximately 2000 Rwandans taking refuge at the École Technique Officielle Don Bosco in Kigali (now Kicukiro Technical Training Center) and their minor roles in taking care of the safe evacuation of expatriates and shooting dogs in a full-blown genocide context.

[148] Helen`s testimony - Survivor`s Fund. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/rwanda/education/survivortestimonies.shtml [accessed May 24, 2018].

For a person who witnessed the body of her relatives being eaten by dogs or saw dogs being used to hunt people in their hiding places, the relationship with these animals are difficult to manage even many years after the genocide, making Rwandans reluctant to conceive dogs as pets, especially because these animals force them to confront eerie past memories.

Nowadays, there is a very specific policy on animal husbandry, which states – under ministerial order number 009/11.30 of 18/11/2010 – owners of dogs have to keep them on a leash at all times, unless inside their properties, carrying a vaccination card with them when walking outside in the community, and the chained dog should be held by an accountable and mature person. Stray dogs are strictly prohibited and, in order to guarantee the security of the community, they are culled[149]. Dogs were then transformed into affective actants, stressing the friction between natural and social, re-signifying the relationship with them.

Due to the infamous role of scavenging dogs, is not very common to see pet dogs in Rwanda, even though it appears they are making a slow comeback. Those who know the background of these episodes are usually more curious and surprised when approaching a person with a dog in Rwanda. It happened to me and a few other people in our group at Lake Kivu beach in Gisenyi – right next to the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Western Province. We were close to the docks, receiving safety recommendations while waiting for a military boat to Iwawa Island – where we would visit Iwawa Rehabilitation and Vocational Skills Development Centre (IRVSDC)[150] –, when I saw a boy with a

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[149] See Rwanda National Police Statement on Stray Dogs, RNP News, November 19, 2015. Retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://www.police.gov.rw/news-detail/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=5630&cHash=e4317dc085dad5ffa492abaf29641622).

[150] The rehabilitation center is designed to provide vocational skills to former street "kids", beggars, petty criminals, drug addicts and other delinquencies. They were approximately 1,193 around May, 2011. They are young men, between 18 and 35 years old, mostly orphans affected or not by the genocide. As part of their process of rehabilitation, they receive counseling and are trained in vocational skills to help them finding jobs after graduation to be reintegrated in the community. They are taught to read and write, they construct their own beds, chairs, tables; they sew their own uniforms and they grow their own food – it is all part of the learning process. As stated by a poster of the Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Rwanda, "The purpose of the Iwawa Rehabilitation and Vocational Training Centre is to rehabilitate disaffected and delinquent male youth in a residential setting, provide them with vocational employability skills and on graduation, and support them in reintegrating into the community as productive citizens" (Disaffected and Delinquent Male Youth in Rwanda: Understanding Pathways to Delinquency and the Role of Rehabilitation and Vocational Skills Training, 2016). Retrieved May 24, 2018 from: http://www.ipar-rwanda.org/index.php?option=com_edocman&view=document&id=105&catid=4&Itemid=118&lang=en.

dog and left the group to take a picture, being followed by others.

Figure 19: Boy with a dog, Lake Kivu beach, Western Province (photograph by author – July 2011)[151].

When we came back to join the rest of the group, three survivors (that were part of the staff hosting us) were explaining how this relationship with dogs is mostly a new thing, since young children did not experience the disastrous combination of dead bodies, an abandoned country and a terrified population, so they did not know what dogs are capable of (Jean, Olivier and Fidele[152], personal communication, Gisenyi, July 30, 2011). In this assemblage of dead human bodies and nonhuman actants, dogs were transformed into undesirable creatures, impacting until today in the relationship with them and applying a hard policy towards these animals in Rwanda[153]. In this sense, the human - nonhuman entanglements should deserve more attention when analyzing the collective to grasp the unexpected effects of their agentic forces.

Moreover, dead bodies are potential actants to be explored, and it is a little

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[151] Subject´s face blurred for the sake of anonymity.

[152] Fictitious names.

[153] According to the report of Rwanda Agricultural Board, in 2016 approximately 3000 stray dogs were culled (see "3000 dogs culled last year", The New Times, October 28, 2017. Retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/222517/).

bit odd that only a few scholars in IR engage with its agentic capacity, especially due to the discipline's obsession with conflict and violence. This vitalist bias, as noted by Jessica Auchter (2015, p. 129), inhibits scholars from considering *the thing as a political entity*. And this means to consider how the dead body can challenge traditional conceptions of agency, asking uncomfortable and unexpected questions and making a difference as ontologically hybrid entities.

In describing such complex assemblage, we are not merely interested in counting dead bodies or attributing its emergence to a failure of state's security, – we ask what changes in memorialization practices if we take into account the ambiguities and recalcitrances of matter? How would 'the political' acquire a revitalized feature if we pay attention to the capacity of things?

Himadeep Muppiddi asks similar questions when reflecting on the discipline's insufficient engagement with death. As the author notes,

> "Death stinks. Left unattended, *it finds many ways to make its presence felt*. (…) International relations is a field littered with dead and dying bodies. But the dead never seem to rot or stink, whether portrayed discretely or starkly, sketched crudely or stylistically. (…) *The stuffiness of dead bodies, their unpleasing decomposition, their stench, rarely comes through our fields*. (…) But corpses do stink, don't they? Bodies putrefy in death. Living tissue turns rotten. And when such things happen on a mass scale in international relations, shouldn't our theories catch, convey and account for that stench? (…) What would it mean for IR to converse with such bodies? " (2012, p. 3-5, my emphasis).

It is particularly relevant for this work to converse with those decomposing and stinking dead bodies. In this sense, we do not avoid their stench, but follow its trails and engage with them in trying to see what do they tell about memorialization practices. We want to explore the dead body as ambivalent within its many different entanglements and continuum of affects (Rogowska-Stangret, 2017, p. 59), focusing on how they can be, *at the same time, person and thing*, *subject and object, meaning and matter*. They are not merely representation of the genocide but physically present with all matter that has left of their former human bodies, and yet its humanity is no longer present. As Jenkins argues,

> "Human remains hold a social category as a 'person' (human, body), but are also a 'thing' (remains, corpse, cadaver, skeleton). As a 'border subject', human remains disturb the boundaries between the real and the not-real, between person and non-person. They have once embodied personhood and, at the same time, that personhood has come to an end (2011, p. 107)".

These corpses are both dead and alive, presence and absence, past and present; they are active, dynamic and affective *becoming-beings* endowed with potentiality. And it is precisely due to this impossibility of detaching the human from the nonhuman that their presence lingers and affective force haunts us. And yet, it will continue affecting because they disrupt linear time so that the past events cannot be contained and finished; they are travelers in many different spatiotemporalities that gain (re)new(ed) contours depending on their entanglements.

While some corpses receive considerable attention, producing a spectacle surrounding their deaths, others are completely ignored or turned invisible. Examples regarding the (in)visibility of dead bodies abound on the news in recent years: while the death of Alan Kurdi called attention to an acute migration crisis, more corpses of migrants are found every day but remain ignored; while there is a massive circulation of Syrian mutilated bodies in social media, their deaths rarely receive the attention needed. As we will see, turning to the Rwandan case, dead bodies were largely ignored during the genocide, only calling attention when crossing borders.

Until 2011, I had never seen a dead body, not even my relatives'. Never touched or smelled them closely, or examined skulls and bones as if they were revealing something. Never felt its textures and compared with my own, or follow their remains to guess what happened in their deaths. Never sensibly reflected on what makes us humans, and appreciated the richness of human matter. I did all these for the first time in Rwanda and the stories they told were, at least, horrifying. Dead bodies taught me to be attentive to their agentic forces, no matter how many years had passed from their deaths.

Having pondered briefly and theoretically on how dead bodies matter, we now turn to show it empirically, delving into the macabre and hectic motion of a river streaming dead bodies, exploring its generative character in dealing with the unexpected. We will follow Jessica Auchter's advice to "map geographies of the corpse, to trace the politics of its visibility and agency, and to explore the complex assemblages in which it is enmeshed" (2015, p. 38). Bodies acting as humans, as wasted matter and as discourse simultaneously, crossing physical and disciplinary boundaries without caring about what should be considered a proper agent/actant.

Instead of passively watch human domination in mnemonic assemblages, nature will show its vitality and feature as an indispensable actant, producing memory in spaces not traditionally designed for memorialization practices. For our concern is to describe a complex material-semiotic assemblage, we will have to pay attention to the heterogeneous actants forming associations that enact the dead body as reject, impacting on international pollution. Although every actant being described here is relevant to understand how dead bodies can produce unexpected effects, I chose to begin with a myth due to its agentic capacity to affect Rwandan collectives from colonial times until today, especially regarding the issue of ethnicity – the Hamitic myth.

5.3 The Hamitic Hypothesis

Oral traditions, tales, myths, proverbs, and poetry are inextricable from Rwandan cosmology; therefore, it is virtually impossible to address Rwandan history without taking these into account. Gerard Prunier (1997 [1995]) once pointed out "there are probably few instances, in Africa or elsewhere, of a country that became the subject of myth to the extent that Rwanda was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries" (p. 346).

Even the types of violence exercised during the genocide were memory-backed since they provide a kind of unquestionable knowledge based on (fictional) historical background. As Nyirubugara (2013) suggests, the power of memories is likely to play a more significant role in fueling violence than direct commands (p. 12). As discussed in previous chapters, sites of massacres, objects, utterances, and body aspects were not coincidental but imbricated in the recalling of myths and symbols. In this regard, Mcnamee (2007) emphasizes,

"(...) circumstances of Tutsi being rounded up into churches as sites for massacre as having reference to the fact that in the colonial period *the church was an avenue towards social power which was open to Tutsi and blocked to Hutu*. (...) Hutu peasantry were organized into killing groups through the notion that they must perform *umuganda*, traditional communal labor *for the common good*. (...) The propaganda leading the atrocities focused on this supposed aspect of *Tutsi as aliens*, who should be *'sent back where they came from'*, and (...) this was a kind of rallying cry for the killers at their 'work' (p. 492, my emphasis).

In this research, we aim to discuss memorial politics, describing the material-semiotic forces imbricated in the process of remembering and forgetting. As memory itself involves *multifaceted processes and practices*, instead of focusing on memory as something concise, disposed and stable, we want to explore the dynamic forces of striving entities enacting this assemblage.

In "Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts", Mckenzie (1999) explored the Latin etymology of the term text – *texere*: to weave, referring not to a specific material, "but to its woven state, the web or texture of the materials" (p.2). The web (or net) of words becomes a text, woven by the agency of human and nonhuman entities in this memorial assemblage. As Nyirubugara emphasizes, these woven materials can be any material representing a past experience in a visible or audible way (2013, p. 16), contributing to memory texts or networks. Heterogeneous fabrics (actants), acting in the web (network) and forming a woven (rhizome) memorial assemblage.

Myths are also important actants in Nyabarongo assemblage to the extent that they make a difference in the course of events being described here, especially the Hamitic myth[154]. Myths can be understood as a type of memory requiring an inextricable aspect of memory process – imagination. More than just conferring legitimacy to an event myth-backed, myths make it impossible to draw a clear line between imagination and reality, past and present (Huyssen, 2000, p. 26; Ricoeur, 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, myths are also bounded by heterogeneous materialities (human and nonhuman), affecting its contours and efficacy.

The name 'Ham' appears for the first time in chapter five of the Old Testament (Sanders, 1969, p. 521; Taylor, p. 58). Ham, son of Noah, seeing his father naked and drunk, could not avoid covering his eyes with shame (Taylor, 1999, p. 58). So when Noah heard that his youngest son had seen him naked, he had told the story to his brothers, Shem and Japheth. The brothers, on their turn, turned chastely back to their father and covered him with a cloak. Noah then reacted by cursing the descendants of Ham to be slaves of Shem and Japheth (Gourevitch, 2006, p.49; Mamdani, 2001, 80). Ham, expelled from the Promised Land, would go south (Taylor, 1999, p. 58). Several bewildering interpretations of

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[154] In trying to describe the Hamitic myth we are not searching for an *origin*, either of the genocide nor of the Nyabarongo assemblage; rather, we advance an impossibility of tracing back what exactly could *cause* such events, underlining the material-semiotic rhizome character of the assemblages.

this passage of the Old Testament were made, the most notable being that Ham would have been the first black man (Gourevitch, 2006, p. 49; Mamdani, 2001, p. 80-81)[155].

The nineteenth European thoughts were inclined to demonstrate quantitatively that human races could be categorized in terms of moral and intellectual capacities, measuring the internal volume of the skull (Taylor, p. 59). Combining theology, biology and anthropology, John Henning Speke[156] proposed the Hamitic hypothesis applying it to Africa. In the book *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (1863), he states superior races inevitably conquered inferior ones. According to him, all culture and civilization in Central Africa would have been introduced by a tall and distinct-looking people that Speke considered to be a Caucasoid tribe of Ethiopian descent of the biblical King David, and thus superior to the native Negroes. Hamites, migrating from the Middle East, became the Galla and Oromo in Ethiopia and these, migrating to the South, become the Hima in Uganda and the Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi (Prunier, 1997, p. 7; Taylor, 1999, p. 59; Gourevitch, 2006, p. 50).

After having observed the complex political organization in Rwanda-Urundi, Speke and Sir Harry Johnston concluded the institution of sacred kingship was introduced by a nomadic pastoralist race related to the Hamitic Galla (Sanders, 1969, p. 528; Prunier, 1997, p. 10; Taylor, 1999, p. 59). Charles Seligman was also a proponent of Hamitic hypothesis, stating that:

> "Apart from relatively late Semitic [referring to Noah's other son, Shem] influence…the civilizations of Africa are the civilizations of the Hamites, its history the record of these peoples and of their interaction with the two other African stocks, the Negro, and the Bushman, whether this influence was exerted by highly civilized Egyptians or by such wilder pastoralists as are represented today by the Beja and the Somali. *The incoming Hamites were pastoral 'Europeans' – arriving wave after wave – better armed as well as quicker witted than the dark agricultural Negroes*" (Seligman apud Senders, 1969, p. 521, my emphasis).

From myth-theology to 'historical fact' the Tutsi became the superior race, descendants of Egyptians or Ethiopian pastoralists, predisposed to govern the

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[155] In South Africa, the Boers believed that they were the elect, while all black Africans, Hamites, would be condemned to live in perpetual servitude (Taylor, 1999, p.59). It is interesting to note that in the Rwandan case the Hamites are not doomed to inferiority, they would become the superior race - almost Caucasian - prevailing over the Hutus (Alves, 2011, p. 77).

[156] Speke was a British explorer that became famous to be the first European to reach Lake Victoria and identify it as the source of the Nile River (Gourevitch, 2006, p. 49).

inferior agricultural Hutu Negroes. The colonialists and catholic missionaries transmitted the theory to Rwandans (and Burundians) by favoring policies that essentialized difference and justified political domination of one identity over the other. Tutsis and Hutus used the myth for different purposes, while the first group emphasizes the intellectual superiority, the latter underlines the Tutsi as foreigners of a Nilotic tribe that should go back to their country of origin[157] (Taylor, 1999, p. 57; Alves, 2011, p. 74-75).

In *From Classrooms to Conflict in Rwanda*, King (2014) analyzes how education (in both primary and secondary levels) can contribute to conflict and peacebuilding processes. She examines colonial, the two Rwandan republics, post-genocide periods, and also Rwanda in comparative perspective[158]. King underlines schooling contributed to spread the Hamitic hypothesis, even though there was a significant variation in the interpretation of it depending on the period (p. 103).

> "During the colonial period, Tutsi were presented as *foreigners, better suited to rule*. During the two Republics, Tutsi were presented as *foreigners with less entitlement to the country*. The secondary school textbook critiqued the 'Hamitic myth' – that Tutsi were superior – calling it 'false and stained with racial prejudice', but *accepted that Tutsi were foreigners from Ethiopia*. As one Tutsi woman recalled, 'They taught the Nilotic [Tutsi], in contrast to the Bahutu. All the while showing that you were a foreigner. *It was the Nilotics that came and that they were not really indigenous. They were not people of the country.* And then, whenever you'd say something, they'd say 'oh, you're Tutsi'', suggesting that she had less right to speak given her ethnic status. 'Then, things got a lot graver when I started university in '92 because there were really threats. They'd say 'Ah, my sister. *You invaded the country, now you'll pay*'" (King, 2014, p. 103, my emphasis).

The same myth can be recalled at different times to perform different functions. As Vansina states, "Remembering is an activity, a re-creation of what once was. It uses for this purpose not just this or that bit of information, but everything available in the information pool that is needed in this circumstance, reshaped as needed for this particular re-creation" (1985, p. 147-148). We understand 're-creation' here involves not only *what once was*, as an attempt to reinterpret an event according to one's purpose, but also *what was not, what was*

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[157] Despite being portrayed at times as descendants of Egyptians and other times as having Ethiopian origins, the Tutsi were described as being from a Nilotic tribe (as both Ethiopia and Egypt are part of the Nile River Basin – see annex I), therefore, non-autochthones Rwandans. Either way, based on Hamitic hypothesis, the rivers in Rwanda became a significant mode of excreting the foreigners.

[158] King compares history teaching in Rwanda with many other countries, such as: Northern Ireland, Israel, Cambodia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. See King, 2014, chapter 5.

invented, added to confer the appearance of credibility or legitimacy to a practice. In Rwanda, it was not unusual to use myths, traditions, and religion, adding other non-existing (fabricated) information to guarantee some validity[159].

Eliciting the Hamitic myth, Leon Mugesera, a lecturer at the National University of Rwanda, political advisor and vice-president of the MRND (National Republican Movement for Democracy and Development)[160] in Gisenyi prefecture, had called on the Hutus to send the Tutsis back to Ethiopia along the Nyabarongo River. On November 22 1992, in Kabaya, Gisenyi prefecture, Mugesera gave a public speech to approximately a thousand Rwandans. The speech was also recorded and reached a wider audience since RTLM broadcasted it during the commemoration of the first anniversary of the Kabaya meeting (Fletcher, 2014, p. 2).

Mugesera's speech encouraged ethnic hatred and extermination, creating a sense of imminent threat (Mafeza, 2016, p. 120), therefore contributing to genocidal discourse. The excerpts below were carefully chosen, focusing on how the opposition is perceived as foreigners that invaded Rwanda who must be exterminated, inciting an action before it was too late.

"(...) At all costs, you will leave here taking these words with you, that *you should not let yourselves be invaded*. Tell me, if you as a man, a mother or father, who are here, if someone comes one day to move into your yard and defecate there, will you really allow him to come again? It is out of the question. (...) *the priests have taught us good things*: our movement is also a movement for peace. However, we have to know that, *for our peace, there is no way to have it but to defend ourselves*. Some have quoted the following saying: '*Those who seek peace always make ready for war*'. (...) You know what it is, dear friends, 'not letting ourselves be invaded', or you know it. *You know there are 'Inyenzis' in the country who have taken the opportunity of sending their children to the front, to go and help the 'Inkotanyis'*. (...) *it is written in the law*, in the book of the Penal Code: 'Every person who recruits soldiers by seeking them in the population, seeking young persons everywhere whom they will *give to the foreign armed forces attacking the Republic, shall be liable to death*'. It is in writing. Why do they not arrest these parents who have sent away their children and *why do they not exterminate them?* Why do they not arrest the people taking them away and why do they not exterminate all of them? *Are we really waiting till they come to exterminate us?* (...) *If anyone penetrates a cell, watch him and crush him: if he is an accomplice do not let him get away! Yes, he must no longer get away!* (...) Recently, I told someone who came to brag to me that he belonged to the P.L.: '***The mistake we made in 1959, when I was still a child, is to let you leave***'. *I asked him if he had not heard of the story of the Falashas, who returned home to Israel from Ethiopia? He replied that he knew nothing about it! I told him: 'So don't you know how*

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[159] As myths are not naturally given or stable but articulated in complex actor-network collaboration in particular spatiotemporal configurations, we need to describe as much as we can the asymmetries in these assemblages. Thus, the asymmetries do not explain anything by itself, there is no linear causality; but need to be addressed so we can see the heterogeneous actants holding it together.

[160] In French: "Mouvement républicain national pour la démocratie et le développement".

to listen or read? ***I am telling you that your home is in Ethiopia, that we will send you by the Nyabarongo so you can get there quickly***'. (...) *Do not be afraid, know that anyone whose neck you do not cut is the one who will cut your neck.* Let me tell you, *these people should begin leaving while there is still time and go and live with their people, or even go to the 'Inyenzis'*, instead of living among us and keeping their guns, so that *when we are asleep they can shoot us*" (Mugesera's speech, 1992, all emphasis are mine, bold and italics)[161].

Based on the Hamitic myth, Mugesera's speech framed the Tutsi as foreigners, justifying acts of violence against them in order to defend the country. While the italics highlight the many different ways in which the opposition was framed as a threat, recurring to religion and law to legitimate and authorize such actions; the bold parts emphasize the specificities of Tutsi as non-Rwandans and the necessity to forcibly sent them back to their original country through the Nyabarongo River as a shortcut. Memories of past events – such as the missionaries' sermons, the Inkotanyi's invasion, and the revolution of 1959 – and myths are recalled in the speech in order to legitimate the killings. To make this possible and easier, *Nyabarongo River, as the source of the Nile, was chosen to be the quickest way to send them back.*

Newspapers, broadcasts, pamphlets, megaphones, recorded speeches, extermination lists in a network of genocidal propaganda. In May 1991, *Kangura* published an issue asserting:

"The Tutsi found us in Rwanda; they oppressed us; and we put up with this. But now that we have left serfdom and they want to reinstall the morning chicotte [whip]. I think that no Hutu will be able to endure this. The war Gahutu leads is just. It is a battle for the republic" (Chrétien, 2003 apud King, 2014, p. 108)

Popular media played an important role in providing the extremists a way to amplify the fight against Tutsi invaders, claiming Hutu solidarity in this effort. Each element of the genocidal campaign exerting its agentic force in a meshwork

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[161] Translation to English by linguist professor Thomas Kamanzi. Retrieved November 21, 2017 from: https://faculty.polisci.wisc.edu/sstraus/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/22-Nov-1992-Rwanda.pdf. In the case of Leon Mugesera x Canada, Mugesera claimed his speech had been altered, with material been added to or deleted from it in order to jeopardize him (Immigration and Refugee Board Adjudication Division, file number: QML-95-00171, p. 2). Retrieved November 21, 2017 from: http://jrad.unmict.org/webdrawer/webdrawer.dll/webdrawer/rec/195556/view/. Several transcripts of the speech were presented and two translations produced by two linguistics experts: Thomas Kamanzi for Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Eugène Shimamungu for the defense. In interpreting the content of Mugesera's speech, the adjudicator Pierre Turmel considered Kamanzi's translation more genuine to the original in Kinyarwanda. The speech is also available in Kinyarwanda and French. Retrieved November 21, 2017 from: http://rwanda94.pagesperso-orange.fr/sitepers/dosrwand/kabaya.html.

that shaped not only the types of violence adopted during the genocide but also the way in which the consequence of this violence (dead bodies) crossed boundaries in unexpected ways. The corpses found in Lake Victoria during the genocide were attesting the efficacy of a particular network configuration – Tutsis as foreigners from Ethiopia – mingled with other human and nonhuman actants to form a new one: Nyabarongo assemblage. In this sense, we can say that every entity is multiple inextricably connecting with other entities and, therefore, mobile.

5.4 Matter-energy: the motion of a river

Figure 20: Nyabarongo River (photograph by author – August 2011).

My first encounter with Nyabarongo River was on August 2, 2011. It was a quick one since we were on the bus on our way to Nyamata genocide memorial. Nevertheless, a survivor with an intimate relationship with the river was also part of the team and introduced the river to us. I got to know Nyabarongo through Emmanuel's testimony and, although I was already prepared to hear some horrific stories, the shield we preemptively built is never too strong when traumatic memories of genocide abound. We were both 9 years old in 1994, but while I was cheering for Brazil during the World Cup, Emmanuel was running away from

being killed. This is something I could never easily accept. In our conversations, I pointed this out with a lump in my throat, but he tried to be as optimistic as possible, always saying: "You don't have to feel guilty and we were lucky enough to be here together, Rio[162]".

Passing by familiar places on the way to Nyamata, he pointed to the bush where he hid during the genocide when separated from his family and underlined that even before the genocide, during the massacre of the Bagogwe[163], he had to forcibly leave his home village, describing to us the "power of a myth" as we approached Nyabarongo River (Emmanuel, personal communication, August 02, 2011). At that time, I was already aware of the Hamitic myth and how it was enacted to clearly separate the alleged autochthone Hutus from the foreign Tutsis, but I did not imagine how deep it affected the everyday life of Rwandans in practice.

I kept listening to Emmanuel's testimony[164] on his relationship with Nyabarongo before and during the genocide:

"At the end of 1993 it was already intense, we kept moving from one place to another trying to escape from being killed. We used to live nearby Nyabarongo, we took the cattle to drink water in the river, and I also used to play close to the river, but one day I noticed that the color of the water had changed (Emmanuel, personal communication, August 02, 2011). I was too young to understand exactly what was happening, but I knew something was wrong. One day I saw some corpses inside the river and run to tell my parents, but they already knew, they just avoid telling not to worry us [Emmanuel and his brothers and sisters]" (Emmanuel, personal communication, August 14, 2018).

During our bus ride, he recalled that the number of corpses thrown into the river was disconcerting and how the bodies were not exactly whole. We can read all the books and learn all the theories trying to account for how a myth can have

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[162] "Rio" was how he affectionately called me since day one of our journey, in reference to my hometown in Brazil. When we first met, I introduced myself and told I was from Rio, Brazil and he replied: "I can't believe it! I love Rio, I just saw the movie [a 2011 animation film]! Oh, my God, it's such a nice movie and beautiful city" (personal communication, Kigali, July 2011).

[163] The Bagogwe is a Tutsi subgroup massacred between 1991 and 1992 in the northern region of Rwanda. See Human Rights Watch World Report 1992 – Rwanda. Available at: https://www.hrw.org/reports/1992/WR92/AFW-07.htm#P451_159300 [accessed May 22, 2018].

[164] We had a few conversations during the first fieldwork in 2011, but we keep talking to each other until today. Some issues were briefly mentioned in the first encounters, being more deeply discussed only afterward the fieldwork by Skype – reason why sometimes there are different dates addressing the same issue. Since it is a very sensitizing theme, involving deep traumatic memories, I usually do not insist to gather more precise information or to push him on describing the dynamics of violence. The question guiding this excerpt of his testimony was: Can you share your story and your connection with Nyabarongo River?

a great impact in ethnic politics, but to experience it sensorial and viscerally opens up new questions and dilemmas to an emotionally invested research.

I can only describe such dilemmas with a metaphor. It is like seeing a black hole and wondering about its form and content in a desire to go beyond the surface of things, then being pulled towards it, even though you were already aware that it could also tear you apart. For the survivors, the black hole is the inescapable space-time of trauma, where all memories are being sucked into the traumatic event (Pitman, 1988; Ataria, 2014); for the researcher, the black hole is that fascinating matter with such gravitational attraction that is impossible to escape from its devours – once you approach the event horizon, there is no way out.

Emmanuel shared his memories – of the river changing its color, of his hiding places, of his parents trying to maintain normalcy in order to avoid panic – in a vivid and detailed way; it seemed he was reviving all again. What always makes me mesmerized is Emmanuel's strength to keep telling his stories despite the pain he faces every time he remembers and narrates his survival struggle. Nyabarongo River was never again only a river. Navigating through its entanglements, we explore the sensuousness of matter and their affectiveness in shaping memorialization, stressing ambivalences and the unexpected effects of their agentic capacities.

<p style="text-align:center">***</p>

Nyabarongo is the longest river in Rwanda. This tributary of the Nile River begins its flow in the southwestern part of the country, close to Lake Kivu. Its course originates in Nyungwe Forest from the confluence of two rivers, Mbirurume and Mwogo, flowing northwards and parallel to Lake Kivu (Hughes, 1992, p. 201). Then its path runs southeast, passing through Kigali and encountering Lake Rweru on the border with Burundi. After joining Ruvubu River, Nyabarongo changes its name to Akagera River, flowing uplands into the Tanzania border near Rusumo Falls, and then through Uganda border, finally arriving at Lake Victoria (Habiyakare; Zhou, 2015, p. 892). This is the flow of a river in motion, carrying thousands of corpses to neighboring countries, causing a severe environmental and health crisis in the Great Lakes Region.
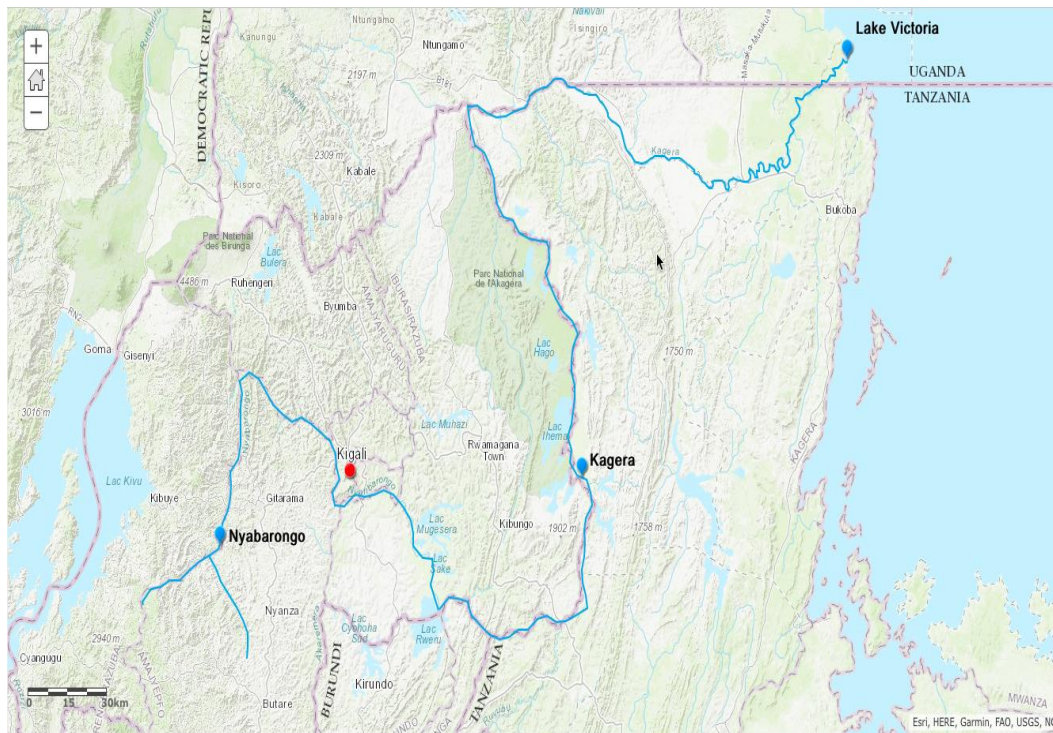
Figure 21: Map of Nyabarongo/Akagera River and the flow of corpses into Lake Victoria. Map created by author using ArcGIS; October 18, 2017.

Corpses – decomposing matter – were navigating, while rain-washed blood flows into the river, people drinking the water in order to survive the chaos, fishes supposedly eating corpses, epidemics of cholera and other diseases, wild and domestic animals feeding on the dead bodies, and jeopardizing of local fishing economies in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya (Tesi, 2000, p. 209; Taylor, 2002, p. 160) – an unusual kind of international pollution.

With this movement, the corpses troubled the division between a domestic and an international problem. This is especially relevant in the Rwandan case, since the debate on categorizing the conflict as a civil war or genocide had taken place in the international community. There was an avoidance to use the "G-word" (genocide) – since it carries an overwhelming burden: to act under the Genocide Convention (Melvern, 2000, p. 177) – and international inaction become apparent, among other reasons, due to the "shadow of Somalia" (Barnett, 2002, p. 21), lack of interest in Rwanda, UN bureaucracy, the possibility of damaging the prospects of future peacekeeping operations (p. 14), dead Belgian peacekeepers in the beginning of the genocide, scarce media coverage on the

ground (Thompson, 2007, p. 3)[165], and mistaken views on Rwandan history and political arena, categorizing it as a "civil war", "age-old ethnic hatreds" and "failed state" (Barnett, 2002, p. 59-60)[166].

Human and nonhuman at the same time, those corpses constituted material proof the conflict was crossing boundaries. In spite of the impact of the genocide in Rwanda to the (in)security of the Great Lakes Region[167] and its spillover effect (including intense refugee flows, internally displaced persons, political/ethnic/gender-based violence, rebel groups, socio-economical crisis) – already widely discussed in the literature[168] –, this chapter will focus on the matter of politics from another point of view, emphasizing the force of nonhuman entities in analyzing identity, mobility, territoriality and memory.

The long-standing refugee flows in the region was probably one of the most severe in the world (Wilkinson, 1997[169]; Prunier, 2009) with people living in a perpetual state of exile until today, fleeing from one conflict to another[170] (UNHCR, 2018 – Update of UNHCR's operations in Africa[171]). But it is not in the scope of this research to address it; we will do it only by way of providing some contextualization. Instead, we will focus on another flow – the flow of a river in what we call *political matter*. A network composed by the distributive agency of human and nonhuman interactions, contributing to shaping accounts of collective memory (internationally).

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[165] A few factors should be highlighted in order to justify the scarce coverage of media. First, of course, for safety reasons. It was very dangerous to report the situation on the ground, especially when all the expatriates were been evacuated in mid-April. Second, it costs a lot of money for the media companies to maintain a number of journalists (and other members of the staff) reporting with expensive materials (cameras, satellite phones, vehicles). Third, the genocide in Rwanda had to compete with other news in the global context. For example, the war in Bosnia, the first multiracial elections in post-apartheid South Africa, the case of O.J. Simpson, the death of Ayrton Senna, Brazilian Formula 1 driver (Thompson, 2007, p. 162). See Thompson, 2007 to a more scrutinized analysis on the scarce coverage of international media in Rwanda.

[166] See Des Forges (1999); Melvern (2000); Power (2001); Kuperman (2001); Barnett (2002) on the international community inaction.

[167] Great Lakes Region is composed by Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Kenya.

[168] Prunier (2009); Nyinawumuntu (2009); Nzongola-Ntalaja (2005); Auteserre (2010; 2014).

[169] Wilkinson, 1997. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/publications/refugeemag/3b6925384/refugees-magazine-issue-110-crisis-great-lakes-cover-story-heart-darkness.html [accessed April 26, 2018].

[170] We are referring not only to refugees fleeing the genocide in Rwanda and its spillover effect into neighboring countries, but also to refugees that are now fleeing armed conflicts and election-related violence, especially in the DRC and Burundi.

[171] UNHCR, 2018. Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/5a9fdc2d7.pdf [accessed April 26, 2018].

Only when the bodies crossed the borders, international media turned their eyes to Rwanda in what was categorized by the UNHCR as the fastest and largest exodus the world had ever seen (Wilkinson, 1997; Melvern, 2000; Thompson, 2007, p. 204; Shaw, 2011, p. 113-114)[172]. Thousands of bodies crossed the border of Tanzania at Rusumo bridge; some were human fleeing the genocide and seeking refuge, others – passing below the bridge, in Akagera river – were difficult to categorize in a clear-cut division.

These were corpses, rarely whole, of Rwandese people covered in machete wounds, tied together with ropes, skewered with sticks, genital organs mutilated, heads cut off, limbs flowing separately. Manuel Pinto, the head of the cleanup operation and a member of the Ugandan Parliament from Rakai district, tried to describe the situation to a journalist from The New York Times: "I've never seen hatred like this in my life. There are so many of them. Children are skewered on sticks. I saw a woman cut open from the tailbone. They have removed breasts and male genital organs" (Lorch, 1994)[173]. Human and nonhuman matter exposed to the force of nature, helped by the Hamitic myth.

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[172] Rwandan refugees in neighbouring countries were estimated in 2,1 million from April to August of 1994 (UNHCR, The State of the World's Refugees 2000: Fifty Years of Humanitarian Action, 01 January 2000, Chapter 10). According to Raymond Wilkinson, UNHCR's publications editor and field spokesman in Rwanda, "more than 200,000 Rwandans crossed into Tanzania in 24 hours through this single border post [Rusumo bridge], an organized evacuation which field workers described as the fastest and largest exodus of refugees in modern times. What subsequently became known as the African Great Lakes refugee crisis blasted its way onto the international agenda within a matter of hours. (...) Hundreds of thousands of people fled in every direction of the compass in 1994" (Wilkinson, 1997). Linda Melvern calls attention to the Hutu flight into Zaire [around 1 million], broking all refugee records and putting Rwanda to the top of international agenda. As she stated: "Hundreds of thousands of people settled on a barren plain surrounded by volcanoes, without food, water or shelter, (...) walking in a mud of choleric vomit and diarrhea. (...) People died from exhaustion, others from starvation, cholera or dysentery. In stark contrast with the reporting of the genocide, within three days of the exodus into Goma, there was a media frenzy" (Melvern, 2000, p. 218).

[173] Lorch, Donatella. The New York Times, May 21, 1994. Retrieved November 6, 2017 from: http://www.nytimes.com/1994/05/21/world/thousands-of-rwanda-dead-wash-down-to-lake-victoria.html.

Figure 22: Corpses tossed into the Akagera River arriving at Rusumo Falls (Michael S. Williamson/The Washington Post)[174].

Rusumo is an important site in Rwandan history for several reasons. First, the Germans arrived in Rwanda at this place[175]. On May 1894, Count Gustav Adolf von Götzen entered Rwanda by Rusumo Falls crossing the country towards Lake Kivu (Briggs; Connolly, 2016, p. 11). Second, the Belgians also invaded Rwanda during World War I via Rusumo, fighting the German troops (p. 284). Third, the single-lane yellow steel bridge at Rusumo Falls[176] was the conduit

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[174] Water currents, wooden sticks, machete wounds, blood, decomposing flesh. Picture retrieved November 6, 2017 from: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2014/04/02/11-powerful-photos-from-the-aftermath-of-the-rwandan-genocide/?utm_term=.d7860d51ca74.

[175] In 1892, Oscar Baumann, Austrian explorer, already had entered Rwanda privately from Burundi, staying in the south (Briggs; Connolly, 2016, p. 11). Rwanda-Urundi constitutes a single territorial space until 1 July 1962, when they became independent States. So, when mentioning Rwanda we implicitly refer to the Rwanda-Urundi region. The region was dominated by two independent kingdoms until annexed by the Germans in 1894, and formally became an administrative unit in 1898 for Urundi and in 1899 for Rwanda (Mwakikagile, 2012, p. 192). Once part of German East Africa – which was composed by Rwanda, Urundi and Tanganyika (Tanzania) –, it was ruled by Belgium from 1916 until 1962. During the First World War, Belgians invaded Rwanda and Urundi from the Belgian Congo in April 1916, remaining in control by the mandate of the League of Nations after Germany lost the war (Mwakikagile, 2012, p. 194).

[176] Today there are two bridges side by side: the old single-lane Rusumo bridge and the International Rusumo bridge built with the aid of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA); the latter was inaugurated in 2014 with two lanes, facilitating international trade. See more on the construction of the International Rusumo Bridge at https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/focus_on/rwanda/rwanda_04.html. While the old bridge is considered an international symbol of Rwanda's genocide, attached to the memories of massive flows of refugees and swollen corpses, the new bridge is a symbol of the 'new Rwanda',

guiding more than 200,000 Rwandese fleeing into Tanzania in less than 24 hours (Wilkinson, 1997), while thousands of corpses flowed underneath. A simultaneous stream of vital materiality (Bennett, 2010), humans and nonhumans alike, claiming their agency and questioning the traditional conception of subjectivity.

"On the metal bridge that spans the gorge, one morning in early May, a short, stout man, dressed in full military uniform, stood with on hand on the rail, peering over the edge of the bridge at the river below. (…) The man in uniform was a general. (…) The general told the few journalists that had gathered around him that he was angry. The war in Rwanda was a tragedy, he said, everyone was agreed on that, though neither he nor his government in Dar es Salaam was in any position to intervene in the internal politics of another country. '*But this*', he said, pointing his stick at the river below, 'this', he hissed, '*is disgusting*'. Quite apart from the risk of the conflict spilling over into neighbouring countries, *this was a public health calamity*. Below the general, I had noticed that *waves crashed against a substantial rock that jutted out above the river* (…). In the middle of the eddy was the body of a man. (…) While the general spoke I watched the dead man as, every few seconds, the waters span him around the eddy. *Most of the bodies that were being carried downstream, however, thundered straight under the bridge and were quickly swept along in the main current of the river. They hurried through the torrent, skirting rocks, slipping sideways down dark channels before disappearing from view, only to re-emerge a few yards later, limbs flailing, turning over and over until they sped around the corner and finally out of sight. (...) I could see half a dozen bodies making their way towards the bridge*, (…) *victims of government propaganda that had urged Rwanda's Hutu population to kill their Tutsi neighbours and dump them in the Akagera and send them back north – back to the Nile and the land they had come from* (Belton, 2014, p. 106-108, my emphasis).

The picture above is like a composite, a mixture of elements mingling and forming something new due to the circularity of its materialities. I saw the whole series of pictures available on Getty images[177] regarding the corpses thrown into Akagera River, but I chose this one since it is least graphic and also captures the idea of movement and transformation in an assemblage. I struggled to keep looking at it in order to capture the wide range of actants contributing to form such a composite, but my body was reluctant, my first response while looking at the pictures was to feel nauseated. When first examining the picture above, I did not realize the corpses were not whole, not even they were covered in wounds,

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concerned with modernity and development. Also, Rusumo Falls is an important place to generate hydroelectric power for Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. The Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project (RRFP) is being implemented and should be operational by 2018. See more on the project at http://rusumoproject.org/index.php/en/. According to Purdeková, 'going forward' (or *amajyambere*, in Kinyarwanda) is what best describes the commitment of the Rwandan government to a fast-paced and forward-bound transformation, at times containing the negative aspects of the past in the name of progress (2012, p. 192).

[177] Series of pictures available at: https://www.gettyimages.com/license/739923 [accessed November 6, 2017].

and I thought the sticks were knives. But what really caught my attention in the series of pictures was the fact that they were white, and I knew those were supposed to be black corpses – a touch of macabre coincidence, washing away the supposedly descendants of a Nilotic tribe with whiter skin.

In the first weeks of May, in 1994, the news reported an acute health hazard. As many as 100 bodies an hour washed up on the shores of Lake Victoria. Ugandan government appealed for international help to dispose the bodies, since the remoteness of the area, heavy rains, the currents, the difficulty in fighting off wild animals and scavenging dogs, and lack of appropriate means – motorized canoes, trucks, gloves and bags – to "fish the corpses" had hampered the task[178]. The testimonies of residents shocked and alarmed the international community, attesting the materiality of the genocide. As a Ugandan fisherman remembers,

> "The whole village was filled with fear. At first we did not know where the bodies were coming from but we later heard media reports that people in Rwanda were killing each other and there was a severe war. We were told people these bodies were being dumped in a river in Rwanda (Nyabarongo) and were flowing through Kagera River into Lake Victoria. (...) It was rare to find a single body floating because most of the bodies were tied in bundles. They came in large numbers for about three months that we stopped fishing on the Lake. We even stopped eating fish because we knew the fish were feeding on these human bodies. It took a very long time for to resume our fishing business again" (Kasumba, 2009; interview for The New Times)[179].

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[178] See Lorch. The New York Times, May 21, 1994; Lorch, The New York Times, May 28, 1994.

[179] See the whole interview of Geoffrey Kasumba for The New Times in: Tumwebaze, Peterson. Ugandan speaks out on human bodies in L. Victoria in 1994, The New Times, April 10, 2009 (retrieved November 6, 2017 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/7996/).

Figure 23: 20 May 1994 – Corpses pilled up for burial at Kasensero, Rakai District, Uganda. The bodies were carried by the Akagera River from Rwanda into Lake Victoria (Stringer/Reuters)[180].

Every actant and its associations contributed to an encompassing understanding of political matter. For this reason, hydrogen, oxygen, water hyacinth, crocodiles, rain, wind, temperature, water pressure, currents, bones, flesh, words, myths, machetes, human beings, borders, emotions, and the media (to name just a few) played a role in this ecology of human and nonhuman entities. It would be inappropriate to assume that only human beings are relevant in this assemblage; nonhuman entities are sources of action too and, working in collaboration with other bodies, they intervene striving their thing-power (Bennett, 2010, p. x) and making a difference in the situation.

As mentioned in chapter 3, words, myths, tales, legends also have a material force, working as actants in this assemblage. These, in conjunction with other actants, help us navigate into Rwanda's past and, unavoidably, its present and future. Despite being entities composing a network conceived in the past (prior to and during the genocide), its significance for post-genocide memory

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[180] Picture retrieved November 6, 2017 from: https://www.reuters.com/news/picture/the-rwanda-genocide-idUSRTR3JZZT. Apart from being the most affected place by the arrival of Rwandan corpses, Kasensero is also widely known for being the first place of an advanced epidemic of AIDS in the world in 1983. See more in Barnett; Whiteside, 2002, p. 28.

politics should be emphasized[181]. That is to say, the temporal horizon is important when describing a meshwork of associations since the force is emanating from a particular spatiotemporal configuration (Bennett, 2010, p. 35). Thus, the human and nonhuman actants will not exercise the same force and effect in another assemblage; it is a specificity of that particular (and temporary) arrangement of interacting entities.

And yet we are in constant movement/transition. In describing the assemblage of Nyabarongo river and its contribution to (re)think memorial politics, we are not limited to the genocide, but will be traversing different temporal lapses; at times going back to what is called 'pre-colonial period', into 'the genocide', and forward again to 'post-genocide', not necessarily in a linear vein. There are different associations composed by heterogeneous entities producing various effects in a network, and some actants of this network will help to constitute new sets of associations in a rhizomatic mode. Thus, as Stengers states, "we have to follow and not deduce" (2010, p. 24).

When describing the Nyabarongo assemblage, we need to be aware that an entity forming a network can play a huge part in a new set of associations, forming another network, transforming and adding new dimensions to it. Therefore, this swarm of vitalities (Bennett, 2010, p. 32) exists only for particular times and places. Tracing the actants in this nonhierarchical, nonlinear and non-subject-centered assemblage will help us grasping new possibilities to think memorial practices across boundaries – not only material but also semiotic.

The flux of a river is both actual and figuratively relevant to approach how things are always in transformation in a process of becoming, entering new associations and forming new spatiotemporal configurations.

Before the genocide, Nyabarongo River was an ordinary place being constantly transformed into a possible conduit to expel non-autochthone citizens.

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[181] We need to follow as many actants as we can, trying to describe Nyabarongo assemblage. These actants are implicated in a very fractal mode of agency, in a way that it is impossible to locate an actant as the ultimate cause of an event. We will be traveling distinct time frames, spaces, contours and relations in a journey towards the temporary effects of the assemblage's agency, avoiding to provide 'a social explanation', as if the social was already there to be accessed. As Latour argues, "the social has never explained anything; the social has to be explained instead" (2005, p. 97). We can only try to grasp Nyabarongo assemblage and its politics from an examination of the "dynamic force emanating from a spatiotemporal configuration, rather than from any particular element within it" (Bennett, 2010, p. 35). Hence, Nyabarongo assemblage traverses diffuse temporalities entangling many actants and presenting a relational and dynamic spatiality – always 'in-relation-with'.

Mingling with new entities, Nyabarongo gradually became a shortcut to excrete the Other. During the genocide, the river was actually used to drown Tutsis in the water to kill them or as a way to discard their body remains. Then, the agency and motion of those dead bodies flowing in the river, transgressed borders and affected health and economy abroad, demanding an attention to its generative force.

When those bodies in decomposition crossed the borders, they were classified as hazardous since the waters, the soil, and the animals (especially fishes) were being contaminated, calling the attention of international media. The fish economy was devastated in the Great Lakes region; people were no longer selling or buying fish. But it also reverberated in Europe and other countries that used to import the Nile Perch from Kenya.

Also, those dead bodies demanded prompt responses in order to avoid greater health risks, and international aid was needed to manage the corpses. Thus, those corpses were buried straightaway, however they were not properly buried and mourned. In order to fill this gap, genocide memorials were and are being constructed in neighboring countries.

5.5 Unexpected memorialization

Ordinary places transformed into death sites, corpses disrupting subjectivity, physical and disciplinary boundaries transgressed – the political reassessed in a complex mnemonic assemblage. Nyabarongo River was a weapon used to kill during the genocide, it later became a graveyard full of dead bodies, and nowadays an unusual memorial place. The transformation of this everyday place disturbs traditionalisms, especially regarding the idea of a river as passive nature, and of a memorial as a motionless place containing objects of adornment. This place of memory holds much more than historical traces, enacting collective practices that are material and semiotic and highly dependent on the effusive work of actants, showing its circularity and exposing the unpredictable effects of the assemblage to memorialization.

While there are many genocide memorial sites to honor the victims that were killed in roadblocks, latrine pits, schools, churches and other 'more regular' places, the memorialization of victims that were dumped into the rivers remains

very marginal, both nationally and internationally[182]. Although many corpses were thrown into the river during the genocide and, in the following years, people used to gather during the mourning periods to throw flowers and lay wreaths in it as a tribute to the dead, Nyabarongo River had no memorial or monument devoted to memorializing those victims. It was only in 2010 that a memorial wall, containing 397 names of victims, was constructed on the banks of the river between Southern and Western Provinces, Muhanga and Ngororero districts, specifically at Gatumba Sector, Cyome cell. The construction of the monument was a Dukundane Family[183] initiative in conjunction with Survivors Fund of Rwanda (SURF), and the official opening ceremony was held on July 2010[184] with the cutting of a ribbon to inaugurate it.

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[182] It is unclear whether there are more monuments constructed to honor the victims thrown into rivers and sites where corpses travelling the streams of rivers were buried in mass graves; we will address here only the ones located in Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania that constructed monuments or memorials, but there is a high possibility of existing more corpses from victims of the rivers in mass graves that were not yet discovered and/or memorialized. Since it was not possible to find academic references on the memorialization of Rwandan victims thrown into rivers, this research was based on news published into well-known newspapers of the Great Lakes Region and also into personal communication with Rwandan survivors.

[183] Dukundane Family is an association of genocide survivors under IBUKA. I will provide, further in this section, more details on their role on memorialization, especially regarding those who died in waters.

[184] It was not possible to find the exact date of the construction of the memorial wall, but a report was written to document the official opening ceremony. Please see SURF's website for more detailed information. Retrieved July 26, 2018 from: https://survivors-fund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Dukundane-Family.pdf.

Figure 24: Liliane Umubyeyi, guest of honor and co-chair of SURF, cutting the ribbon in the official opening of the memorial wall in Ngororero district (SURF, 2010)[185].

The location of the monument is symbolic for a few reasons. First, during the genocide, Tutsis from Kabgayi [186] (Muhanga district, former Gitarama Province) were taken to Cyome to be killed and then thrown into Nyabarongo River[187], so the monument honors both victims of Muhanga and Ngororero districts. Second, Ngororero (former Gisenyi prefecture) was the hometown of Léon Mugesera, who used to live in Kibirira commune – now Gatumba sector of Ngororero district – and one of the first places to experience the massacres of

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[185] Picture retrieved July 26, 2018 from: https://survivors-fund.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/Dukundane-Family.pdf.

[186] Kabgayi was known as the "Vatican of Rwanda" due to the strong presence of catholic-run projects (like schools, convents, a hospital and a church) and became one of the main sought after destinations to escape from genocide – a supposedly refuge town for Tutsis who believed that religious places would be spared. However, government leaders – especially Jean Paul Akayesu and Sixbert Ndayambaje, the mayors of Taba and Runda communes, respectively – toured the area searching for Tutsis with death lists and organized exterminations.

[187] See the news below for more details on how they were taken from Kabgayi to Ngororero and killed. Tumwebaze, Peterson. Survivor: How the RPA saved the Tutsi in Gitarama, The New Times, July 04, 2014 (retrieved July 26, 2018 from: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/76601; Kambanda, Noel. Kwibuka22: Reminiscing a 'day of resurrection', The New Times, June 07, 2016 (retrieved July 26, 2018 from: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/200540; CNLG Editorial. Muhanga: Tutsi who were slain at Kabgayi were commemorated, CNLG News, June 05, 2017 (retrieved July 26, 2018 from:http://cnlg.gov.rw/newsdetails/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1792&tx_ttnews%5Bpointer%5D=153&cHash=83ae745e9ba081c2f8f9faa72d7446e4).

Tutsis, especially the Abagogwe, as early as in 1990 and again in subsequent years, culminating in the genocide.
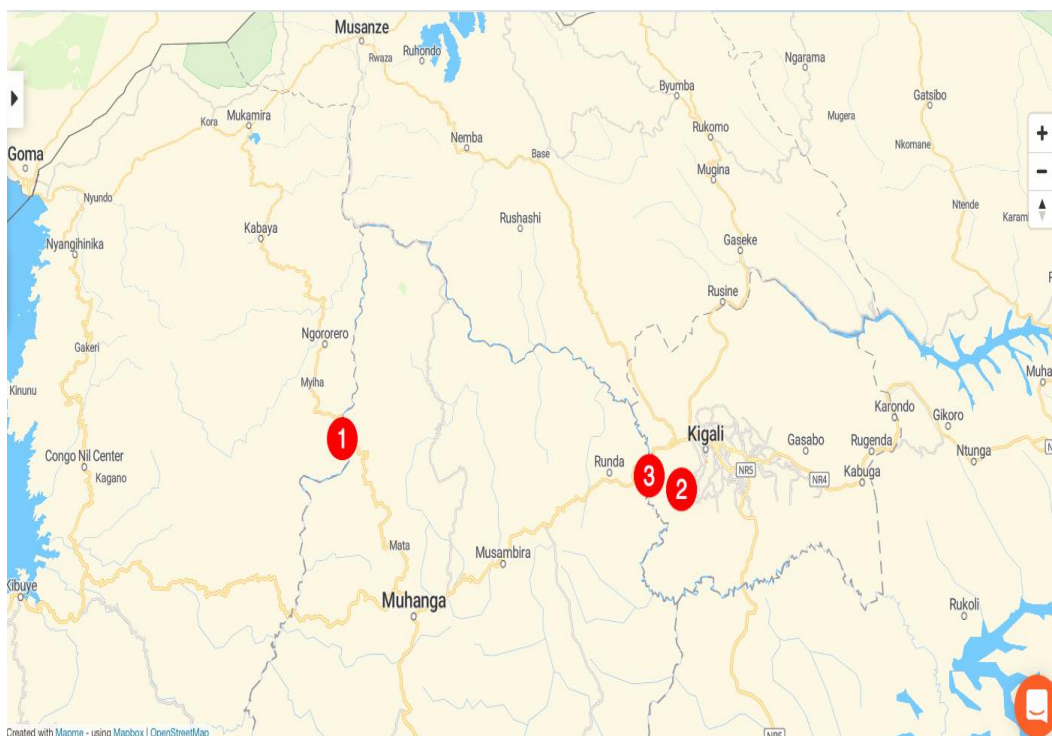
Figure 25: Monuments erected to victims dumped into Nyabarongo River: 1) Ngororero memorial wall; 2) Nyarugenge memorial wall; 3) Runda memorial wall (to be constructed). Map created by author using Mapme; August 07, 2018.

Although a memorial dedicated to Nyabarongo victims was a latecomer in memorialization efforts, other monuments of the same kind are now appearing throughout Rwanda. In 2016, as part of the events that commemorate the genocide against the Tutsi (Kwibuka 22), a monument was constructed in Nyarugenge district, Kigali Province, on the banks of the river to honor the dead thrown in its waters during the genocide. "We lost our people [killed] in Nyabarongo River but did not manage to get their bodies to bury them. That is why we wanted this monument"[188], a survivor underlines the importance to memorialize those whose bodies could not be recovered. A marble wall exhibiting 755 names of victims that were dumped into the waters of Nyabarongo is another effort towards the acknowledgment of the river as a memorial place. The monument was unveiled on April 16, a day after the verdict of Léon Mugesera's

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[188] See Ntirenganya, Emmanuel. Kwibuka22: Monument unveiled to honour victims thrown in Nyabarongo, The New Times, April 18, 2016 (retrieved July 6, 2018 from: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/199055).

trial[189], Rwanda High Court sentenced him to life imprisonment for public incitement to commit genocide, persecution as a crime against humanity and incitement of ethnic-affiliated hatred[190]. Mugesera's conviction is very symbolic not only because his infamous speech, inciting to thrown Tutsis in Nyabarongo River as a shortcut to Ethiopia, was a powerful actant in this catastrophic assemblage of corpses flowing abroad but also due to the fact that the verdict came out the day before the commemoration was held in the shores of Nyabarongo, bringing some sort of relief to the survivors remembering the victims of such speech.

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[189] Léon Mugesera left Rwanda due to an arrest warrant against him for the speech he gave in Kabaya. He fled to Canada and was a political refugee until granted permanent residence in 1993. From 1993 until 1995 he lectured at Laval University, in Quebec. In 1995, his deportation proceedings began, but he was able to postpone it for 17 years, arguing the allegations against him were unfounded, that he would not receive a fair trial in Rwanda, and that his life and family would be at risk if deported to Rwanda. It was only on January 21 of 2012 that he left Canada and was sent back to Rwanda to be judged. One more time, Mugesera postponed the trial based on allegations he needed more time to prepare his defense, and arguing two of the three judges were disqualified. After four years, he was convicted to life imprisonment in 2016 for public incitement to commit genocide, persecution as a crime against humanity and incitement of ethnic-affiliated hatred, although he pleaded not guilty to all the charges. See Trial International, April 25 of 2016 for a more detailed account of the legal procedures from his permanent residence in Canada until his extradition. Retrieved July 6, 2018 from: https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/leon-mugesera/. Léon Mugesera is now serving his sentence at Mpanga Prison, an international accredited facility located in Nyanza District, Southern Province.

[190] For news on the indictment of Leon Mugesera, see O'Grady, Siobhán. Rwandan who called Tutsis 'cockroaches' in 1992 gets life sentence, Foreign Policy, April 15, 2016 (retrieved July 6, 2018 from: https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/04/15/rwandan-who-called-tutsis-cockroaches-in-1992-gets-life-sentence/); Uwiringiyimana, Clement. Former Rwandan official given life sentence over genocide crimes, Thomson Reuters, April 15, 2016 (retrieved July 6, 2018 from: https://www.reuters.com/article/us-rwanda-court-idUSKCN0XC21K); Rwirahira, Rodrigue. Leon Mugesera gets life term for genocide crimes, The New Times, April 16, 2016 (retrieved July 6, 2018 from: http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/199005).

Figure 26: Nyarugenge memorial wall inaugurated as part of Kwibuka 22 commemoration events in 2016 (Igihe)[191].

Not far from Nyarugenge, another memorial wall is about to be constructed in Runda sector, Kamonyi district. Nyabarongo River is currently the only commemoration site of Runda's citizens, since there is no memorial in this place, but there is an initiative of building a memorial wall being discussed by sector and district authorities concerning the more adequate place of construction and issues of funding. The genocide against the Tutsi in Runda is commemorated on April 15, the day when the Tutsis that had hidden at Gihara catholic parish were taken to Nyabarongo River and killed. According to a survivor,

> "It was on April 15, 1994 that, frightened by the scale of the massacres, Tutsis from Ruyenzi and Gihara areas took refuge at the catholic parish of Gihara believing to find a salute, but unfortunately the 'interahamwe' criminals and ex-FARs joined them and took many into vehicles to dump them over the Nyabarongo River bridge on the road to Kigali" (Eric Dushime, interview to The Partner Magazine, April 2018[192]).

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[191] Picture retrieved July 28, 2018 from: http://www.igihe.com/amakuru/u-rwanda/article/yafashijwe-kwegera-nyabarongo-yamaze-abe-muri-jenoside-we-ikamuruka.

[192] Kagahe, Jean Louis. Runda-Kamonyi: Nyabarongo River will no longer be the only memorial site of genocide, The Partner Magazine, April 17, 2018 (retrieved July 28, 2018 from: http://www.thepartnermag.com/2018/04/17/runda-kamonyi-nyabarongo-river-will-no-longer-be-the-only-memorial-site-of-genocide/).

On April 15 of 2018, a commemorative march departed from the sector's office towards the bridge at Ruliba, where the residents of Runda joined the mayor of Kamonyi district, Alice Kayitesi, and the president of IBUKA in Runda sector, Innocent Nshogoza, to lay wreaths to the victims at Nyabarongo River. Although the annual commemoration event usually takes place over the bridge, many other places were also targeted in Runda during the genocide in 1994[193].

Figure 27: Residents and government representatives at Runda's commemoration of the Nyabarongo victims in 2018 (The Partner Magazine)[194].

The construction of monuments to memorialize the victims of Nyabarongo River is an attempt to pay a tribute to those that could not be properly buried with dignity since many corpses were never recovered. Apart from these monuments, commemoration events are being held throughout the country by civil society and governmental initiatives. Many associations are dedicated to remembrance

[193] For a detailed account on other targeted places in Runda during the genocide, see: Kagahe, Jean Louis. Runda-Kamonyi: Nyabarongo River will no longer be the only memorial site of genocide, The Partner Magazine, April 17, 2018 (retrieved July 28, 2018 from: http://www.thepartnermag.com/2018/04/17/runda-kamonyi-nyabarongo-river-will-no-longer-be-the-only-memorial-site-of-genocide/); CNLG Editorial. Important sites of massacres of Tutsi in different areas of Rwanda on 7th April 1994 and RPA military operations to stop the genocide, CNLG News, April 07, 2017 (retrieved July 28, 2018 from: http://cnlg.gov.rw/news-details/?L=2&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=1330&cHash=cf9665ff75593721af603e9ea71835f3).
[194] Picture retrieved July 28, 2018 from: http://www.thepartnermag.com/2018/04/17/runda-kamonyi-nyabarongo-river-will-no-longer-be-the-only-memorial-site-of-genocide.

activities, acting in conjunction with IBUKA and SURF, but Dukundane Family is, since 2007, the one committed to remembering those killed in rivers, lakes, and streams under the theme "Remembering and ensuring that water stays a source of life and not death".

Dukundane Family is one of the 15 associations of survivors of the genocide under IBUKA, and it was formed by Rwandan Graduates Genocide Survivors or Groupe des Anciens Etudiants Rescapés du Génocide (GAERG)[195]. GAERG was created in 2003 as a way to overcome the consequences to orphans of the genocide against the Tutsi, forming artificial families for survivors who were graduating from universities and aiming to cover the gap of parents killed during the genocide, enabling orphans to raise their peers. Dukundane Family is one of these artificial families formed by youth survivors and former members of the Association des Etudiants Et Éleves Rescapés Du Genocide (AERG)[196] Groupe Scolaire Saint Andre in Nyamirambo sector, Kigali province, devoted to organizing annual commemoration events for those who perished in the waters during the genocide[197]. According to Robert Shimirwa, the coordinator of Dukundane Family, "Rivers, streams, lakes and their banks were used as a weapon for mass destruction during the Genocide against the Tutsi. The commemoration is held on the banks because these were turned into

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[195] GAERG has been working in projects to improve the daily lives of survivors as a precondition for their active participation in genocide prevention activities. GAERG'S goals are to promote memory and commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi and to prevent the spread of genocide ideology among young generation; to accelerate survivor's economic empowerment through capacity building for members of GAERG and other vulnerable survivors, decreasing their level of vulnerability and improving their social wellbeing; to build synergy with other key stakeholders to carry out evidence-based advocacy for key challenges which affect GAERG members, other vulnerable survivors and their surroundings; and to ensure organizational sustainability and accountability. Please visit GAERG website for more information: http://gaerg.org.rw/.

[196] AERG is an association of student survivors created in 1996. The association was founded as a support mechanism in the form of artificial families for genocide orphans studying at secondary and higher institutions, but has now expanded to cover not only support systems and morale-boosting activities, but also to advocate for the ongoing needs of survivors, supporting them in education, with economic issues and onwards towards productive life. Please visit AERG website for more information: http://aerg.org.rw/.

[197] For some news regarding Dukundane Family commemoration initiatives to honor victims of the genocide who perished in the water, please see: Tumwebaze, Peterson. Dukundane Family: a juncture of survivors hope implementers, The New Times, August 01, 2009 (retrieved July 28, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/79295); Nizeyimama, Jean. Dukundane Family to hold 10th commemoration of 1994 Genocide victims dumped into water, Umuseke, June 16, 2016 (retrieved July 28, 2018 from: http://en.umuseke.rw/dukundane-family-to-hold-10th-commemoration-of-1994-genocide-victims-dumped-into-water.html). Byumvuhore, Frederic. Kwibuka22: Genocide victims thrown in Lake Muhazi honoured, The New Times, June 21, 2016 (retrieved July 28, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/201000).

cemeteries". As an actant, it streamed corpses beyond borders, demanding us to rethink the international management of corpses and pollution. It altered memorialization practices not only on national grounds but also internationally, shaping the way memory is produced across the border.

The arrival of Rwandan corpses in the Great Lakes Region contributed to the creation of memorial sites in Uganda and Tanzania. In Uganda, there are currently three memorials erected to the victims of the genocide: Kasensero, in Rakai district; Lambu, in Masaka district; and Ggolo, in Mpigi district.

The corpses arrived in Uganda and were recovered from the lake to be buried in mass graves in, at least, six places – Ddimo, Malembo, Namirembe, Lambu, Kasensero and Ggolo –, but they were later exhumed from the first three places and assembled in Kasensero, Lambu, and Ggolo memorial sites. The decision to create those memorials was made on the 15th anniversary of the genocide against the Tutsi to honor the remains of more than 10, 900 victims[198] who were thrown into Nyabarongo and Akagera rivers, ending up on the shores of Lake Victoria.

Figure 28: Map of genocide memorials in Uganda: 1) Kasensero memorial, in Rakai district; 2) Lambu memorial, in Masaka district; 3) Ggolo memorial, in Mpigi district. Map created by author using Mapme; August 07, 2018.

[198] This number could be even higher, since many residents claim to have already buried many corpses before the official counting began.

Kasensero Genocide Memorial is located at a fishing village in Rakai district, high atop a limestone cliff overlooking Lake Victoria, where 2,875 bodies are buried just beyond the crest of the hill in eight mass graves. The last commemoration event was held on April 21, 2018 marked by prayers and hymns as well as the laying of wreaths on the mass graves.

Rwanda's High Commissioner to Uganda, Frank Mugambage, has been working in upgrading the memorial sites along with other political leaders and "friends of Rwanda" to transform the memorials into international centers of learning, following the model of Kigali Genocide Memorial Center (Muramira, 2018)[199]. Mohamood Noordin Thobani is a Ugandan businessman[200] actively involved in these transformations. He played a significant role in preserving the memory of the corpses since their arrival on the shores of Lake Victoria, donating the lands to assemble the bodies in mass graves where now the three memorials stand, and frequently contributes financially to the preservation of the victims' remains.

[199] For more details see Muramira, Gashegu. Hundreds pay tribute to Genocide victims recovered from Lake Victoria, The New Times, April 23, 2018 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/hundreds-pay-tribute-genocide-victims-recovered-l-victoria).
[200] Thobani is the managing director of Fourways Investments Ltd and also the Minister of Trade and Cooperative in Buganda Kingdom.

Figure 29: Mourners laying wreaths on top of mass graves in Kasensero genocide memorial site in the 24th commemoration of the genocide (AFP/Isaac Kasamani)[201].

Lambu Genocide Memorial is also located at a fishing village in Masaka district, where 3,336 bodies are buried in nine mass graves. 1,718 corpses were already in Lambu, but 1,618 were exhumed and transferred from Namirembe.

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[201] Picture retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.yahoo.com/news/hundreds-bodies-found-rwandas-1994-genocide-172158466.html.

Figure 30: Mohamood Thobani lays a wreath on a mass grave at Lambu Memorial Site, in Masaka district – April 2015 (Gashegu Muramira/The New Times)[202].

As shown in Figure 28, these first two memorials are located very close to Lake Victoria along poor accessed roads and swamps nearby, making it difficult to attract visitants and to properly maintain these sites. The most alarming issue is the preservation of the human remains in mass graves due to difficult access, deterioration caused by climatic effects, and lack of funds, but another concern can be added to the list – the use of human bones for witchcraft[203].

Before the exhumation and assembling of the human remains in cemented mass graves with plaques highlighting they were victims of the genocide in Rwanda, the bones were being excavated from mass graves and used in witchcraft practices in Uganda[204]. A report compiled by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Unity, Human Rights and the fight against Genocide was published on March of 2009, after a working visit to assess the situation of the remains of

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[202] Picture retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/187774.

[203]Tumwebaze, Peterson. 'Genocide remains in Uganda used for witchcraft purposes' – Report, The New Times, March 22, 2009 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/41166); Tumwebaze, Peterson. A visit to our dead in Uganda, The New Times, April 05, 2009 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/78883).

[204] Although there is no report addressing new cases of vandalism or witchcraft in the main three memorials, Kasensero, Ggolo and Lambu memorials must be very well kept to secure the victims remains, since it is still very common to see practices of witchcraft in the region of Lake Victoria.

genocide victims. According to the report, some mass graves were found defaced, others abandoned and covered by bushes, and also adorned with coins and other witchcraft materials in a type of shrine built on top of the graves (Tumwebaze, 2009). In Uganda, some people still believe they can become rich using human bones in exchange for blessings from witchdoctors. More recently, rituals of human sacrifice are becoming habitual, especially of children, due to a belief they can bring quick health and wealth [205].

Ggolo Genocide Memorial is located in Mpigi district, about 100 kilometers away from the capital Kampala. Ggolo is where the largest number of victims are buried in Uganda, and also more easily accessed if compared to Lambu and Kasensero memorials. Approximately 4,771 bodies are buried in several mass graves, but only 955 were originally in Ggolo, the other bodies were transferred from Malembo and Ddimo – 1,667 and 2,149 respectively. Ggolo is soon to be transformed into a memorial museum, the first of the three genocide memorials in Uganda to upgrade into a museum that attempts to recount the specificities of the bodies' arrival into Lake Victoria and serve as an education center to promote messages against genocide ideology and revisionism, exhibiting plaques, pictures, old clothes, and objects of those who perished into the water. As stated by Frank Mugambage, as soon as the transformation occurs, the memorial will apply to be registered at UNESCO for recognition and attraction of tourists from other countries (Serugo, 2018)[206].

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[205]For some news on this issue, see Ajiambo, Doreen. Witch doctors sacrificing children in this drought-stricken African country, USA Today, September 26, 2017 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/09/26/witch-doctors-sacrificing-children-drought-stricken-african-country-uganda/703756001/); Onyulo, Tonny. In this nation children's body parts are sacrificed for witchcraft, USA Today, May 1, 2017 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2017/05/01/uganda-human-children-sacrifice/100741148/); Kirumira, Mark. Six million Ugandans believe in witchcraft, Daily Monitor, April 20, 2010 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: http://www.monitor.co.ug/News/National/688334-902622-bt1n72z/index.html); Bloadhurst, Clea. Children sacrificed in Uganda to bring wealth and power, RFI, March 7, 2016 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: http://en.rfi.fr/africa/20160307-child-sacrifice-bring-wealth-and-power-uganda.

[206] For more details see Serugo, Geoffrey. Funds raised for construction of genocide memorial sites in Uganda, Eagle online, April 6, 2018 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: http://eagle.co.ug/2018/04/06/funds-raised-for-construction-of-genocide-memorial-sites-in-uganda.html). Nsaba, Lisa; Ssenyonga, Andrew. Rwandans raise sh37m for genocide museum, New Vision, April 6, 2018 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1474992/rwandans-raise-sh37m-genocide-museum); Ssenyonga, Andrew. Rwandans want UNESCO to list genocide memorials, New Vision, April 10, 2016 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1421782/rwandans-unesco-list-genocide-memorials).

For the transformation of the memorial into a museum, a foundation stone was laid in Ggolo on April of 2016, marking the beginning of the construction in the events of the 22nd commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi. A fundraising campaign was launched in 2016 coordinated by the Rwanda High Commission in Uganda and the Commission for the fight against genocide (CNLG) guiding structural designs to build the first genocide memorial of this kind outside Rwanda[207]. On the last commemoration at the memorial, Frank Mugambage announced another event for June of 2018 to increase the amount already raised[208].

Figure 31: Mohamood Thobani lays a wreath on a mass grave at Lambu Memorial Site, in Masaka district – April 2015 (Gashegu Muramira/The New Times)[209].

[207] The New Times (unknown reporter). Rwandan community in Uganda fundraise for genocide museum, The New Times, April 3, 2016 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/198620).

[208] The Rwandan community and friends of Rwanda have already raised close to 37 Ugandan million shillings (approximately 7 million Rwandan francs) for the construction of the memorial museum in Ggolo, but according to the Rwandan High Commissioner to Uganda, Frank Mugambage, it requires 3,7 billion shillings for completion. See New Vision (unknown reporter). Rwandans raise sh37m for genocide museum, New Vision, April 6, 2018 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1474992/rwandans-raise-sh37m-genocide-museum; Rwanda Diaspora Global Network (unknown author). Kwibuka24: Rwandans in Uganda commemorate, Rwanda Diaspora Global Network, April 9, 2018 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from:http://www.rwandaglobaldiaspora.org/kwibuka24-rwandans-in-uganda-commemorate).

[209] Picture retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/198833.

In Tanzania, only in 2009 some corpses were discovered in Ngara district, about 3 kilometers away from the Rusumo border separating Rwanda from Tanzania. According to CNLG, approximately 917 corpses were buried in mass graves and a memorial is to be constructed as the resting place of the corpses collected near Rusumo[210]. Apart from the issue of funding, the talks are about the ownership of the land where this memorial site will be located[211]. Although not being a prominent part of the memorialization events, those who submerged to death ("Abantu baguye mu mazi") changed memorialization efforts internationally. In an unexpected way, the corpses traveled through rivers and crossed boundaries, forcing us to recognize their agentic capacities in changing the way we memorialize. Memorial sites constructed abroad were a conjoint initiative of both Rwanda and the host governments, advancing a perspective of genocide as something universal that should be commemorated transnationally.

The motion of a river streaming corpses abroad emphasizes the dynamic and unexpected character of Nyabarongo assemblage, demanding us to look carefully to these encounters in order to understand new ways of memorializing. An untamed stream, carrying away person-things, disrupted the territorial trap of modern politics and the ideal of a contained memorialization in a movement of deterritorialization.

If we understand places as a collection of stories-so-far and unfinished business (Massey, 2005), attention goes to the enactment of provisional gatherings rather than universal transcendentals. And yet, a move of re-territorialization can stabilize[212] and recapture the flux of these corpses, trying to fix them into memorials or monuments.

As such, dead bodies are converted into names on the walls. Victims that were not whole but half (or not-quite) bodies are now mourned by the presence of their names and absence of their bodies. In order to avoid forgetting, those names are inscribed, fixed, and placed to recognize the individual who used to inhabit the

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[210] The New Times (unknown reporter). Genocide remains discovered in Tanzania, The New Times, October 22, 2009 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/12509); Musoni, Edwin. Genocide memorial centre to be constructed in Tanzania, The New Times, April 5, 2013 (retrieved August 4, 2018 from: https://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/64595).
[211] It was not possible to found information on the status of the negotiations that began in 2013.
[212] These movements of territorialization, stabilizing its internal homogeneity, are necessarily imbricated in the interaction of components working hard to stabilize an assemblage, evincing a change or transforming into a new assemblage.

dead human body. But what happens with those bodies that were not possible to identify? How do we memorialize person-things? The majority of dead bodies in Rwanda are not identified since they require a tremendous effort to recognize near a million people systematically killed. If not impossible, this task might take many years, especially due to the particularity of their deaths. Those bodies were mutilated, dismembered, disfigured, and usually mingled together with other bodies in mass graves, making it difficult to separate and identify each individual.

Genocide produces dead bodies in mass, and although each person is missed for their uniqueness, it is difficult to mourn and memorialize them based on personhood. An alternative to this obstacle is to collectively memorialize them, assembling a few human remains, objects, photographs, and identity cards in memorials, eliciting affective connection with all lives lost. These materialities do something through and within us, demanding a response. We can both interact and mourn them in terms of their individuality and collectivity. It is not uncommon to see memorial ribbons and wreaths in memorial sites with messages acknowledging both the genocide as an event not to be repeated and the loss of a specific person in this context. While "never again" is the most used term to express the collective character of genocide, phrases such as "We remember you, [person's name]"; "I will never forget you, [person's name]; "Our family will always be with you, [person's name]" are an attempt to individualize it, calling attention to the person. I remember seeing many wreaths in memorial sites, but small and individual roses called my attention in this effort to emphasize the singular.

When perpetrators killed their victims with machete blows, dismembering their bodies and throwing inside Nyabarongo River, they were actually committing a tripartite murder in which the body, dismembered and disfigured, was held incapable of identification with a person, who also cannot be mourned in vestiges since they were sent away in the waters to become waste in another place. This practice can be conceived as an effort to vanish a person's body, name, and place in such a way that she/he can be said to have never existed. Conversely, this attempt to make them invisible was exactly what highlighted their visibility and recalcitrance when those human remains, conjoining other entities, crossed boundaries and affected the Great Lakes Region and international economy.

In post-genocide Rwanda, there is always this friction between the presence of human remains and absence of the whole person; individual identification and the impossibility of it; a corpse without a name and the name without a corpse. As Auchter summarizes, "this link between name and body is ruptured by genocide" (2014, p. 70), render[ing] their names invisible, and rip[ping] the names from their attachments to bodies. The question is whether the most fitting memorial to genocide is reclaiming names for bodies, or whether memorialising their non-personhood is more fitting to memorialise their personhood" (p. 56).

5.6 Conclusion

The bodies in Nyabarongo are nomadic[213] beings in many senses. They are de-humanized humans, person-things; they are human and pollution; they possess a vitality even in their deaths; they co-habit different social categories, they are dead but very much alive; they are travelers blurring boundaries, national and yet foreign; they are neither one thing nor the other, but both simultaneously; they require a different concept of subjectivity. Dead bodies addressed here are then politically relevant, not only because they are sites of political struggle, but also due to the implications of their management and their agentic capacity in transforming memorialization practices unexpectedly. As an 'object-subject', the dead body disrupts the idea of an inert matter and presents itself as an uneasy substance traveling through flows and generating consequences beyond borders. Dead bodies were treated as disposable waste tossed into the rivers to be discarded, which in turn carried the corpses abroad, to later become the main part of memorial sites, contributing to the internationalization of memorial practices.

As Braun and Whatmore highlight,

"The idea that "things" might condition political life is seen to return us to a primitive state, attributing magical qualities to inanimate objects. (…) The effect has been to cast anything nonhuman out of the political fold or to relegate it to the status of resources or tools, entering political theory only to the extent that it has *instrumental* value but not in terms of its *constitutive* powers" (2010, p. xiv-xv).

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[213] The term "nomadic" here do not suggest a movement from a fixed point to another, but more sketchy borders, always in the process of becoming in a human/nonhuman cohabitation.

In recognizing dead bodies as political matter, we are only calling attention to the distributive character of agency, emphasizing the "throbbing confederations" of humans and vibrant materialities (Bennett, 2010, p. 23) and how they can affect practices of remembering and forgetting. Adopting a more visceral and embodied orientation towards memorialization, we delved into the sensorial, being opened to the unexpected and focusing on the experienced as a way to explore the constant, but also temporarily fixed, flux. As Latour argues, "action had already started; it will continue when we will no longer be around" (Latour, 2005, p. 123), highlighting the contingent and metamorphic character of materialities (and memorial places to that extent).

6 Fragile and provisional conclusions

This research delved into messy and awkward encounters while traversing memory and memorialization in post-genocide Rwanda. Our main endeavor was to expand the corpus of bodies that matter in IR, acknowledging agency and circularity of nonhuman actants, challenging conventional concepts of subjectivity in a more-than-human and more-than-representational gesture. In this sense, our aim was to show the agentic capacities of things/matter and how they affect practices of remembering and forgetting, considering agency in a more distributive way, rather than a capacity located only in human or nonhuman actants, but in the heterogeneous associations they form, transform, and deform. This 'ungraspability' of locating the exact source of agency in a particular event is an essential aspect of agency (Marres apud Bennett, 2010, p. 36).

While addressing memorialization, we did not opt to privilege an individual or collective optic towards memory, but focused on the multiple, mobile, and fluid character of memory ecologies (Hoskins, 2016), calling attention to memory as necessarily entangled with and enacted through an always frictional negotiation between materialities, sensations, technologies, environmental elements, representations (and so on) in unexpected a/effects.

In this effort to present how matter comes to matter, we engaged in an experimental leap towards a bricolage of approaches orienting this research in a fruitful conversation between assemblage thinking, actor-network theory, and affect theory. Rather than opting for a robust theoretical approach guiding our path, we turned to assemblages as an onto-episteme-methodological choice for exploring memorial places in post-genocide Rwanda. Traveling assemblages is, as Sassen and Ong (2014) remind us, a more careful way to slowly describe and engage with our surroundings, paying attention to the process on conjointness. As the authors point out, "assemblage is a (…) modest admission that we can only grasp a pretty limited part of unfolding contemporary life (…). It forces the analyst to confront what he or she is trying to study as a question and not just something that has already been predetermined by the past or predetermined by our theories or categories" (p. 24).

Assembling innovative approaches in social theory and international relations, this research is theoretically and methodologically pluralist in its conception. This gesture was a leap of faith, delving into nodal points of intersection and exploring potential cross-fertilizations to advance materiality and the flux of things as central (dis)positions of politics. In so doing, this work can be considered *indisciplinary* (Shapiro, 2013), even reckless, since it is dwelling away from ontological, epistemological and methodological orthodoxies, deterritorializing disciplinary boundaries. As I was trained in International Relations only, this work could be conceived as an effort to leave home behind and travel to unknown places, as home seems to be more confining and obeying than liberating – like our parents' house. Adventurous as I am, I engaged in conversations with gender studies, cultural geography, cultural anthropology, museum and memory studies, and affect studies to name a few. In emphasizing these encounters beyond disciplinary boundaries I did not want to critically debunk those I disagree with, but to stress the contribution of a diasporic spirit to understand community.

Nevertheless, raised in academic life, I know too well this space is normally structured in adversarial ways[214], and disciplinary boundaries usually constrain the work we seek to develop, securing its self-identity. In blurring these boundaries, I hope I had offered at least some insights to fruitful encounters, celebrating the multiplicity of actants assembling IR – of course, material-semiotic relations.

Under the rubric of the so-called 'new materialisms', we broadened agency beyond consciousness, opening space for a more integrative and transformative concept of agency that accounts for the movements and intensities of bodies. In doing so, we acknowledged matter, bodies, technologies, flows, memories (and so on) as symmetrical units composing an assemblage, exploring

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[214] As Grace Jantzen, quoted by Dauphinee, argues: "(…) in an adversarial paradigm the discussion that follows a paper is not one that tries to take up points to see how they could be developed further, but rather one which tries to demolish questionable bits. If arguments are set up so that they must be 'won' or lost', most people, at whatever academic level, will try to present cases which they feel confident that they can 'win'. Nobody enjoys being a loser. But this means that, in a more important sense, everybody loses, since fewer people will risk trying out adventurous ideas. Innovative thinking may well contain inadequacies. If students expect that these will be pounced upon, rather than that their creativity will be fostered (while being helped to avoid potential pitfalls and dead ends), they will quickly learn to curtail their innovative or exploratory inclinations and reproduce the attacks and defences of traditional philosophical battle" (Jantzen, 1998 apud Dauphinee, 2010, p. 804).

ambiguities and recalcitrances in emergent, nonlinear, and unpredictable memorialization.

As our focus was on the co-fabrication of the collective, we did not center on previously established categories or level of analysis but follow those material, discursive, and experiential entanglements in a more rhizomatic way, focusing on inter-corporeal connections that traversed all levels simultaneously. Traveling through the encounters between matter, bodies, memories, and places, we tried to grasp the sensuousness of matter in a mixture of affect, sensation, emotion, and critical reflexivity, exploring not only representation but also embodied experience in places of memory. Thus, we suggested conceiving memory as a fusion of bodies, places and practices, always enacted in the moment of encounter, forming provisional mnemonic assemblages. Central to our work was to grasp the movements of territorialization and deterritorialization in memorial places, dwelling on virtualities and actualities negotiating the lived, the desired, the narrated, the unexpected in different spatiotemporal configurations.

To explore the in-betweenness of sense and sense-making, we dwelled on affect as the force bonding such entanglements. We explored the affective forces of matter and their capacity to transform bodies, and the bodily responses to the potentialities of these affective forces. We tried to grasp affect as a force that precedes consciousness, emphasizing its potential and the realm of virtual, but we also exploring affects' captures and its actualization. For this reason, after presenting the bricolage of approaches orienting this research, in the second chapter, I ventured to explore the sensorial and visceral encounters with materialities through room 28 and machetes. This was a first step aiming to introduce affectivity and lived experience when exploring memory and landscape. In addressing places and objects that were not originally of memorial relevance, we aimed to show the unexpected character of memorialization and how those places and objects are enacted in our encounters with them. As such, our endeavor was to address affectivity by delving into the negotiations of sense and sense-making, feeling and thought, describing its generative force and the unpredictable effects of my engagements with it. In exceeding (and preceding) human consciousness, affect is difficult to grasp because it is always in excess of language (Dewsbury, 2010a; 2010b), so we usually resort to affect's captures to make sense of the world. Balancing affect and emotions (the most intense

expression of affect's capture) was not easy, and especially because they are always interweaving, it is useless to untangle them. As such, I described their interrelation by adjusting emphasis, so I could try to grasp both somatic and cognitive responses while exploring memorial places and the co-becoming with other bodies. Also, following places and objects/things, this chapter proposed a different path to describe the dynamics of violence during the genocide, providing a background without resorting to chronological singularities of 'historical facts'.

In order to compare different modes of memory gatherings, in chapter four we addressed carefully designed national-level memorial sites (Kigali, Murambi, and Bisesero) and, in chapter five, we underlined the unexpected character of memorialization following the flow and circularity of Nyabarongo River.

The main goal of chapter four was to discuss the constitutive relation between matter, memory, and place, digging deep on their entanglements and controversies as they rub against each other in frictional movements. We suggested, following Tsing (2005) and Massey (2005) that memorials are spaces of friction, negotiating personal and collective, experience and meaning, material and semiotic, past and present, local and global, being enacted through the effusive work of actants transforming them. In those messy encounters, a provisional spatiotemporal configuration arises, but is also constantly altered in unexpected ways. In this regard, memorials are unfinished business, never closed or stable, always under construction – a becoming place, ever contested in our being-together (Massey, 2005). Enfolding into each other, striated space and smooth space (Dovey, 2010) can stabilize and destabilize spatiotemporal configurations, transforming memorials in sites of both conformity and contestation. To compare different modes of memorializing the genocide in Rwanda, we traveled through Kigali, Murambi and Bisesero memorials, underlining respectively a cosmopolitan gaze, a dead gaze, and a native gaze, ranging from more ingrained to more volatile designs but escaping to stabilize or fix them in only one possible configuration. The chapter also explored the possibility of new affective alliances through the digitalization of memorials in virtual tours, and the recent application of these memorials to UNESCO World Heritage Sites, focusing on the destabilization of previous scales and temporalities, and underlining movements of delocalization and transnationalization of memory.

While we advance an engagement with matter/things underlining their agentic capacities and affective forces, a special kind of matter called my attention in memorializing the genocide in Rwanda – human remains (or person-things). During fieldwork, I was introduced to countless dead bodies and its remaining parts in memorials, but I was not satisfied with standard stories surrounding their deaths, I wanted to dig deeper on the controversies of their entanglements and the a/effects they could produce. I became interested in human remains, exploring where they may lead if I followed them carefully. The paths we can travel are surprisingly abundant, but I was concerned only with memorialization practices. In my travels, following their vitality, motion and circularity, I passed through official memorial sites, everyday places, memorial places, mass graves, and what can be conceived as non-traditional or unexpected memorial sites.

Following those human remains, we traveled through the flux of a river crossing borders and boundaries, streaming away dead bodies into an unusual kind of pollution. In a symbiotic relationship with the entities composing the river, dead bodies became reject/waste, affecting the environment of the Great Lakes Region and threatening health and economy in unprecedented ways. Nonhumans and (former) human entities intermingling and striking back, recalcitrantly showing their voices, so that we could no longer neglect it. Dead bodies disrupted the living human body as the only legitimate locus for agency, playing with the blurriness of the binary human/nonhuman and underlining the dead body as person-things. In its motion and circularity, interweaving with many other elements, the river carried the corpses abroad, calling for an international response to manage the dead bodies and to memorialize them. Every actant composing Nyabarongo assemblage – such as hydrogen, oxygen, water hyacinths, machetes, myths, bones, borders – played a role in this memorial ecology, exploring the unexpected character of memorialization through the creation of non-traditional places of memory, both nationally and internationally. Nyabarongo River used to be an ordinary place, it became a weapon used to kill Tutsis during the genocide, then a graveyard, and nowadays an unusual place of memory where survivors mourn and memorialize their beloved ones. Although the memorialization of victims dumped into the waters is still very marginal, recently, monuments with the names of some victims are being erected throughout Rwanda on the shores of the river. Internationally, memorials – with

some of the victims' remains streamed from Nyabarongo towards Lake Victoria – were erected in Uganda (in Kasensero, Lambu, and Ggolo) in an effort to transnationally memorialize the genocide. In Tanzania, the negotiations are still underway to construct a memorial site in Rusumo, where 917 corpses are buried in mass graves. While the flux of the river disrupted the ideal of a contained memorialization in a movement of deterritorialization; a recapture of the flux and circularity of these corpses tried to fix them again in a movement of re-territorialization provisionally frozen through the construction of monuments and memorials with the victims' names and/or human remains.

In acknowledging the agentic capacity of both humans and nonhumans, assemblage approaches seemed to disarray with what was long considered stable: humans as the center of actions. As we previously discussed, nonhuman agency is probably one of the most controversial issues, attracting a great deal of criticism (Khong, 2003, p.702; Riis, 2008, p. 295; Bloor, 1999; Collins and Yearley, 1992; Schaffer, 1991; Amsterdamska, 1990). However, as we aimed to demonstrate, we do not invert the long-standing privilege of human actants substituting it for nonhuman actants. Rather, we suggested a non-biased sociology of associations in describing mnemonic assemblages. My only hope is that, at this point, it is clear that our claim is about co-fabrication and companionship, cherishing a symbiotic relationship between humans and nonhumans to the point of greeting our co-becoming.

This move certainly alters the conventional parameters of ethical and political agency, flowing from the autonomous self, equipped with instrumental reason, to a swarm of hybrid entities, disturbing the borders between humans and nonhumans in a move towards an "assemblage of mutually constituting subjects and patterns of association" (Whatmore, 2002, p. 159). As such, our work suggested rethinking the privileged ethical status of humans as the only (or more) relevant subjects in the political arena, claiming for an 'enlargement of the subject' (Whatmore, 2002) beyond human consciousness in considering the multiplicity of organisms and energies populating this world. This multitude of interacting entities, forces and flows are working not only across bodies but also inside (our human) bodies. These materialities are not something exogenous, they are us. In this sense, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to clearly separate human from matter in a vital materialist assemblage. In this perspective,

we should acknowledge that, following Whatmore (2002), "not only does 'humanity' always already 'dwell among badly analysed composites [like nature or the non-human] but that 'we' ourselves [the human-all-too-human] are badly analysed composites" (Ansell-Pearson, 1997 apud Whatmore, 2002, p. 165).

In traveling mnemonic assemblages, this research could have explored many other modes of memory gatherings. Somewhat frustrated, I now turn to point out the limits of this work. I use this term (frustrated) because I ventured in these travelings into mnemonic assemblages through encountering literature and performance studies. Thus, it is quite ironic that the research did not properly engage with the intimacy and multiplicity that literary prose and performances enable, resorting only to a very brief engagement, in chapter 3, with the play 'Maria Kizito' and the novel 'Murambi: the book of bones'. I would like to have been able to address more fictions and memoirs, and performances as alternatives to the (more conventional) ways in which the Rwandan genocide is memorialized, exploring how they can be politically relevant to IR – after all, politics is also about art crafting.

Moreover, this research could have benefited from examining the role of primary school curricula in teaching genocide (in the discipline of History), addressing how it helps to shape the way future generations memorialize an event they never experienced *in situ*, as tangentially discussed in chapter 4 while engaging with Innocent's testimony[215]. It could also have explored more deeply the memory inscribed on the body, addressing scars as indelible memories to the individual and collective bodies, maintaining the memory of the genocide alive in defying temporal containment and engaging on hostages of their own bodies – as underlined in chapter 5 with Cassius' testimony.

Dwelling on visceral and sensorial encounters with semiotic materialities, I introduced affect as an important force connecting body and mind in an unavoidably intertwined way, exploring affects and its captures – sensation, emotion, reasoned argument. In this perspective, I aimed to address the virtual, the potential, and the excesses of affect knitting together thinking and feeling space, trying to show the in-betweenness of sense and sense-making thinking through the body. Nevertheless, I recognize this work focused more on affect's captures in

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[215] Innocent is the twelve-years old boy I met at Nyamirambo market, Kigali.

exploring places of memory, while the 'pre-personal' and 'pre-social' (Massumi, 2002; Thrift, 2008) character of affect was left aside. I believe I should also have engaged in conversations with neurophysiological and psychoanalytical accounts on affect in order to better grasp those non-reflective bodily visceral forces. However, as we argued, this gesture towards affect's captures was due to exploring a sensorial, emotive, and embodied account of the transversality of memory and memorialization. When feeling the past we delved into the sensuousness of matter, recognizing its affective and generative force, and opening spaces for experimenting new forms of engagement with our associates or companions. In such an effort – and following Law's advice (2007) –, I hope to, at least, have told interesting stories of these associations, unavoidably transforming them.

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8 Annex

I – Nile River Basin (The World Bank, March 2000)