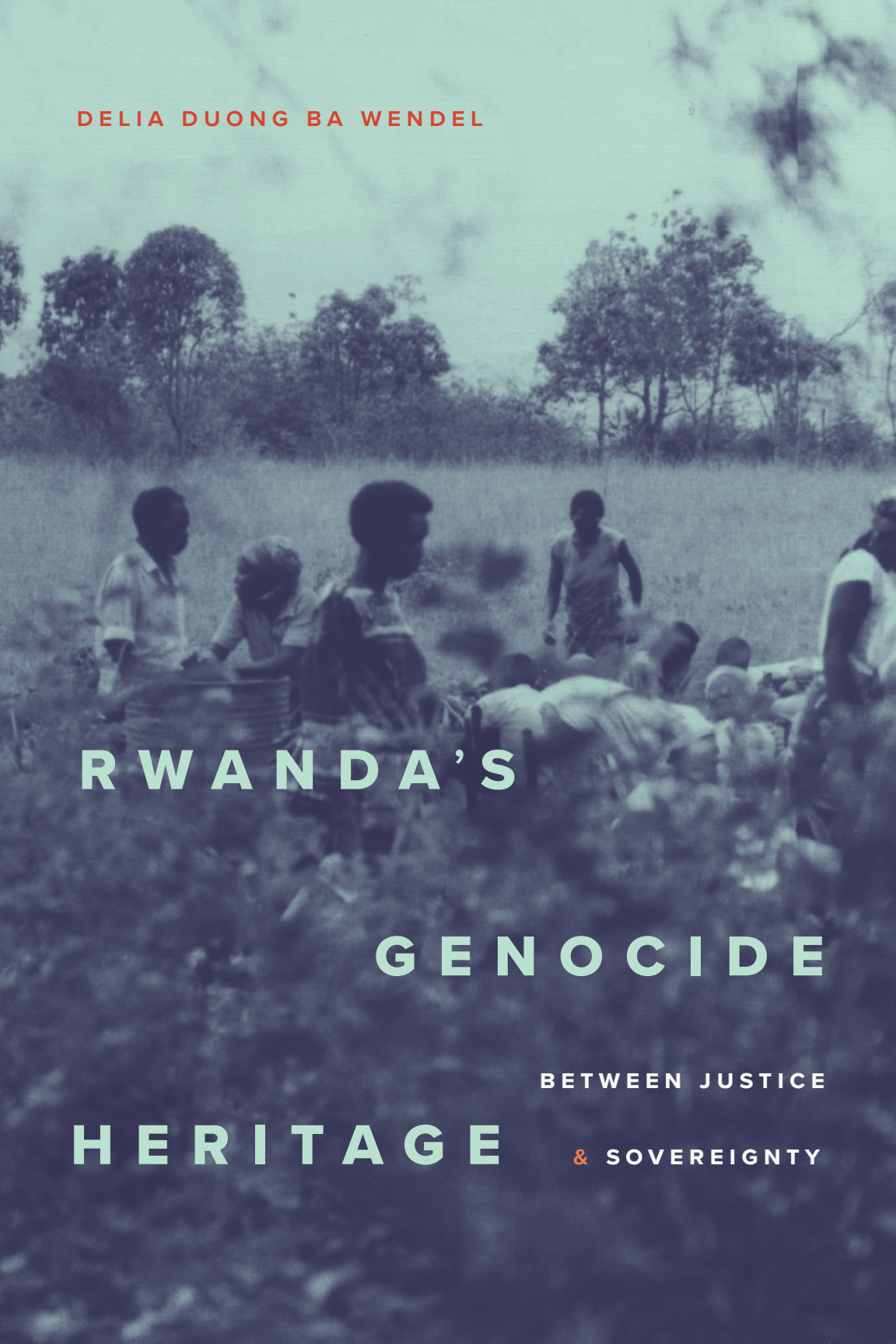




DELIA DUONG BA WENDEL

RWANDA'S

GENOCIDE

BETWEEN JUSTICE

HERITAGE

& SOVEREIGNTY

R W A N D A ' S

G E N O C I D E

H E R I T A G E



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R W A N D A ' S

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BETWEEN JUSTICE & SOVEREIGNTY

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Duke University Press *Durham and London* 2025

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Printed in the United States of America on acid-free paper ∞

Project Editor: Lisa Lawley

Designed by Courtney Leigh Baker

Typeset in Garamond Premier Pro and Proxima Nova

by Copperline Book Services

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Wendel, Delia Duong Ba, author.

Title: Rwanda's genocide heritage : between justice and sovereignty /

Delia Duong Ba Wendel.

Description: Durham : Duke University Press, 2025. | Includes

bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2025009904 (print)

LCCN 2025009905 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478032472 (paperback)

ISBN 9781478029106 (hardcover)

ISBN 9781478061311 (ebook)

ISBN 9781478094418 (ebook other)

Subjects: LCSH: Rwandan Genocide, Rwanda, 1994. | Collective

memory—Political aspects—Rwanda. | Collective memory—

Social aspects—Rwanda. | War and society. | Transitional justice—

Rwanda. | Rwanda—Politics and government—1994–

Classification: LCC DT450.44 .W463 2025 (print) |

LCC DT450.44 (ebook)

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025009904>

LC ebook record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2025009905>

Cover art: Conservationists clean and dry the bones of genocide

victims in a field near Murambi, Rwanda, 1996. Photo by Mario Ibarra,

Ibarra archive, Chile.

The open access edition of this work was made possible by generous
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the future of our past.

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CONTENTS

Abbreviations ix

Prologue: A Rock Among Many xv

Introduction: Trauma Heritage as Repair 3

39 **1. EL OLOR Y EL DOLOR (THE SMELL AND THE PAIN)**

The Practice of Reparative History

2. BEYOND STATE CONTROL 87

Global Dialogues and Local Experiences

129 **3. WITNESSING NYARUBUYE**

The Uneven Afterlives of Genocide Heritage

4. MEMORY WORK 163

Murambi's Conservation

213 **5. EXHUMATION, DISPLAY, REBURIAL**

Ordering the Future of the Past

6. MEMORY AND EMPOWERMENT 259

Inzibutso Zigaragara, Inzibutso Zitagaragara

Conclusion: Memory Justice in an Era of Trauma Heritage 305

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Acknowledgments	333
Appendix 1: Concise Atlas of Trauma Heritage, 1875–2020	337
Appendix 2: Chronological Atlas of Trauma Heritage, 1875–2020	343
Appendix 3: Chronological Index of Featured Trauma Heritage Sites, 1875–2020	353
Notes	363
Sources	395
Index	415



ABBREVIATIONS

CLADHO

Collectif des Ligues et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme
(Collective of Leagues and Organizations for the Defense of Human Rights in Rwanda)

CNLG

Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide (National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide)

CONADEP

Argentinian National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons

ECOSOC

Economic and Social Council (United Nations)

FAFG

Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala

FAR

Forces Armées Rwandaises (Rwandan Armed Forces)

FPH

Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le Progrès de l'Homme
(Charles Léopold Mayer Foundation for the Progress of Man)

GOR

Government of Rwanda

HRFOR

Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (United Nations)

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ICTR

International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (United Nations)

IITC

International Indian Treaty Council

IMIC

International Monitor Institute Collection, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University

KGM

Kigali Genocide Memorial

MIJESPOC

Ministère de La Jeunesse, des Sports et de La Culture (Ministry of Youth, Sport, and Culture)

MINESUPRES

Ministère de l'Enseignement Supérieur, de la Recherche, et Culture (Ministry of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Culture)

MINIREISO

Ministère de Réinsertion et de l'Intégration Sociale (Ministry of Rehabilitation and Social Integration)

MINITRASO

Ministère du Travail et des Affaires Sociales (Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs)

MINUBUMWE

Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement

NGO

nongovernmental organization

OFFICIAL GAZETTE

Official Gazette of the Republic of Rwanda

OHCHR

Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights (United Nations)

PHR

Physicians for Human Rights

x

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PRIMATUR

Office of the Prime Minister, Government of Rwanda

RPA

Rwandan Patriotic Army, the former armed branch of the RPF

RPF

Rwandan Patriotic Front, a political party

RWF

Rwandan franc, the national currency

SIU

Special Investigations Unit (OHCHR and ICTR, United Nations)

UN

United Nations

UNAMIR

United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda

UNDP

United Nations Development Program

UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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D The former director of Rwanda's Genocide Memorial Commission included this 1995 photograph of a rock in his memoir as a poignant representation of the genocide. His caption: "Gros plan de la pierre sur laquelle les têtes d'enfants de moins de cinq ans étaient fracassées avant de les jeter dans les puits perdus à côté" (Close-up of the rock on which the heads of children under the age of five were smashed before being thrown into the nearby pit). Kanamugire, "Témoignages recueillis" (2013), 107.

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PROLOGUE A ROCK AMONG MANY

A vegetal enclosure encircles a former septic pit where forty-seven young children were found dead in 1994. When I visited in 2018, the plant leaves were dense, and I did not attempt to peer beyond them (figure P.1). The planted cluster is a spare but meaningful marker of Rwanda's genocide heritage. Immediately after the genocide, in place of the *imihati* (corn plants), an *ibuye* (a single rock) marked this mass grave. The *ibuye* was more than a landmark. It was used in the brutal killings. In multiple photographs taken over several years, Louis Kanamugire and Mario Ibarra—who together piloted the state's approach to genocide memorialization—documented the *ibuye* obsessively.¹ Their images and words have etched this site into my memory, a powerful metonym for the brutal inhumanity of the genocide. And yet the *ibuye* is not included in—or really even legible to—official genocide histories.

My search for the *ibuye* began with its absence from the national *Genocide Sites Map*. Jean-Damascene Gasanabo, the director of the National Research and Documentation Center at the now-dissolved National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG), suggested that I speak to Paul Rutayisire, a historian at the National University.² Rutayisire was from Rwamagana District and wrote extensively about genocide histories in eastern Rwanda.³ He was familiar with the *ibuye* and the genocide crimes committed there. Rutayisire connected me to the local representative for Ibuka, a genocide survivors' association, who met me at the site.

The Ibuka representative told me that the local genocide organizer to whom the land had belonged had died. His house was destroyed, leaving the makeshift memorial to stand on an empty lot bordered by village houses on either side. The *ibuye* was also no longer there. It was, perhaps, relocated to the side of the lot, where many rocks were piled (figure P.2). Despite its absence, both in place and in

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FIGURE P.1. *Imihati* plants encircle the site where the bodies of forty-seven children were found, 2018. Photo by Delia Duong Ba Wendel.

FIGURE P.2. The original *ibuye* (rock) has been displaced to a pile of rocks at the massacre site, 2018. Photo by Delia Duong Ba Wendel.

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national registries, the *ibuye* is not forgotten in local memory. It is also not the only memorialized rock in the area. In the course of my visit, the Ibuka representative took me to the “other” rock nearby. There, a thin eucalyptus tree had been planted to remember a family killed in the genocide, marking a rock where attackers sharpened their weapons. I began to more fully recognize the *amabuye* (rocks, plural) all around. Each *ibuye* registers multiple individual engagements with its history of violence. They are also part of a constellation of underrecognized sites like them.

By contrast, the country’s official state memorials are well-known and marked sites. They are typically located in everyday places—churches, schools, government offices—transformed by the massacres of Tutsi that they once held. Viewing the dead in a site of killing is central to the state-authorized approach to genocide memorialization. I call this *Rwanda’s genocide heritage aesthetic*. Most government-managed memorials display the bones of victims in buildings conserved to maintain damages incurred during the massacres. Many sites also contain belowground crypts where extensive stores of victims’ remains are kept in coffins or on shelves. The memorials are “authorized” in the sense that they are representative of state histories; are funded, maintained, and curated by government institutions; and are officially sanctioned sites of public education and commemoration.⁴ On the whole, state genocide memorials and narratives are afforded more space, visibility, and power than other sites of memory in the country.

During the past thirty years, Rwanda has put memorials and annual commemorations at the center of initiatives that promote national and international recognition of the genocide. The government attaches corrective social and political functions to authorized genocide memorials, claiming that acknowledgment and remembrance are critical to forms of justice and reconciliation. Genocide memorials contribute to this effort primarily as places of memory and witness. At the same time, genocide memorials and history have been closely controlled by the national government, with significant impacts on free speech. The involvement of genocide memorials within larger state strategies of social regulation has been consistent since 1994 even if, as this book shows, the sites’ origins and early development began with a wider and more disparate range of actors and motivations.

That national genocide memorials are among the most visible and accessible sites of memory in Rwanda is the result of an iterative, and at times inconsistent, three-decade government process of ordering the country’s memory landscape. Since 1996 the list of national-level sites has expanded and contracted based on sites’ ease of access, valuation (as representative of genocide), and funding. The government has also progressively expanded its control of genocide memorials, including the controversial relocation of local memorials, and the victims buried there, to regional sites.⁵ The work of organizing genocide memory was institu-

tionalized in October 1995 with the formation of the state Genocide Memorial Commission. In 2003 the government partnered with the Holocaust memory organization Aegis Trust to fund and shape its genocide memorial program. The organization's initial involvement in the development of a new national genocide memorial and archive in Kigali in anticipation of the tenth anniversary soon expanded to consultations at several memorial sites.

Rwanda's authorized genocide memorials are situated within a diverse memory landscape. Like the *ibuye*, scores of local genocide memorials remain underrecognized as sites of memory. Most were sites of killing. The memories of those acts, and their victims, are maintained discreetly through traditional religious practices, Christian crosses, or commemorative plantings by local genocide survivor organizations and the communities living near them.⁶ There are also countless massacre sites that bear no marking at all, including hidden graves where the dead were disposed. Other sites anchor memories that are unauthorized, such as those of Hutu survivors whose Tutsi spouses or children were killed.⁷ There, victims and the violence they endured are commemorated, but surviving relatives remain unacknowledged. Yet others, often the most difficult for outsiders to locate, are sites of prohibited memories. Those places include the unmarked sites of attacks on Hutu communities during and after the genocide by the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) and the government led by the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF).⁸ Thus, sites of memory that are not authorized by the state are, to varying degrees, marginalized, silenced, or erased from view.

This book contends with the realities of the RPF regime's social and political control while also grappling, often paradoxically, with the complexities and dilemmas negotiated by the people who shaped Rwanda's genocide memorials and live near them. This prologue provides context for that exploration. It locates the book's research methodology and contributions within a wealth of scholarship on genocide memorialization, which has amply demonstrated the relationships among a memorial aesthetic, state sovereignty, and the shaping of everyday life in the country. In the following chapters, I retrieve a less understood set of justice and human rights objectives that the preservation of Rwanda's genocide heritage originally set out to enact, and the dilemmas encountered therein. To do so, I draw from interviews with Rwandan residents, original memorial workers, and authorities to explore the social and political effects of the display of the dead. My research tempers views on both ends of the political ideological spectrum in which Rwanda's genocide memorials are situated. On the one hand, it contests views that memorials are exclusively antidemocratic and dehumanizing. On the other, my recognition of the sites' ethical and political tensions does not support the theory that a double genocide occurred in Rwanda.⁹ Instead, my research ex-

plores the ethical stakes and afterlives of genocide memory. It also puts Rwanda's genocide heritage in dialogue with other efforts to represent the erasure of a people in public spheres both inside and outside Rwanda. In doing so, I explore the political co-optations of those efforts head-on as well as the repercussions for groups still struggling for recognition.

THE 2007 REORGANIZATION of the Genocide Memorial Commission within the newly formed CNLG was pivotal, along with a series of new laws in 2008, to ratifying existing state practices of genocide remembrance and speech regulation. One of the most impactful of those laws established the government's reach to punish genocide denial, which criminalized a wide-ranging set of speech and behaviors along with the expression of genocide ideology.¹⁰ Another law placed all genocide memorials and burial sites within the public domain (under state control) to relay an authorized history of the genocide.¹¹ It effectively reorganized Rwanda's authorized genocide memory landscape, establishing a primary memorial in the capital (the Kigali Genocide Memorial), below which thirty district sites are situated. It also designated aesthetic and historiographical standards for state genocide memorials, mandating that conserved evidence of the genocide, including victims' remains and weapons used in the killings, be displayed.¹²

Accordingly, genocide memorials are not merely historical sites. They are central to the state's larger postgenocide sociopolitical objectives, including its "strategy to fight genocide, crimes against humanity, genocide ideology, and denial."¹³ This statement was included in the government's 2012 UNESCO application to acknowledge four genocide memorials as world heritage sites (an inscription achieved in 2023). The sites' roles in "fighting genocide"—as a reassertion of moral values contrary to the genocide, as a matter of ideology, and as a representation of state (RPF) intervention to end the violence—have been a part of the sites' mission from their inception. State stewardship changed the status of genocide history from one that was largely dismissed as internecine civil war to an internationally recognized occurrence of targeted mass violence. Today the genocide is foundational to how the government narrates Rwanda's history and future.

Genocide memorials are also government-regulated public spaces that locate commemorative ceremonies. Across the country, memorials host genocide commemorations every year, either during the week of national mourning (beginning on April 7) or on dates when attacks occurred at the sites. Local commemoration ceremonies mandate the attendance of area residents, especially in rural areas. This is not so much a requirement of law as of citizenship.¹⁴ Over the years, through

legislation governing comportment during the commemoration period, public speech, criminal activities, and the education of children, among other initiatives, citizens' rights and inclusion have been increasingly regulated through residents' acknowledgment of genocide memory.¹⁵

Not surprisingly, state interests have most affected the public form and experience of genocide heritage today. On the one hand, government control of genocide memory seeks to guarantee that this period of inhumanity will not be forgotten. State institutions, annual commemorative rituals, educational programs, and places of memorialization do this work. On the other hand, as historian René Lemarchand notes, the same government control reveals certain blind spots or omissions in official memory.¹⁶ This speaks to conditions of unequal remembrance in the country, where the recognition and empowerment attained through genocide heritage are not widely available to all. The unevenness in terms of how certain memories gain wider visibility and collective recognition reflects the vastly different levels of power that individuals and groups possess to make their memories public and take steps toward repair. It is a politics of memory that is echoed in a network of power differentials felt in citizenship, economic opportunity, symbolic representation, and psychological and physical health.

MOST PRECEDENT RESEARCH on genocide memorialization has been concerned with tensions between state and individual forms of remembrance and the relationships between social inequality and public representation. That scholarship has been guided by the following primary questions: Who is included and excluded from authorized genocide memory? How do differences in social position or power affect whose narratives are supported in state-authorized histories? How do those differences, in turn, affect who receives government assistance and benefits? The display of victims' remains at memorial sites amplifies the stakes of these questions. Memorials that conserve massacres and display victims are emotionally and physically jarring places; they were especially so in the immediate aftermath and for survivors living nearby. Compelling people to see bodies and bones, to commemorate the genocide through government-organized ceremonies at memorials, to replicate omissions from state-authorized genocide historical narratives or withhold complexities to comply with them, and to forgo private burials for genocide victims, regardless of survivors' and families' preferences, uneasily reproduces forms of autocratic governance. Memorial sites are also fodder for voyeuristic and reductive coverage of the genocide by journalists. Viewing the aftermath, then, animates a range of tensions and inequalities between Rwandan

residents, between citizens and the state, between those with privilege and those with lesser status, and between foreigners and local residents.

Much of the scholarship critical of state-led memorialization was based on research undertaken from 1994 to 2004. This first decade after the genocide was a period of significant instability. Residents navigated profound grief and fear while displaced by violence. The new governing regime fixated on security and control amid humanitarian crisis. Despite the difficulty of living alongside the sites, a range of experts posited that memorialization could have positive effects on reconciliation and conflict prevention. Six years after the genocide, anthropologist Susan Cook summarized those aspirational links based on interviews with representatives of the government, foreign aid agencies, and nongovernmental organizations.¹⁷ Those sociopolitical impacts are what sociologist Claudine Vidal sought to evaluate, drawing from interviews and observations of the first six genocide commemorations (from 1995–2000). In addition to clarifying important historical details of those ceremonies, Vidal has written incisive analyses of what she called the government's selective curation of official genocide memory, and the ways that the presence of victims' skeletal remains restricts the possibility of reconciliation.¹⁸ The long-term research engagements of anthropologist Jennie Burnet and political scientist Timothy Longman have built on these threads, illustrating Rwandans' diverse views of government memorialization and commemoration, including those of genocide survivors, women, individuals from multiethnic backgrounds, and government critics. Both Burnet and Longman highlight views on the display of bones and bodies (especially the state's insensitivity to survivors' emotional needs and desires for burial rituals and mourning) and the dominance of political interests in deciding what is remembered and how.¹⁹ Political scientist Susanne Buckley-Zistel's research, undertaken outside Kigali from 2003–4, expands on the social divisions underlying and fueled by authorized genocide remembrance, and forgetting, in the country.²⁰ Very little of the early historiography on genocide memorialization and its reception was written by Rwandans.²¹ A notable exception is an essay by Célestin Kanimba Misago, whose writing is significant as he was both a state official (the inaugural director of the CNLG) and an archaeologist involved in the first conservation practices at and near the Murambi massacre site.²² His analysis represents a rare recounting of key ambivalences associated with the memorials' reception and intent: the ways in which they simultaneously provoked trauma, provided some measure of commemorative healing, and seeded nascent forms of national unity.

Considering that research together with the *ibuye*, the reflections of Louis and Mario, and their images and reports has prompted me to carve more space for ir-resolution in my historiography. The first four years of Rwanda's genocide heritage

development (1994–98), on which this book focuses, present a prehistory of its more overt politicization: During those years the first experiments in the preservation and conservation of killing sites and victims' remains took place, shaping Rwanda's genocide heritage aesthetic. I do not downplay the existence of political motives in this early period. Instead, I suggest that state objectives evolved paradoxically alongside other ethical demands, including those oriented toward human rights and justice. A sole reading of genocide heritage today as the calculated and sensationalized display of the dead exists in tension with the context in which that aesthetic developed. Instead, when understood as a paradox, the politics that force viewers to see genocide heritage are co-located with the ethics of viewership that those sites demand.

In subsequent decades, research has elaborated three related inquiries. Many scholars have been keen to compare Rwanda to other states' memorialization of atrocity to illustrate the globalization of violent memory representation and performance. A key conclusion of those analyses claims that Rwanda's genocide memorials exemplify dark tourism and thereby perpetuate and encourage sensationalized and reductive narratives of violence.²³ Others have noted the predominance of international influences and funding—including from foreign aid agencies, UNESCO, and Holocaust memory organizations—in Rwanda's curatorial approaches and emphases.²⁴ I explore both of these conclusions in the following chapters, specifying the nature of international influences in the immediate aftermath when the approach to genocide memorialization initially developed. In doing so, I do not undermine the central roles of Holocaust memory, foreign aid agencies, and (much later) UNESCO in Rwanda's genocide heritage. Instead, I argue that those influences were most prominent *after* the first decade of the memorials' existence.

A second line of inquiry has explored the Rwandan state's approach to genocide memory curation as a process that is historically differentiated and evolving. This scholarship argues that the state is not a monolith, even in the context of autocratic governance; it comprises diverse actors navigating local situations, national directives, and global influences in discrete historical periods. As a result, we gain a finer-grained understanding of the interface of society and state, including the governing regime's increasing reliance on genocide memorialization and commemoration, laws, and education to effect social and political control today.²⁵ We also gain a sense of that memory work's progressive institutionalization and the expertise (from Rwandan academics and experts, especially) from which it drew.²⁶ This book contributes to this line of inquiry by exploring the origins of the state's approach, including the first experiments in preservation and conservation and the relationships among nascent memorialization, exhumation, and reburial practices.

In doing so, it illustrates the often-competing ideologies, diverse local initiatives, and global influences that shaped Rwanda's genocide heritage.

A third line of inquiry has extended precedent studies on the intentions and reception of state memorials by drawing from sources other than state representations. A significant subset of that literature draws from feminist research methodologies and attention to gender-differentiated perspectives on genocide memory maintenance.²⁷ Another key aspect of that research draws from oral histories and interviews with Rwandans from diverse positionalities, including memorial workers, exhumers, convicted perpetrators, genocide survivors, returnees, and youth to explore how those groups understand their identity and possibilities for peace in relation to state representations of them and the nation.²⁸ We learn much from that work about the private and public spheres in which relations of self and society are articulated, which provides a better sense of the lived experience of belonging and conflict in Rwanda. We also learn more about the communal "work" that memory maintenance does alongside the political aims of the governing regime, and the affective registers of genocide history preservation.²⁹ Another key contribution of this research highlights the silences in government narratives and the presence of a subaltern memory landscape that remains outside state management.³⁰

My approach to research privileged the views of those who did genocide memory work and the dilemmas they faced. This became possible only with newly available information—including archival photographs and videos of the first memory conservation, exhumation, and reburial practices and interviews with the individuals who did that work. Those sources draw context and affect into conversation with the politics of memory. They allow me to directly contend with the controversies that preserving scenes and evidence of violence provoked. At the same time, the following chapters take heed of the ways in which the present shapes the past in Rwanda. Much of the research conducted for this book took place more than twenty years after the first preservation practices began. That research surfaced both the original motivations behind genocide memorialization and the forms of social and political control reproduced through those sites today. The origins and the legacies of these sites are both germane to understanding the social and political work that memorials do. Toward the end of this book, I discuss unauthorized and prohibited memories that persist in the country. Understanding genocide heritage in that larger landscape of memory in Rwanda uncovers the perspectives regulated away by the governing regime's control of genocide remembrance. It situates memory representation as undeniably central to projects of state sovereignty but equally enduring in activism for justice.

The stakes could not be clearer in Rwanda. But the subaltern struggle to be seen, to gain social recognition and political rights, is global. Philosopher Judith

Butler reminds us, “The public sphere is constituted in part by what can appear, and the regulation of the sphere of appearance is one way to establish what will count as reality, and what will not. It is also a way of establishing whose lives can be marked as lives, and whose deaths will count as deaths. Our capacity to feel and apprehend hangs in the balance.”³¹ Butler argues that whom—whose lives and deaths—we represent in the public sphere reflects a society’s values: who and what it considers valuable.³² Those public representations, they note, build our capacity for knowing the world around us. Butler warns that our capacity to not only apprehend reality but also to *feel* is contingent on radically inclusive public representations. By extension, understanding the politics of who and what is remembered is as important to constituting one’s civic responsibility as the feelings and social relations enacted through remembrance. Reinvigorating the latter requires contending with the presence of and absences in memory representation—recognizing the *ibuye* among the rocks. That work in Rwanda holds important lessons for feeling and apprehending the world around us.

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xxiv

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PROLOGUE



D A crowd gathers for a genocide commemoration in 1995. Children were given signs that declare (in Kinyarwanda, *left*, dated April 7) “They will not be forgotten to Rwandan history. We hate the people who committed genocide” (*itsembabwoko n’itsembatsemba*) and (in French, *center*) “We reclaim our right to live” (*Nous réclamons notre droit de vivre*). Photo by Mario Ibarra, Ibarra archive, Chile.

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Louis Kanamugire shifted uncomfortably in his seat. “The work was necessary to make history known, so that it would not be erased.”¹ He paused and looked away. Louis was explaining why he and his team conserved killing sites and victims’ remains after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. A former high school teacher who had worked for UNESCO’s local Rwanda office, he was tapped in 1995 to lead the government’s newly created Genocide Memorial Commission.

Louis cleared his throat, continuing, “People didn’t understand. We didn’t understand either, at least not before we started. We thought it was just something that people were saying. But once we went there and saw the . . . the corpses . . . everywhere . . . that’s when we understood the significance of . . . of what happened.”² Louis expanded, returning to the different reactions that people had to the sites’ conservation, “There were people who were against it, who didn’t want [the killings] to become public knowledge. And survivors themselves were against it because they didn’t want their people to be exposed. They said that respecting victims meant burying them, not displaying their bones. And there was the Church too—they didn’t want people to keep saying that they had participated in the genocide. There was opposition from all sides. Even in the government—only a few people understood.”³

We were sitting in an outdoor café in the Rwandan capital, Kigali. It was mid-July, and the sun was peeking through the clouds, which were on the verge of rejecting the dry season. Louis was speaking about his early work to develop genocide memorials. We had been stitching together that history through multiple conversations over the years, always at the same café. Every time, Louis recounted the circumstances of that work slightly differently. I couldn’t tell if the gaps in narration were a result of my questions seeming obvious and not worth addressing. I frequently asked, *Who decided . . . ?* Or perhaps the origins of genocide memo-

rialization were too politically sensitive, rendering Louis somewhat hesitant to disclose details. The issue of various publics' responses to the display of victims' bodies and bones in genocide sites was an uneasy and controversial subject—so much so that Louis was not willing to engage the topic directly until 2018, six years after our first meeting.

Within a week of the first killings in April 1994, genocide organizers affiliated with ethnic Hutu political extremists began executing ethnic Tutsi en masse, along with Hutu and Twa political moderates.⁴ Genocidal massacres largely took place in churches, government offices, school complexes, and other public buildings where large numbers of people sought refuge. In the months that followed, massacre sites and victims' bodies began to be maintained in place to display evidence of the genocide for public viewing. That phenomenon developed into what I call *Rwanda's genocide heritage*, which aimed, as Louis had put it, to make the recent history of the genocide known, incontrovertibly and in public space, as a form of justice. Rwanda's genocide heritage was made possible by preservation and conservation practices along with related photographic, video, and cartographic documentation. It was further supported by two tandem efforts that also attempted to order the country's aftermath landscape: reburial and exhumation. Reburials served as a counterpart to display, returning victims to some measure of dignity in consecrated mass burial sites and through communal rites. The practices of preservation and reburial were not entirely at odds, however, as most ceremonies that accompanied early reburials included the temporary display of genocide victims. Those ceremonies prefigured the national commemorations that have become public performances of genocide remembrance today. By contrast, the first exhumations were efforts in unearthing. Those practices entailed locating victims and removing their remains from hasty mass graves to investigate their identities, their manner of death, and those responsible. Exhumations were largely undertaken within genocide investigations. But the individuals who conducted them were also preserving massacre sites and organizing reburial ceremonies. Exhumations constituted part of the backstage work that facilitated both the mass reburial of victims and their display.

This repertoire of approaches to ordering the aftermath first developed from 1994, after the killings occurred, to 1998, when foreign governments and the United Nations finally recognized the violence as a genocide. It was ultimately steered by Louis, the first director of the Genocide Memorial Commission, along with higher-level authorities in the new governing regime. But efforts to preserve and conserve victims' remains and killing sites occurred before the commission was established and, in many cases, were led by nonstate actors, including local residents, recent returnees, and foreigners. Rwanda's genocide heritage was thus

initially the result of ad hoc efforts that incorporated diverse local initiatives and experiments to prevent the decay of victims, their belongings, and weapons and scenes of killing. Over the past thirty years, that memory work has been progressively institutionalized and managed by the government. Today genocide heritage forms part of a state legal-memory apparatus that manages national remembrance and regulates speech and citizenship, with significant restrictions on civil liberties. The early history of genocide heritage preservation, exhumations, and reburials reveals how and why publicly viewing the aftermath became so central to national genocide memory. It also opens to view conflicts between the state-controlled future of the past and other, unauthorized views on genocide heritage that endure today.

Rwanda's genocide heritage originated in four massacre sites—the locations of the first preservation and conservation experiments—that have since become nationally recognized memorials.⁵ Preservation—whereby gruesome evidence of the killings was protected from removal and frozen in time—comprised the earliest initiatives, which began before the sites were formalized as memorials and a full year before the Genocide Memorial Commission was created (figure I.1). The first preservation efforts took place at the Nyarubuye and Ntarama Churches, rendering them places of witness that rendered the genocide viewable long after its occurrence. Louis's involvement in the new agency converted the first preservation experiments into a government-led *conservation* program. Conservation entailed further intervention, beyond protecting sites as they were found (figure I.2). It involved treatments to stabilize the progressive deterioration of victims' remains, belongings, massacre sites, and weapons used in the killings. The first conservation efforts, at the Murambi Technical School and Nyamata Church, attempted to restore genocide evidence to killing sites that had been emptied of victims by the perpetrators. As the decay and deterioration of genocide sites countrywide made preservation untenable, however, all memorialization efforts shifted to the conservation of genocide evidence and the restoration of killing sites. This involved cleaning up the massacres and the bodies and bones of victims so that they could be placed back in sites of killing. Preservation and conservation were urgent practices in the context of ongoing violence, attempts by perpetrators to destroy evidence of crimes, and massacre sites' deterioration in the rain and sun. After the genocide, moreover, residents experienced a significant scarcity of resources, which meant that much had to be done with little means, using simple approaches with tools and supplies at hand. It was emotionally and physically grueling work.

Displaying scenes and evidence of homicidal and sexual violence in public spaces was also, from the beginning, rife with controversy. Most major massacre sites were located in living communities and surrounded by homes. As Louis al-



FIGURE 1.1. Preservation of the Nyarubuye Church genocide site as it was found, 1994.
Photo by Mario Ibarra, Ibarra archive, Chile.

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FIGURE 1.2. Conservation of skeletal remains for display and reburial at the Murambi Genocide Memorial, 1996. Photo by Mario Ibarra, Ibarra archive, Chile.

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luded to earlier, the sites triggered sadness, grief, and anguish for residents who lived nearby and whose relatives had been killed there.⁶ Many residents decried the objectification of their relatives through display and related prohibitions on traditional burial rituals.⁷ Still others believed that the display of bodies and bones was important to national remembrance, that the sites could educate future generations. As a result, the decision to make victims and massacres available to view was inextricably caught between the sites' value as material evidence of crimes and concerns about the places' effects on the living.

Louis had lost both of his parents to the genocide and was intimately familiar with those dilemmas. In 1996, aided by colleagues at the Genocide Memorial Commission, he found the bodies of his father and mother in western Rwanda. His parents were subsequently interred in marked graves, so he did not have to directly confront the question of whether he wanted his "people to be exposed" in a memorialized massacre site. Despite his personal experience of loss, Louis supported the conservation of victims' remains and their display in places of killing. Still, his familiarity with countless scenes of genocide across the country made the choice to conserve sites doubly heavy with responsibility. Ultimately, he remained steadfast in his view that displaying victims' remains was necessary to communicate the gravity and extent of genocidal violence. He reflected on that work twenty-four years later, musing, "I was convinced *then* that it was important. I still am today."⁸

Louis's convictions and tensions of conscience were not unique. They were echoed by others who worked to maintain those sites of memory, both before Louis was involved and thereafter alongside him. In this book I primarily draw from oral histories with individuals who had on-the-ground roles in that memory work to reconstruct the origins of genocide memorialization in Rwanda (see "Methods for Seeing and Listening" in this chapter). My interlocutors are not directors of ministries in the central government. They are individuals with local knowledge of the challenges and ambitions associated with "making history known." Some led investigations of massacre sites and violent crimes. Others were residents of communities who elected (and were paid) to conserve the bodies of victims and genocide sites. Still others were local government leaders who assumed their new roles immediately after the genocide and authorized the first preservation acts and conservation experiments. I also spoke with individuals who had lead roles in developing conservation techniques and curating memorials.

The historiographical contributions of this book are indebted to these individuals—especially Louis Kanamugire and Mario Ibarra—who played central roles in developing Rwanda's genocide heritage. Mario investigated genocide crimes immediately after the genocide as a human rights field officer for the United Na-

tions. He led conservation experiments at massacre sites, working initially for the United Nations and later directly for the Genocide Memorial Commission. He brought camera equipment to the country and the documentary sensibility that made a photographic record of genocide memory work possible. Despite these pivotal roles, Mario has not previously been identified as a central figure in early memorialization processes. Louis joined the work of genocide conservation one year after Mario. For close to a decade (from October 1995 until 2003), he directed the Genocide Memorial Commission and was responsible for organizing and curating national memorials and commemorations. A third key figure in this history was Dr. Célestin Kanimba Misago, an archaeologist and director of the National Museum of Rwanda.⁹ As a result of his academic training and the museum's location in Butare town, Dr. Kanimba was centrally involved in the conservation experiments that Mario conducted (supervised by Louis) at the Murambi memorial site.¹⁰ Dr. Kanimba died in 2010, and I did not have the chance to interview him, so I primarily draw insights from Louis and Mario and their respective archives. In addition, both men's involvement in this work preceded Dr. Kanimba's.

Louis, Mario, and Dr. Kanimba shaped how and why state genocide memorials display the bodies of the dead at sites of killing (figures I.3 and I.4). They were critical intermediaries between local approaches to memorialization and those of the national government. They developed the institutional framework and conservation procedures for Rwanda's genocide memory, experimenting with and eventually codifying new approaches to representing targeted mass violence. Mario and Dr. Kanimba had hands-on roles in genocide conservation experiments. They drew both from residents' early initiatives to retrieve bodies and preserve evidence of massacres and from their individual expertise in human rights investigation and archaeology, respectively. Together with Louis, they built a set of conservation practices for a range of genocide evidence, including victims' remains, their belongings, weapons used in attacks, and the massacre sites. The work demonstrated what was possible to government officials, evolving Rwanda's genocide heritage by experimentation. In other words, top-level government officials were not the only, nor the primary, architects of the country's genocide conservation strategy. Instead, the production of a distinctly material and spatial memory of mass violence was propelled by both human rights *and* state interests.

This book holds several such paradoxes in tension. We see ethical and political conflicts in the backstage memorialization work of Louis, Mario, and others to construct a form of representation for the genocide. We draw closer to those individuals' emotional, affective, and physical labor: to the coexistence of trauma and justice seeking; to social connections built alongside grief; and to the preservation of human remains as collective memory through difficult, dehumaniz-



FIGURE 1.3. Louis Kanamugire (*left*), Director of the Genocide Memorial Commission, leads Louise Arbour (*masked*), chief prosecutor of the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, on a tour of conserved victims at the Murambi massacre site, 1996. Photo by Mario Ibarra, Kanamugire archive, Rwanda.

ing work. In the following sections, I lay out the relationships of paradox and connection that trace through the chapters. We encounter a genocide memorial landscape that today represents efforts in memory justice alongside those of state sovereignty and sociopolitical control. Yet early genocide memorial development demonstrates that state interests did not exclusively shape genocide history's representation in the landscape. A range of other influences—kin attentive to the humanity of victims as well as the growing (and global) practice of human rights—were also impactful. Those conflicting interests remain in tension at Rwanda's genocide memorials.

Thus, this book concerns not merely memorial monuments but a whole body of initiatives to represent violence—especially violent acts that are actively hidden or normalized—in public spaces. I call this phenomenon *trauma heritage* and call a subset of related initiatives in Rwanda *genocide heritage* to explore the affective landscape that exceeds the symbolism of memorial monuments.¹¹ Trauma heritage



FIGURE 1.4. Mario Ibarra (*left*), Dr. Célestin Kanimba Misago (*standing*), and local residents employed by the Genocide Memorial Commission clean and conserve the bones of genocide victims for reburial and display at Murambi, 1996. Courtesy of Mario Ibarra, Ibarra archive, Chile.

comprises the spatialization of traumatic experiences. It forms strategic challenges to erasure, inattention, and obfuscating rhetoric, replacing narratives with landscapes, amplifying words with images. But trauma heritage is not merely a representational tactic; it aims to be historiographical and reparative. It seeks to codify harms and violence as part of the historical record—and therefore offer evidence for judicial processes, initiate forms of social recognition and healing, and prevent recurrence. Motivated thus, trauma heritage comprises a distinct form of memorialization, distinguished by its concern with revealing acts of violence and its subaltern status (at least to begin with). That work is rife with irresolvable paradoxes to do with representing violence and its aftermath in communities.

My hope is that this book provides grounding for my interlocutors' calls to witness human rights and justice claims in Rwanda. Moreover, and especially as the country's stories draw in parallel experiences worldwide, I also hope that it begins to demonstrate a method for countering abstraction and inhumanity. Learning to

“read” trauma heritage substantiates an ethics of seeing violence and listening to struggle. The following sections unpack the stakes and objectives of this form of remembrance. I also attend to the ethical dilemmas inherent in making violence known to wider publics, especially the challenges faced by survivors and kin, and the distinct demands that viewing places on others, like you, the reader. Oriented thus, the landscape of trauma heritage in Rwanda contains important lessons for understanding relationships between memories of injustice and forms of empowerment and repair.

Trauma Heritage

In Kinyarwanda, the language spoken throughout Rwanda, *heritage* translates as *indangamurage*. The term is typically employed in museum settings in Rwanda but is conceptually much broader. Etymologically, *indanga-murage* is composed of two words. The verb *kuranga* refers to making something known, often through display. The noun *umurage* is an inheritance or something passed down from a familial elder. In the first years after the genocide, the government used the term *indangamurage z’itsembabwoko n’itsembatsemba* (heritage of the ethnic killings and massacres) to refer to all manner of material memory of violence—including sites of massacre, the bodies of victims, their belongings, weapons, and memorials to the genocide.¹² Central to the concept in Kinyarwanda, as in English, is the notion of making the past known and visible in the present.

Relatedly, my definition of *heritage* is “a past made present.”¹³ I emphasize the temporal and ontological aspects of the memory work that produces heritage. Temporally, *heritage* refers to ways that the past becomes relevant for, or at least drawn into, a present time. References to the past are important. People venerate and narrate significant experiences through heritage such as family lands, cultural customs, and mementos. Ontologically, *heritage* also refers to the *presence* of the past, which alludes to the importance that many societies accord to material representations of history, evident in memorials, monuments, or sites of cultural importance. My view of materiality is broad and ranges from something conceptualized and named to visual representations, physical objects, and places.¹⁴ For example, material representations of the past include ancient ruins, aboriginal song lines, customary practices, religious rituals, and folklore. But as this book argues, a certain kind of empowerment is sought through memory’s spatialization. Implicit in heritage’s temporal and ontological registers is the perpetuation of a past made present. Spatializing the past seeks permanence and, by extension, future representation and relevance.

Heritage conceptually belongs to a category of memories that take material and spatial forms to become known and persist. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs claimed that “collective memory,” or how groups remember their past, requires localization in or reference to place. Halbwachs believed that all memory is socially constructed around some concept of space: He argued that only spatial imagery had the necessary stability to allow groups to discover their past in the present.¹⁵ In Rwanda the idea to transform massacre sites into memorials echoes Halbwachs’s view, underscoring that memories are not just possessed by people but are edified in landscapes. These *lieux de mémoire*, to expand on historian Pierre Nora’s term, are not mere repositories of memory. They are sites of discourse in which historical narratives become tangible and are passed on to others.¹⁶

Trauma inflects memory in particular and powerful ways, affecting the ways it is spatialized. In her seminal work on the subject, Cathy Caruth defines trauma as injuries that are “doubled”: felt by both bodies and minds but not simultaneously nor in ways fully knowable.¹⁷ Trauma heritage identifies a third site where wounds are felt: the places and landscapes associated with traumatic experiences and their afterlives.¹⁸ Those memories of violence become collective—located and remembered by groups that share traumatic experiences—in part through their presence in the landscape. Yet trauma is a particular type of past representation: It haunts, recurs, persists unceasingly, and is fleeting, in turn and at once. The representation of violence is often enigmatic. It is not always fully available to understanding. Trauma is often known only through the voice, body, or place that communicates, paradoxically, through pain. Nonetheless, as Caruth reminds us, traumas constitute a particular form of truth telling, relaying a reality “that is not otherwise available.”¹⁹

Trauma heritage tells truths in distinct ways: as spatial stories of collective violence that are wrought by individual experience and intense feeling. The desire to compel acknowledgment of a group’s trauma is particularly acute for those whose experiences of violence are erased or marginalized from public representation. And yet representing violent experiences is impossible. The effort to render pain legible takes an incalculable toll on the body and mind and affects how individuals navigate environments laden with difficult memories. Victims and activists nonetheless endeavor to find ways to make traumatic histories known to wider publics. They seek trauma heritage as a means to counter the abstraction and concealment of violence.

What I call an *ethics of nonerasure* propels these efforts, within trauma heritage, to make history known in spatial forms. Partly informed by human rights discourse, this ethic holds that the representation of genocidal crimes contravenes the

purpose of such violence: the targeted destruction of a people. Spatialized memory retrains the averted gaze and tells otherwise ignored or hidden truths. There is an element of reparative—if not procedural—justice in those ambitions. Revealing and telling violent memories aims to defend the human rights of the individuals who have been persecuted, harmed, and killed. The ethics of nonerasure seeks to render that history indelible, never to be forgotten.

The ethics of nonerasure is not merely conceptual. It refers to values that guide material and spatial practices. In Rwanda the ethics of nonerasure motivated memory workers to seek recognition for genocide victims and forms of repair for a society split and traumatized by brutal mass violence. It continues to animate efforts to substantiate violent disappearances or violations that are not apparent. As a spatial form of memory evolving from this ethics of nonerasure, therefore, trauma heritage does not stop at mere remembrance. Trauma heritage seeks justice, empowerment, and repair. The ethics of nonerasure situates trauma heritage with an affective excess that anticipates future commitments.

Psychologist Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela spent years listening to witnesses of apartheid crimes as a former commissioner in South Africa's truth and reconciliation process. She writes of a "language of mourning" that she began to recognize there, one that represented both individual and shared, even transgenerational, experiences and memories of violence.²⁰ That language is often visceral, laced with emotion and traumatic memories. It is also recognizable by others who share similar, largely unacknowledged experiences. Gobodo-Madikizela describes the representation of trauma in testimony, therefore, as a process of giving public voice to silenced pain. In doing so, she underscores the social, sometimes liberatory, impacts that come with representing shared experiences of harm that are actively silenced.

Trauma heritage, extending Gobodo-Madikizela's salient observation about the language of trauma, makes public *space* for silenced pain. In this regard, trauma heritage demonstrates how spatialized memory can be a form of empowerment. To break through silence is to compel a society to recognize violence that is hidden from view or normalized in the background. It is to seize back control of the representation of self and others in life and history. It is an approach to justice and repair. I return to this more fully in the following sections, but note here, in a discussion on tensions, that trauma heritage locates opposing forces. It seeks to control memory as a form of power, and it also represents marginalized memories (in the context of that control) as a form of empowerment. Each of those forces loosely refers to the politics and ethics, respectively, of trauma heritage. Those politics and ethics are, in turn, critical to understanding the origins and legacies of authorized genocide representation in Rwanda.

Repair

In trauma studies the *secondary witness* is a spectator or bystander who sees and hears the testimonies of others; they are not a participant in traumatic events but in accounts of them.²¹ Trauma heritage produces secondary witnesses out of viewers, compelling them to see crimes erased or marginalized from view in the hope of seeding forms of repair. In this regard, trauma heritage is associated with initiatives in memory justice. *Memory justice* refers to the active remembrance of injustices to enact forms of repair, including accountability, restitution, and empowerment.²² Facilitated by the evidentiary and social processes that preserve and share memories, it requires those who remember and witness alike. Central to the work of trauma heritage and memory justice, then, is an affront to indifference and abstraction. Instead, the very possibility of repair is predicated on drawing closer to listen to and see inordinately difficult stories and scenes of violence.

Political theorist W. James Booth claims that remembering and witnessing crimes are moral obligations. Memory—of the crime, its perpetrators, and its victims—is bonded to justice as debts and duties that each of us holds in societies broken by injustice.²³ The practice of justice, then, is grounded in an individual's everyday ethical engagement with the past. The search for retribution becomes one of societal responsibility through public representations of those memories. In other words, we know of our obligation to do justice to the past through material and narrative traces, which act as representatives for victims who can no longer speak.²⁴ By extension, spaces that hold memories of violence comprise part of a moral landscape of witnessing that helps to activate forms of justice.

Similarly, anthropologist Victoria Sanford, in reflecting on the aftermath of La Violencia, the Guatemalan army's massacres of Mayan communities in the 1980s, has argued that witnessing is both an individual and a social act. Sanford participated in investigations of clandestine state violence by the FAFG (Forensic Anthropology Foundation of Guatemala): excavating mass graves and interviewing survivors.²⁵ She asserts that acts of witnessing are not merely contained by the interests of individual and familial restitution. Sanford writes, "Witnessing is necessary not simply to reconstruct the past, but as an active part of community recovery, [it is] the regeneration of agency and a political project of seeking redress through the accretion of truth."²⁶ When vanquished memories are expressed in public, they serve at minimum to correct absent representations of injustice in history. Public disclosure can also support forms of individual and social healing.²⁷ Speaking about one's experiences demands reciprocation: the recognition of victims' suffering and forms of accountability from perpetrators and society at large. With truth and redress as central objectives, individual remembrance does critical social work.

Conceptualizing the witness with Booth and Sanford underscores the ethics of remembrance and its social impacts. But for both, efforts to repair are neither linear nor neat. Holding memories of crimes and harms is unruly, laden with trauma and righteous anger, and insufficient to guarantee justice alone. Attention to that unruly affect recenters the views of individuals affected by injustice. It enlivens the personal and intergenerational stakes of memory justice.

Those dimensions are rendered palpable by sociologist and filmmaker Colin Prescod, who in 2017 described the intense fury that he and other Black Britons feel in response to historical and ongoing racialized violence. Prescod declared his “rage against ‘othering’; rage against ‘White-washing’ the record; rage against systemic, institutionalized denial; rage against continuing, intransigent, irritating, debilitating, distracting and destructive racism. This is rage about the necessity of transformation, a million miles from mere toleration. This is rage about making curatorial interventions into curative interventions.”²⁸ Prescod enumerates violence enacted on individuals through systems and institutions and in representations of lives and histories. His rage is thus “about the necessity of transformation” in historiography and social life alike, led by Black voices and actions. With those memories central, he insists on finding forms of repair, not merely new forms to represent histories of violence.

In doing so, Prescod draws from a Black radical tradition that substantiates a need for reparations, not as individual payments, but as forms of communal restitution.²⁹ This is a point made by historian Robin D. G. Kelley who situates reparations within the US civil rights movement. Kelley argues that historically reparations were “never entirely, or even primarily, about money”: they were part of communal strategies to advance social justice, racial reconciliation, and the autonomy, economic empowerment, and thriving of Black communities.³⁰ Kelley recounts “freedom dreams” imagined through forms of material retribution, symbolic restitution, the restoration of dignity, and equitable socioeconomic improvement.³¹ Historically, then, the notion of repair has been inspired by dreams for freedom made necessary by the denial of basic rights and opportunities for whole groups of people.

But the scholarly discourse on repair does not always foreground redress for past injustices as the central impetus for reimagining the future. In a twenty-first-century essay on the philosophy of repair, STS scholar Steven J. Jackson challenges teleological views of the world that are concerned with technological progress, endless development, and everlasting nature.³² His view has had particular purchase for those of us reflecting on a world vulnerable to anthropogenic climate change and coded biases unchecked within the rapid development of artificial intelligence. For Jackson, “broken world thinking” brings with it a renewed sensi-

tivity to the “fragility of the worlds we inhabit.”³³ Broken world thinking, in other words, reorients our progress-obsessed societies to the myriad needs for repair. And yet, Jackson’s view is less attentive to the human sacrifices, entrenched inequalities, and harms done in the pushes for technological advance, racial capitalism, and power. By contrast, the efforts at repair foregrounded by Kelley, Prescod, Sanford, and Booth demand more of the past: They seek accountability and restitution for injustices that have occurred. Doing so also disrupts linear-progress narratives by drawing attention to silenced pasts, their legacies, and ongoing cycles of violence that remain.

Though separated by continents and distinct histories of violence and struggle, Rwanda, Guatemala, Britain, and the United States are linked by ardent commitments to radical forms of repair, built on histories and living memories of injustice. In each, memory serves as a precursor to any possibility of equality. The very histories that have been erased, dismissed, or devalued must be restored through forms of public recognition as a precondition to reparative efforts. But as Booth reminds us, with reference to Walter Benjamin’s “Theses on the Philosophy of History,” forms of justice that merely confront the wreckage of history are insufficient to “make whole what has been smashed.”³⁴ Something more than remembrance is needed to attempt repair for brutal and systemic violence.

Nobel laureate and Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka underscores that the “something more” desired is in fact a future shaped by memory. He writes, “Memory—of what has been, of acts of commission and omission, of a responsibility abdicated—affects the future conduct of power in any form. Failure to adopt some imaginative recognition of such a principle merely results in the enthronement of a . . . culture of impunity.”³⁵ For Soyinka, justice is tied to memory because what we acknowledge about the past makes possible either a future of continued injustice or a future of human rights and possibility. Memories of the past hold the potential to either uphold a culture of wrongs or form the basis for imagining restitution. In other words, forms of repair require both memory and imagination.³⁶

Precedent forms of repair range widely. Some approaches seek material compensation for harms and their social, economic, and psychological effects in the form of monetary payments and redistributive policies. Other approaches are symbolic in nature, including truth-telling forums and the public recognition of victims and crimes committed. Still other efforts at repair are social in their attempts to mend relationships in divided societies and restore dignity to harmed and devalued groups. Despite their variety, each of these proposals for repair seeks to establish bridges between what has been and could be done, demanding that the historical and psycho-social dimensions of injustice inform the social and material propositions for redress.

When situated in relation to repair, and not merely remembrance, memory justice becomes a powerful cognate for both the recognition of past wrongs and related forms of restitution. The reparative efforts that derive from memory justice seek to address violence and its aftermaths in various ways. At minimum, memory provides testimony for procedural justice. But too often governments and legal systems fail to hold perpetrators accountable for their crimes. Moreover, a range of wrongs are not easily redressed through law, including psychosocial injuries, state terror, and structural oppression. A maximal form of memory justice demands a relationship to the future by imagining forms of social recognition and reparation. Repair, in this way, actively brings together moralistic needs, such as the imperative to right wrongs, advance justice, restore dignity, and recognize a people erased or forgotten—with discrete actions like political reform, equitable policies, the reconstruction of homes destroyed, and public acknowledgments of wrongs and the humanity of harmed groups. This is a reparative sensibility informed by peace and urban studies—one that views memory justice as critical to community empowerment and development. It is one that extends beyond broken world thinking to attempt to make things “right” for affected people in the present, concretely shaping future possibilities.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that as a response to violence, repair cannot be considered inevitable, immediately accessible, or driven by technoscientific fixes. It also cannot reasonably be the first order response to historical injustice. Slavery, genocide, state terror, and colonialism have been so nearly normalized or erased from national and global consciousness that the outsize task is first to return memory to the legacies of that violence. Moreover, achieving repair is rarely conceivable for acts of violence that are, frankly, irreparable.³⁷ The individual and intergenerational experience of pain and trauma—the *rage* against it all, in Prescod’s words—is incommensurable with any proposed corrective.

Memory, too, has limits. As a form of truth telling, it can only approximate a historical record, because violence literally destroys individual remembrance, and trauma complicates it further still.³⁸ Consequently, the multifaceted incompleteness of memory justice is a product of its inadequacy to redress violent acts. When striven for, memory justice remains necessarily unfinished, an aspiration. It requires continual work to approximate repair. Despite its difficulties, individuals and communities seek repair to fulfill desires for the acknowledgment of wrongs, restitution, and perhaps healing. Endeavoring to repair recognizes both the impossibility and necessity of those aims.

Situated as an endeavor in memory justice, trauma heritage enacts a distinct, if similarly inadequate and corruptible, form of repair. More on this follows in chapter 1, but in short, trauma heritage initiates the work of repair as spatial acts of his-

toriography. The sites that make violent experiences known are a form of history representation. They constitute an othered history—a reparative historiography—that seeks to reveal and communicate marginalized and hidden experiences of violence. Not merely oral or written, the reparative histories that trauma heritage “writes” rely on material and spatial forms of representation to compel attention in the context of significant power imbalances and inattentive publics. In doing so, trauma heritage expands the field of historiography, itself a reparative act.³⁹ Additionally, by its presence in the landscape, trauma heritage intends change beyond remembrance. The sites hold space for justice, repair, and empowerment—making those objectives tangible and possible—for the harmed and their descendants.

Memory justice work in Rwanda was not purely an effort at victim advocacy. It was also tethered to contradictory state objectives that have evolved into the government’s control of residents today. Furthermore, memory justice in Rwanda was not a local endeavor alone; genocide heritage referenced global efforts to spatialize hidden violence. Those efforts were intimately tethered to the development of human rights practice in the late twentieth century. Both of those aspects—forms of national politicization and entanglements in global movements—do not dilute the significance of memory justice as a driving force for Rwanda’s genocide heritage. But they do suggest the need to more closely understand the actors and contexts involved in memory justice initiatives. Attention to Rwanda’s early genocide heritage development along with its legacies three decades later provides a unique vantage on memory justice not as some romanticized effort, but as one embedded in a messy politics of repair, searching for seemingly impossible redress for injustice.

An Ethics of Viewership

The images shown in the pages of this book document the discovery of genocide massacres and the work involved in preparing bodies, weapons, belongings, and sites for conservation. Many of the images are difficult to see. They form a historical record of violent experiences. I am deeply aware of their conflictual nature: their potential to be read as sensational representations of violence and to reproduce power and privilege in the relationships of viewer and viewed. Throughout, I endeavor to contextualize who made the photographs and videos, why, and, critically for the bulk of this uncaptioned historical documentation, what they portray. My request of the reader, following theorist Ariella Azoulay, is not merely to look at these unbearable images but to *watch* them. To watch images of violence is, as Azoulay claims, to “read them both out of and into the space of the political re-

lations instated by photography.”⁴⁰ That is, the images included in this book, like the landscapes of memory they reference, require an ethics of viewership for deep understanding. The ethics that guides watching invites viewers both to critically examine the regimes of meaning that condition the images’ interpretation and also to radically see the agency and claims of the individuals pictured.

WATCHING IMAGES

Azoulay builds out what is required of watching. She suggests that images of harm initiate a civil contract between the individuals pictured and us, the viewers. They compel us not only to bear witness but also to see others’ claims for citizenship. Such is the “civic space of the gaze”: one that rejects such terms as *empathy*, *shame*, *pity*, and *compassion* as organizers of one’s view and instead begs a certain ethical imperative to reconsider one’s own assumptions.⁴¹ Both the act of watching and the reconfiguration of the gaze as a civic space enable an ethics of viewership.

Readers of this book may not be willing to see all of the images I include. That aversion is understandable. Images of violence are never easy to receive. For those who have experienced the pain of harm, especially, trauma heritage opens up landscapes of association and memory that one cannot help but see and feel. I am, however, appealing especially to those of us who are unaccustomed to experiences of violence; an ethics of viewership asks for your considered engagement. At the very least, my hope is that the images—and the histories they provoke—begin to open a larger set of questions about personhood and political circumstances beyond the image of suffering.

Two photographs demonstrate the watching required of an ethics of viewership. Both were taken by Mario Ibarra near the Murambi genocide site in 1996. They document what it was like to conserve evidence of genocidal violence (figures I.5 and I.6). One photograph shows a woman’s arms gently encircling a toddler. They watch an infant playing with the grass at their feet. Blankets to keep the children warm are close in case comfort is needed. A long cloth for carrying them is also at hand, draped on the grass. The woman is resting and looking off into the distance, where another woman sits partially out of frame. She, too, holds a baby to her chest, nestled in a blanket on her lap. The women are conservation workers and also caregivers for their and others’ children. They sit in the very field where the work of conserving victims’ remains is taking place.

A second photograph documents what was out of frame in the first. The camera centers in on a multitude of hands suspended over a sheet of plastic that tenuously holds soapy water. The hands rub human skulls to wash the dirt and remaining bits of hair, blood, and flesh from genocide victims found in a mass grave. Other images in the series show several groups engaged in similar work,

conserving hundreds of bones and skulls. Some of the remains will be displayed at the newly established Murambi Genocide Memorial. Others will be buried in consecrated graves.

Photographs of this backstage work of conservation and mothering challenge reading genocide memorials solely as commemorative monuments. They instead invite questions as to the dilemmas and emotional and physical labor inherent in that memory work. The scenes forestall hasty assumptions regarding the sites' political sensationalism. They likewise trouble the connections of that emotionally challenging work to memory justice. In place of both conclusions, the images ask viewers to contemplate the process of making trauma heritage and the people involved.

METHODS FOR SEEING AND LISTENING

In the research for this project, an ethics of viewership served as a methodological guide. It formed part of my philosophy of seeing, one that resisted horror and anguish as my only reactions to the photographs of this memory work and the bodies and bones displayed at memorial sites. An ethics of viewership required that seeing led to watching the process of how these sites came to be, and deeply listening to the individuals involved and their struggles.⁴² Attending to the memories of individuals who did and do memory work in Rwanda retrieves a more precise history of genocide memorials' ad hoc development and their politicization. Considering those individuals' ethical and social commitments traces their vast local and global associations across discrete practices of genocide heritage. I do not seek to resolve or romanticize those efforts. I aim to recuperate a sense of the tensions inherent in them.

In this book my aim is to read genocide heritage "both out of and into the space of political relations" instated by the postgenocide governing regime. To read genocide heritage into its political context is to recognize the lived experience of state power and social control that memorials reproduce. To read genocide heritage out of those forces is to be sensitive to the ethical imperatives and kinship that *also* produced those sites of memory. It is to attend to a diverse and marginalized memory landscape in Rwanda, aligned with genocide heritage in a search for repair but unable to gain similar public recognition.

Arriving at the watching required of an ethics of viewership was an iterative process. Research for this book developed within a larger project that explored government peacebuilding programs enacted through the design of new villages and rural landscapes.⁴³ Research took place over multiple visits to Rwanda in 2011–18, with my longest period of residence lasting for twenty months during 2012–13. My initial purpose was to understand rural residents' experiences of those



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FIGURES 1.5 AND 1.6. Genocide Memorial Commission workers care for their children and clean the bones of genocide victims retrieved near Murambi, 1996. Photos by Mario Ibarra, Ibarra archive, Chile.

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projects and the significant challenges that “building” peace posed. I came to this research with training in cultural geography and architectural history and a keen attention to socio-spatial phenomena—the interaction of people and their environments. Along the way, I encountered genocide memories codified in neat narratives by the government that were often repeated by rural residents. I also became privy to the unruly ways that those memories are embodied and navigated by a range of residents, including survivors and perpetrators, but also their relatives, bystanders, those who fled violence, and subsequent generations of Rwandan youth.

Government archives contained little information to indicate the roles that the military, the government, its partners, and local actors played in genocide memory conservation. Two primary factors explain this. First, relevant government documentation had been unevenly archived in the midst of the emergency postgenocide response, with much lost in subsequent years. The government archive that is most accessible to registered researchers, the former National Commission for the Fight Against Genocide (CNLG) Documentation Center, contained a wide-ranging photographic collection with no identifying information and a patchy repository of documents and ephemera related to memorialization from 1995 to 2008. Much of that historical record is retained ad hoc by individuals rather than by institutions. More generally, it was difficult to access politically sensitive topics in the country. This is a methodological and structural challenge well documented by scholars of Rwanda.⁴⁴ Second, much information related to the genocide, the aftermath, and the two governing regimes’ operations during both periods was strategically withheld from public view by the government for various reasons related to protection—to avoid incrimination or to provide security or narrative control. Genocide heritage formed part of that larger politicization of available information because it formed the substance of opposing regimes’ attempts to reveal and hide gross violations of human rights.

Similarly, most of my initial interviews were not ready avenues for discerning either the early history of genocide memorialization or individual views on state approaches to genocide remembrance. In 2012 and 2013, on the eve of the twentieth commemoration, genocide remembrance had become so dominated by state-authorized narratives and memorialization that most Rwandans I spoke with believed that they could not freely express their opinions on the subject outside of trusted circles.⁴⁵ Many rural residents were reticent to disclose views of memorials that did not align with state policies. Individuals involved in early genocide conservation—including those close to government decision-makers at the time and others who were employed to do the work—were often hesitant to disclose dilemmas inherent to conserving bodies and bones or the ad hoc nature of that approach. Genocide site and victim conservation was and is highly controversial

within communities. It is also ethically muddled by government restrictions on free speech, prohibitions on customary burial practices, and state violence. It is furthermore entangled in long-standing critiques of the postgenocide regime by foreign scholars and international media and controversies regarding the state's own representations of history and its democratic governance.⁴⁶ This meant that the majority of my initial interviews with former and current government representatives and rural residents reinforced pithy official histories and perspectives without a sense of the process, local stewardship, or tensions of genocide heritage development. With repeat visits, space for more sprawling conversation, and, in some cases, guarantees of anonymity, many individuals did explore some of the doubts surrounding this work and the social, procedural, and political messiness it entailed. Those aspects had been increasingly filtered from official histories by 2014.

Several related structural factors troubled open discussions on the origins and effects of genocide memory representation. The strong public presence of Rwanda's genocide heritage—both in the capital and in rural communities throughout the country—mirrors government laws that regulate free speech and private remembrance and punish critics of the regime. By 2003 Rwanda's approach to genocide heritage conservation was bolstered by the involvement of Holocaust memory organizations, including Aegis Trust, which organized an archive of genocide survivor and witness testimony and a national memorial museum to victims in the capital, Kigali. Those efforts amount to a publicly conserved, state-authorized aesthetic and account of genocide history. In Latin America sociologist Elizabeth Jelin refers to similar phenomena as the “master narrative” of the nation: a version of history, and its accompanying symbolic landscape, that anchors national identity in state legitimacy and sovereignty.⁴⁷ A series of laws passed in 2008 reinforced the role of genocide memorials in conveying state-authorized histories and the government's reach in punishing genocide ideology and regulating free speech.⁴⁸ Since then, Rwandans have witnessed progressively tighter control over speech critical of the government, political opposition, and narratives that complicate state genocide histories. This has included the imprisonment of political dissidents, including Victoire Ingabire, an opposition party leader, in 2010; Paul Rusesabagina, manager of the Hôtel des Mille Collines during the genocide and whose actions to safeguard Tutsi were portrayed in the film *Hotel Rwanda*, in 2020; and of a widely popular musician and genocide survivor, Kizito Mihigo, whose music was a national standard at genocide commemorations before he questioned government national unity programs and omissions from authorized histories.⁴⁹ A 2016 law ratified existing government consolidations of memorial sites and the relocations of genocide victims buried at them.⁵⁰ Consolidations allow

the government to manage fewer memorials, render their aesthetics and narratives more uniform, and provide better access to foreigners. But the practice has been highly controversial—especially for victims’ families.

By my second year in this research process, I began to actively follow the silences I encountered in archives and interviews. Some of those silences indicated a lack of institutional memory within government ministries regarding the origins of genocide memorials. Other narrative gaps could be described as *amplified silences*, a term that anthropologist Jennie Burnet developed to refer to both the governing regime’s control over civil liberties and the pervasive self-censorship that results from it, especially regarding a range of impermissible positionalities and topics related to the genocide and violence in the 1990s.⁵¹ Many other silences did not represent government coercion at all but forms of everyday resistance—withdrawal, even—from participating in state narratives, policies, and expectations for citizenship.⁵² Still other omissions reflected a language of trauma: emotionally burdened silences that stand in for the unspeakability of violent experiences.⁵³ Those silences required special care, including my attentiveness to speakers’ feelings and a reinforcement of their boundaries. I came to understand all of these silences less as absences than as the “metadata” that Lee Ann Fujii followed in Rwanda. Fujii’s research on what motivated the genocide relied largely on oral testimony.⁵⁴ In doing so, she came to understand that a range of silences in interlocutors’ stories indicated “conditions in the present [that] shape what people are willing to say about violence in the past, what they have reason to embellish or minimize, and what they prefer to keep to themselves.”⁵⁵ Those silences, then, tell us a great deal about how the present shapes the past.

Following silences led me to bring diverse source material together. My research turned to oral history and visual and spatial ethnography to grapple with the gaps and varied challenges of reading this memory landscape. Oral history is an approach to interviewing individuals that privileges their memories of life events, families, and communities to inform the historical record. Visual and spatial ethnography take images and places, respectively, to be central subjects and methods for ethnographic inquiries. Centered as subjects of conversations, sites of memory and photographs of conservation work provided concrete referents for uneven remembrance. As ethnographic methods, sketching, mapping, and walking through landscapes invited access to finer-grained details, feelings, and associations. For example, Mario often drew while he talked, illustrating sequences of his genocide investigations and approaches to conservation work. For some interlocutors, it was important to either describe meaningful places from memory or show me locations where violent events had happened but were no longer visible. My use of both methods attempted to restore individual voices and views to the origins

and legacies of genocide memorialization that had been lost owing to the various structural, personal, and methodological factors I outline above.

In the study of trauma heritage—efforts to represent hidden or minoritized violence—visual and spatial evidence are especially critical communicative modalities in the context of restricted speech. Those nonverbal representations can harbor what can't be said, challenging singular or inordinately clear state narratives. Suppressed from public expression, those stories in Rwanda have taken refuge in a folded and annotated field map, a sharp-edged rock obsessively photographed in a genocide investigation archive, and the mummified body of a child—as the following chapters elaborate. Memories are also held in tension with the ways they are received today. Such is the case with the busy marketplace that today bears no marker noting a state reprisal attack, and the collective reburials of genocide victims at sites that no longer register the punitive labor of the prisoners who dug them. Those stories don't disappear when marginalized from inhospitable publics; they imbue places with feeling.

When speaking is possible, survivor oral histories are key sources of truth in the aftermath of violence that reveal details actively hidden by the powerful. Many interlocutors represented voices and narratives that are typically not recognized by state-authorized histories because they are too complex or deviate from or challenge official views. Often, however, respondents' narratives extended far beyond testimonies of fact. Those individuals linked past remembrances to present-day impacts, opening onto the social relations, aspirations, fears, and symbolic meaning situated by genocide memorials and photographs of memory work. In the less structured format of an oral history interview, they had more autonomy in how they replied to my questions and what they included (and when). I learned a great deal from those conversations about listening—especially to the sensitive and disjointed nature of traumatic remembrance.

In this research oral, visual, and spatial sources informed each other. Because of the relative lack of written documentation on early memorialization, I relied primarily on oral histories with people who first worked on genocide memory conservation. Finding those individuals and establishing grounds for more open conversations was also iterative: predicated in large part on multiple conversations over several years, establishing some measure of trust (including with Louis) and locating Mario in the first place (see chapter 1). Louis's and Mario's personal archives in Rwanda and Chile hold photographs and videos of exhumations, massacre conservation, and reburials that record the process of making genocide heritage from 1994 to 1998. Interviews with them and others were helpful in identifying the contents and describing the contexts of those photographs. Some of that visual material is publicly available in government repositories, but there is no index

listing which places, dates, and activities they picture. I located other people involved in conservation work through Mario's and Louis's recollections and written documentation and by showing their photographs in rural communities near the sites pictured. Images, in turn, often prompted more detailed recollections in conversation. Places, both visible and hidden, served as mnemonic devices during conversations. Without these visual and spatial sources, I had limited understanding of the feelings and backstage work associated with memory conservation, or of relationships to early exhumations and reburials. As a result, I came to understand oral histories, visual documentation, and places as not mere source material for developing more "accurate," balanced, or grounded histories. These stories, images, and sites form a visceral archive of deeply emotional remembrance.

LOCATING POSITIONALITY

This visceral archive—the process of assembling it and the experiences it represents—situates several ethical dilemmas I grappled with in this research. Among them, the single most challenging was the range of wrenching emotions that my questions evoked, balanced tenuously with my commitment to do no harm.⁵⁶ In such instances, consent to ask questions on the subject matter seemed a woefully minimal standard to permit my intrusion. Returning to conversation after a flood of grief or anger was never easy. I trod carefully in those instances, inviting interlocutors to stop, pause, or express only what they felt comfortable saying. The individuals who continued to speak with me acknowledged my apologies. They also stated what they thought was important for me and others to know about this history and why. A related ethical challenge has been writing the complexity of those encounters. I struggle with both relaying the deeply personal and violent memories told to me and weighing the political ramifications for interlocutors in doing so. Moreover, questions of relevance and judiciousness in representing experiences of trauma are critical to considering how readers receive these stories. Examining my positionality has been central to navigating both dilemmas and, similarly, to the methods of watching and listening that resulted in this book.

In most of my interviews, mention of the violence that occurred in the 1990s was first introduced at a remove. Understandably so—these were intimate memories that were not easily shared with others, especially outsiders. I was largely received as an outsider in this research. In rural areas in Rwanda, I was often teasingly called *akazungu* (small foreigner), a layered name that was simultaneously a diminutive, a commentary on my relatively short stature, and a term of endearment. In cities, residents were more likely to call me *Chinoise* (a francophone reference to my mixed Asian-Caucasian ethnicity). In both settings, both my privilege as a foreigner with the ability to travel and ask questions and my disadvantages as

a foreigner with none of the knowledge and expertise possessed by Rwandans were raised by nearly everyone I spoke with. Foreigners' lack of situated understanding is so well known that it has long been codified in a genre of Kinyarwanda riddles (*inshoberamahanga*). I took my newfound monikers to be humbling, if slightly cringeworthy. I understood my diminution while conducting research to be part of a Rwandan "infrapolitics" of establishing agency in the context of historically unwanted foreign intervention.⁵⁷ It reinforced the partiality of my knowledge (and that of my interlocutors) in the process of encountering complexity and making sense of it.

To listen and watch in this context required relating to interlocutors as both a partial insider and an outsider. Scholars often conceive of researchers' positionalities in binary terms: either as insiders who have advantages in accessing information because they belong to the groups they study or as outsiders who retain objectivity and distance in the interpretation of data. Yet positionality is rarely static. Geographer Beverley Mullings made this point in her research with Jamaican company managers. She argued that individuals rarely remain insiders or complete outsiders.⁵⁸ Instead, Mullings suggested that "positional spaces" more aptly describe the process of creating a shared, if transitory, space of trust and cooperation within interviews in which power and class differentials, politically sensitive settings, or emotional topics challenge both. Within this framing, positionality is the product of an interaction of persons, and holding insider or outsider status is only ever partial. Trust is contingent on an appreciation of the situated knowledge of both parties, which is only ever approximated through mutual questioning.

In my case, developing a positional space for conversation was not a shortcut to access nor a subversion of power dynamics. I embraced my *akazungu* status because it humbled me. I sought some measure of social relation by gaining Kinyarwanda language proficiency.⁵⁹ Speaking in the local language was most appreciated by government officials, who took it as a marker of willingness to hear what they, and Rwandans in general, think. With rural residents, I conducted interviews in Kinyarwanda to meet them in the language in which they felt comfortable. I also partnered with a Rwandan translator in those interviews. Though certainly more familiar with the culture and language than I, they were also a relative outsider to the communities we visited as someone who did not grow up in those places. They prefer not to be identified. I consider ours a collaboration animated by questions regarding interpretation, un/ease, what was narrated, and what possibly was left unsaid. Without their humanity and insight, this work would have been both less joyous and less meaningful.

Our partnership and our collective partial insider and outsider statuses were critical to creating positional spaces where individuals explained commonly held

local knowledge. In 2018, during a return visit with a couple living in the east of the country, our conversation shifted to my status as an outsider. I had asked if they had questions for me. In response, the husband asked where I was from, returning the conversation to where I began the interview.⁶⁰ I foregrounded my university affiliation and my US citizenship to reinforce my impartiality (and nongovernmental status). That my research was not sponsored by the government but could inform state policies was especially important to them. In response, the husband turned to my colleague, “*You* see us, we’re part of the masses and we’re at the bottom. *Urumwa?* [Do you understand?] But she, she doesn’t know. She cannot see what a Rwandan does, what Rwandans need.”⁶¹ We all nodded in agreement. The wife added, “It takes effort for someone from there to come here and learn what needs to be done. She will listen and give that knowledge to someone who has the means to do something about it.”⁶² The conversation was similar to others I had in rural areas throughout the country, where ordinary folks living with modest means were willing to explain their situations to me because, as an outsider, I did not have their knowledge or know what Rwandans know. That I might possibly be able to do something in response was not assumed to be immediate. It is, for me at least, an expectation that remains to be fulfilled.

Not everyone I spoke with wanted to talk about the past. Often, the harrowing nature of exhumations, conservation, and reburials—not to mention the violence that each followed—produced abstract narratives where details were withheld and replaced with procedural observations. I respected those boundaries. Those strategies kept difficult memories at a distance. I often navigated political and emotional sensitivities by employing the built environment as a form of distancing. I learned about the importance of those positional spaces from individuals residing in rural villages. Oftentimes, residents were most comfortable talking about worries about poisoned water wells as an analogue for conflicts with neighbors or speaking openly about the failures of electricity provision rather than deriding government policies. In some cases, walking together in landscapes supported more open storytelling. Out in the world, memories about the genocide and its aftermath were articulated at a relatively safe distance: not held inside but somehow elsewhere at the interface of self and environment. Other times, homes were more protective of memories contested by the government, and those landscapes would unfold within a safe interior where no one could be observed speaking, let alone to the *akazungu*. Often, conversations organized around photographs, memories of places, or walking in landscapes would shift our conversations from more general accounts to deeply personal reflections and experiences. The individuals who did speak about their experiences taught me about the complex temporalities of traumatic memories—at once contained or locked away in the past and yet eas-

ily triggered in ways that flood the present. I was consistently taken aback by how precipitously difficult pasts, relegated to a distance, spilled over into our conversations. In those moments when photographs were explained or experiences relived, I learned a great deal about the presence of the past.

I could not be a researcher at a remove in these instances. I cried after interviews. I felt wretchedly guilty for asking questions that evoked others' tears. Writing of research in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, oral historian Erin Jessee rightly warns that there are limits to a researcher's "deep listening."⁶³ This is particularly the case when interlocutors recount experiences of harrowing violence. In the context of those stories especially, it is doubly difficult to then hear others' justifications for harms they inflicted. The deep listening that Jessee speaks of, like the ethics of viewership, comes with personal costs. Even acknowledging this, I needed to be able to quiet my own emotional reactions to listen to the many individuals who shared their experiences. The majority of my interviews took place in respondents' homes, in the midst of daily routines and everyday landscapes. As a result, rarely were remembrances relegated solely to the past. Those quotidian "distractions" grounded traumatic experiences in the present, providing context and a sense of life beyond. In rural Rwandan villages especially, I remember the *akana* (small child) that one of us was bouncing, the sounds of dry beans being sorted on flat baskets, and the giggles of neighborhood children just outside the door. Situated there, I listened not only to traumatic pasts but also to the present—and especially *why* interlocutors spoke with me. Whether responses were organized from the outset by a need to "make history known" or not overtly conditioned by personal or political motivations, I came to understand that the individuals who ventured to speak of their experiences intended their words to have some measure of transformative effect. They opened tentative positional spaces to foster others' understanding and, perhaps, their own empowerment.

The ethical dilemmas I encountered in research were echoed in writing. I struggled with writing emotionally and politically difficult experiences while remaining faithful to interlocutors and the ways they represented their memories. By way of attempting some balance, I offer an intimate history, not distant or evacuated of its emotional excesses, that also responds sensitively to individuals, their often-intense feelings, and significant concerns—including community dynamics and regime repercussions. Examining my positionalities as a partial insider and outsider has been helpful to navigating my roles and responsibilities in this regard. I have also found it helpful, in the writing of this book, to retrospectively consider my positionalities as a custodian and witness. As a custodian, a term that derives from archive studies, I highlight my responsibility as a researcher to hold, organize, and represent interlocutors' knowledge. That responsibility is not neutral, as critical

archive studies scholars attest.⁶⁴ Feminist perspectives on custodianship emphasize the importance of not just an ethical responsibility to individuals and documentation of them but a relationship of care, as archivists Michelle Caswell and Marika Cifor put it, “about and for and with subjects.”⁶⁵ Putting this in practice—in writing—is not easy. Folklorist Henry Glassie has described a similar challenge: how a feeling of responsibility for individuals and their histories translated into his writing about Northern Ireland during the Troubles. His “problem” was, as he put it, “to create an ethnography strong enough to cause disquiet in my world, but gentle enough to cause no discomfort among the people I wrote about.”⁶⁶ Thinking feminist custodianship and Glassie together situates this book as primarily for an audience of outsiders—whether in Rwanda or elsewhere—not privy to the experiences I recount.

What began for me as an empirical observation of the ways that individuals spoke about experiences of violence and the aftermath of the genocide has become both a method for writing this history and a central narrative force in this book. I regard the uneven, sometimes removed, other times deeply personal, nature of the histories that result to be faithful to the book’s fraught subject. Those perspectives offer a more intimate engagement with the silences and narratives of genocide memory under strict state control today. Time lapses also play an important part in the book’s narration. Several decades passed between the events and their description. More than context for my research, that passage of time demonstrated the persistence of difficult memories, sometimes clear and other times hazy. In response, the chapters telescope from the first years after the genocide to lived experiences almost three decades later. In writing an intimate history comprising images, places, and stories that endure and slip in time, I attempt to represent the myriad ways in which the past is present in Rwanda.

When moving from recording individual histories to the stakes involved in documenting experiences of violence, I found myself functioning not merely as a custodian of interlocutors’ stories but also as a witness. In earlier sections I situated the importance of witnesses—primary and secondary alike—in the context of reparative and memory justice work. Here, positioning myself as a researcher-witness seeks to highlight not only my ethical responsibilities to the individuals I spoke with but also the importance of not denuding the stories they told. Anthropologist Allen Feldman has reflected on the dilemmas and stakes of representing research on violence to wider publics.⁶⁷ He asks, “How do we translate the dead, the dying, the terrorized, the disappeared”—a social and emotional landscape of trauma, grief, and terror—“to a condition of historical actuality?”⁶⁸

To contend with this question, I connect the writing of history to the sites in which it is located. Doing so has opened up the reparative history that this book

documents and attempts—a history inscribed in landscapes to enact forms of repair in living communities. This is an expanded understanding of historiography, “written” in place, made material, and read visually. Writing reparative histories in and through place locates the excesses of feeling and experience that interlocutors recount. The history that this book attempts, like those developing from myriad sites of trauma heritage, demands an ethics of viewership attentive to individual agency and a willingness to engage sites and stories of violence.

As a result, this book is about making public space for silenced pain, as a form of empowerment and repair—and as a critique of the spaces in which no such acknowledgment exists. It is also about an ethics and method of listening and watching, one that draws close to trauma as an intimate form of acknowledgment and resists violent erasures by sharing feelings, aspirations, and lessons heard. The hope is that doing so proliferates the number of custodians and witnesses—those who care about, and for, and with individuals seeking justice, repair, and empowerment.

The Chapters

This book documents an exceptional form of trauma heritage that emerged after the 1994 genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda to render scenes of massacre as visceral places of witness. It contributes new research on the initial memory work and dilemmas entailed in those efforts in making Rwanda’s genocide heritage. In doing so, it traces connections to a global geography of trauma heritage practices, informed by the human rights movement developing in the late twentieth century. *Rwanda’s Genocide Heritage* also explores the history of the sites’ evolving state control and politicization. Genocide heritage continues to shape social and political life today. The sites exist alongside other struggles for memory justice embedded in unauthorized and prohibited trauma heritage in the country. As an extreme example of a local and global phenomenon, then, Rwanda’s genocide heritage reveals the tensions inherent in confronting violence along with trauma heritage’s potential and unruliness as sites of repair.

Chapter 1 introduces two of the first curators of Rwanda’s genocide heritage—Louis Kanamugire and Mario Ibarra—who developed a *practice* of reparative history. They sought to formalize genocide memory in preserved and conserved killing sites, photographic and cartographic documentation of the scale of the killings, and commemorative ceremonies. In doing so, they worked to transform traumatic memories into history—an authoritative form of knowledge from which the genocide would be more likely to be recognized. Tracing the spatial and material forms of the truth telling they attempted, the chapter explores a central tension in trauma heritage, in which memory workers and witnesses navigate a distinctly

affective—an inescapably sensorial and emotional—experience of aftermath landscapes to produce objective, historiographical representations. Louis's and Mario's memory work demonstrates the challenges of practicing a reparative history, up close and for wider recognition. Their work also contributes to conceptualizations of reparative history, furthering our understanding of the stakes, dilemmas, and modalities of such endeavors.

Chapter 2 traces the formalization of Rwanda's genocide heritage, detailing how and why the government decided to publicly display victims' remains and other material evidence as collective memory. The chapter updates precedent literature on the early development of genocide memorials, emphasizing the knowledge exchanges among the first preservation and conservation experiments at Nyarubuye, Ntarama, Murambi, and Nyamata. It also traces the local and global forces that led to the institutionalization of an extreme aesthetic in the representation of the genocide, which, rather than evolving from Holocaust memorialization templates (those influences would be more prominent a decade later), drew from a global human rights movement, including memory justice activism in Latin America. Those influences underscore that early genocide heritage exceeded state control both on the global scale and on the scale of local experiences of trauma.

Chapter 3 details the practices to preserve the country's first genocide heritage site at Nyarubuye Church (in eastern Rwanda). It follows three actors critical to Nyarubuye's preservation—the rebel Rwandan Patriotic Army, which took control of the country, ending the genocide; the regional office of the United Nations Human Rights Field Operation in Rwanda (UN HRFOR); and newly appointed local governing authorities. The chapter considers what these actors did to preserve the site, why they did so, and what ethical dilemmas and political pressures they faced. It also explores the phenomenon of secondary witnessing that emerged at the site and its outcomes. Regular tours by international observers positioned Nyarubuye as a metonym for the genocide. Nyarubuye centers the irresolvable tensions of Rwanda's genocide heritage: The misalignments between the ethics of nonerasure and state sovereignty, preservation and witnessing, and authorized heritage and its growing body of omissions.

Chapter 4 shifts to the Murambi Technical School, Rwanda's largest genocide heritage conservation operation. It follows both the formalization of that visceral aesthetic and the backstage work, and individuals, that developed it. Foregrounding the emotional, affective, and physical labor that produced genocide heritage, the chapter draws from photographs and videos of conservation work that were recorded in 1996–97 and oral histories with memory workers decades later. Those sources reveal genocide memorials less as monuments than as intimate and fraught

engagements in reparative processes, driven by ethical and communal commitments. The chapter concludes by discussing the multiple temporalities and paradoxes inherent in forms of repair, evident in individual engagements in making genocide heritage.

Chapter 5 explores the interplay of exhumation, display of victims' remains, and reburial ceremonies to explore relationships between the visibility of violence and forms of social and political order instated by the new regime. The chapter draws primarily from photographs, taken in series from 1995 to 1997, of the work to recover genocide victims from mass graves, prepare their remains for reburial, and commemorate them in public ceremonies. Those photographs document the backstage and social dynamics of multiday events. In them we see accused prisoners laboring in processes of victim exhumation, temporary display, and reburial. The photographs also reveal the social hierarchies and socialization processes that emerged through new and old burial rituals in which mourning and campaigns for state sovereignty and justice coexisted, often in contradiction. The chapter concludes by considering how conservation and ceremonies for reburial and commemoration ordered aftermath landscapes and shaped how the state controls the future of the past.

Chapter 6 explores Rwanda's uneven landscape of memory, in which official genocide memorials sit side by side with less dominant forms of trauma heritage. Drawing from contemporary oral histories with rural residents across the country, it brings the country's authorized genocide heritage into conversation with marginalized memories and the places associated with them, noting the breaks, silences, and omissions that come into focus as a result. The chapter reveals a diverse memory landscape in Rwanda where underrecognized, unauthorized, and prohibited memories remain latent in terms of their public visibility. The move that genocide heritage shares with reparative history, from truth-telling to action, is not equally available to all. The stakes of Louis's and Mario's work in developing Rwanda's genocide heritage become more apparent as a result. The chapter explores the marginalized memories in the country that are not afforded the same opportunities for spatial representation and thus justice and empowerment.

The conclusion contextualizes the memory work that occurred in postgenocide Rwanda within an *era of trauma heritage*. My conceptual periodization describes a late twentieth-century phenomenon in which activists spatialized memories to reveal, and call attention to, hidden and normalized violence in the Global South. Such acts of trauma heritage continue to have resonance today—from the claims to existence and brutal erasure made by the fervent documentation of destroyed Palestinian homes to the collection and preservation of soil at lynching sites in

the southern United States.⁶⁹ Those initiatives make public space for silenced pain, calling for recognition, justice, and repair. The era of trauma heritage traces a global geography of memory justice activism and its origins within the then-emerging international human rights movement. In this context, following one of the world's most devastating periods of mass death, Rwanda crystallized global shifts toward a distinctly *spatialized* form of memory justice.

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Louis Kanamugire (*left*) and Mario Ibarra select photographs and artifacts to display as evidence of the genocide at the Institut Français (French Cultural Institute) in Kigali, 1996. Courtesy of Mario Ibarra, Ibarra archive, Chile.

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PROLOGUE: A ROCK AMONG MANY

1. Both Mario Ibarra and Louis Kanamugire passed away while this book was in production (in March 2025 and December 2024, respectively). Louis's 2013 memoir (Kanamugire, "Temoignages recueillis") offers a significant overview of the memory work he directed for the Genocide Memorial Commission.

2. In 2021 the CNLG was replaced by a newly established Ministry of National Unity and Civic Engagement (MINUBUMWE).

3. Rutayisire passed away in December 2023. See Rutayisire, "Approche locale du génocide" (2014); and Rutayisire et al., "Kwandika amateka ya jenoside" (2022).

4. I use the term *authorized heritage* following Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (2006).

5. GOR, Law No. 15/2016 of 02/05/2016 Governing Ceremonies to Commemorate the Genocide Against the Tutsi and Organisation and Management of Memorial Sites for the Genocide Against the Tutsi, *Official Gazette*, no. 22 (May 30, 2016): 30–50. The 2016 law retrospectively granted state authorities discretion to consolidate memorial sites that would otherwise be considered "permanent" (Article 15, 43). It both legislated a practice that preceded it and suggested an amplified program of memorial consolidation and burial relocation in years to come.

6. Traditional religious practices include *guterekera*, a form of ancestral communion that is practiced with discretion today. See Bigirumwami, *Imihango n'imigenzo* (1984), 218–28; Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us* (2012), 99–101; and Taylor, *Milk, Honey, and Money* (1992).

7. In Rwanda, ethnic identity is patrilineal.

8. The RPA was the armed force associated with the RPF political party. It seized control of Kigali on July 18, 1994, effectively stopping the genocide. The RPF has since dominated the national government and is the party associated with President Paul Kagame.

9. This view is espoused by critics of the postgenocide, RPF-led government who claim that reprisal killings of Hutu during and after the genocide amounted to organized, ethnically targeted mass violence similar to the 1994 genocide against Tutsi. That criticism was reprised in both a BBC documentary, *Rwanda's Untold Story* (2014), and journalist

Michela Wrong's book *Do Not Disturb* (2021). For work that parses related debates, see Beloff, "Double Genocide" (2022).

10. GOR, Law No. 18/2008 of 23/07/2008 Relating to the Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Ideology.

11. GOR, Law No. 56/2008 of 10/09/2008 Governing Memorial Sites and Cemeteries of Victims of the Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda, Articles 3 and 11.

12. GOR, Law No. 56/2008, Article 10. The law listed eleven features that every national and district-level site should have. Key among them were state control over memorial curation, administration, and access. In addition to displaying skeletal remains, clothing, and weapons, the law stipulated that each memorial should host curated exhibitions on the history of the genocide and show photographs and the names of victims, perpetrators, and rescuers associated with crimes in each region.

13. CNLG, "Sites mémoriaux du génocide" (2012).

14. The situation evokes what Michael Rothberg and Yasmin Yildiz describe as "memory citizenship," in which full national belonging is contingent on knowing and performing one's recognition of a collective memory. Their concept arises from an analysis of migrants in Germany who experience the country's Holocaust commemoration and civic education programs. Rothberg and Yildiz, "Memory Citizenship" (2011).

15. Longman, *Memory and Justice* (2017); Nyirubugara, *Complexities and Dangers* (2013); Purdeková, *Making Ubumwe* (2015); and Vidal, "Commémoration du génocide" (2004).

16. Lemarchand, "Politics of Memory" (2008), 65–66.

17. Cook, "Politics of Preservation" (2006).

18. Brauman et al., "Rwanda" (2000); Vidal, "Commémorations du génocide" (2001); Vidal, "Commémoration du génocide" (2004); and Vidal, "Humanitaires" (2004).

19. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us* (2012); and Longman, *Memory and Justice* (2017).

20. Buckley-Zistel, "Remembering to Forget" (2006).

21. Notable exceptions are an article coauthored by human rights activist Théoneste Rutagengwa and the history of ethnicized vernacular memory by Olivier Nyirubugara. Longman and Rutagengwa, "Memory, Identity" (2004); and Nyirubugara, *Complexities and Dangers* (2013).

22. Misago, "Instruments de la mémoire génocide" (2007).

23. Bolin, "On the Side of Light" (2012); Brandstetter, "Contested Pasts" (2010); Davis and Bowring, "Right to Remember" (2011); Eltringham, "Bodies of Evidence" (2014); Guyer, "Rwanda's Bones" (2009); and Sodaro, *Exhibiting Atrocity* (2018), 84–110.

24. Bolin, "Imagining Genocide Heritage" (2020); Lischer, "Narrating Atrocity" (2019); Ibreck, "International Constructions" (2013); Selimovic, "Making Peace, Making Memory" (2013); and Wosińska, "Murambi Is Not Auschwitz" (2017).

25. Baldwin, "Constructing Identity" (2019); Breed, *Performing the Nation* (2014); Fox, *After Genocide* (2021); Grzyb, "Unsettled Memory" (2019); Jessee and Mwambari, "Memory Law" (2022); King, "Memory Controversies" (2010); Korman, "Politique de mémoire" (2013); Korman, "L'état rwandais" (2014); Korman, "Mobilising the Dead?" (2015); Korman, "Bury or Display?" (2015); Mwambari, "Agaciro" (2021); and Mwambari, *Navigating Cultural Memory* (2023).

26. Dumas and Korman, “Espaces de la mémoire” (2011); Korman, “Universitaires et intellectuels rwandais” (2022); and Mason, “Conserving Rwandan Genocide Memorials” (2019).

27. Burnet, *To Save Heaven and Earth* (2023); Jessee, *Negotiating Genocide* (2017); Selimovic, “Gender, Narrative, Affect” (2020); and Viebach, “Mediating ‘Absence-Presence’” (2020).

28. Jessee, *Negotiating Genocide* (2017); Ibreck, “Politics of Mourning” (2010); Lakin, “Memory and Victimhood” (2022); and Major, “Unearthing, Untangling” (2015).

29. Jessee, “Micro-Politics of Remembering” (2022); Major, “Unearthing, Untangling” (2015); Nsabimana, “Genocide-Time” (2023); and Viebach, “Mediating ‘Absence-Presence’” (2020).

30. Meierhenrich, “Topographies” (2011); Meierhenrich and Lagace, “Tropes of Memory” (2013); and Mwambari, “*Agaciro*” (2021).

31. Butler, *Precarious Life* (2004), xx–xxii.

32. With reference to Hannah Arendt’s “space of appearance” and Giorgio Agamben’s “bare life.” Arendt, *Human Condition* (1958); and Agamben, *Homo Sacer* (1998).

INTRODUCTION: TRAUMA HERITAGE AS REPAIR

1. Louis Kanamugire, interview, Rwanda, July 16, 2018 (translated from French and Kinyarwanda by BUK and the author).

2. Kanamugire, interview, July 16, 2018.

3. Kanamugire, interview, July 16, 2018.

4. Significant sources for understanding the origins and dynamics of the 1994 genocide against Tutsi include Burnet, *To Save Heaven and Earth* (2023); Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell* (1999); Fujii, *Killing Neighbors* (2009); Newbury, “Ethnicity” (1998); and Straus, *Order of Genocide* (2006).

5. Four of those national genocide memorials were established at killing sites (Nyarubuye, Ntarama, Nyamata, and Murambi), and two were purpose built (Bisesero and Kigali). Chapter 2 provides an overview of the first sites and their interrelated development, while chapters 3 and 4 focus on Nyarubuye and Murambi, the primary loci of preservation and conservation practices, respectively.

6. Interviews with residents in the first years after the genocide include reactions to genocide sites. See African Rights, “*Go*” (2007); Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us* (2012); Schotsmans, *A l’écoute des rescapés* (2000); and Vidal, “Commémorations du génocide” (2001).

7. For burial practices and funerary rites in Rwanda, see Bigirimwami, *Imihango n’imigenzo* (1984), 218–28; Kagame, *Organisations socio-familiales* (1954); Sadruddin, “Death in an Ordinary Time” (2022); van’t Spijker, *Usages funéraires* (1990); Taylor, *Milk, Honey, and Money* (1992); and Vidal, “Commémoration du génocide” (2004).

8. Kanamugire, interview, July 16, 2018.

9. I call him Dr. Kanimba, using his Rwandan first name, honoring how interlocutors who worked with him referred to him (with significant fondness).

10. Louis, Mario, and Dr. Kanimba were colleagues and friends. They worked together

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from 1996 to 1998 to refine conservation techniques. Mario, a human rights expert, was subordinate to Louis. They were also close friends. Louis was the director of the Genocide Memorial Commission, but at particular memorial sites like Murambi, he often deferred to Dr. Kanimba and Mario with their respective academic and field expertise. After Louis was forced to retire, Dr. Kanimba became the first director of the CNLG, assuming control over the rehoused Genocide Memorial Commission for a brief period (2008–10) before his death.

11. My conceptualization of genocide heritage drew from my development of the concept of trauma heritage and is independent of other scholars' work on similar concepts. My framing emphasizes the material and spatial forms of genocide remembrance, along with the processes and work entailed in their development. Annalisa Bolin develops a parallel concept in archaeological research on contemporary Rwandan memorials in "Imagining Genocide Heritage" (2020).

12. Until 2008 the term *genocide* (*génocide* in French and *jenocide* in Kinyarwanda) was not officially used in Rwanda. The Kinyarwanda term *itsembabwoko n'itsembatsemba* (ethnic killings and massacres) was more common. That phrase recognized the thousands of Hutu who also were killed during the 1994 violence; it was later changed to the narrower "genocide of the Tutsi." In 1997 the phrase *indangamurage z'itsembabwoko n'itsembatsemba* appears in government documents to refer to the "heritage of the ethnic killings and massacres." GOR, "Umushinga w'Itegeko rishyiraho Ikigo cy'Igihugu cy'Urwibutso rw'Itsembabwoko n'Itsebasemba," PRIMATUR, January 1997, Article 4, CNLG Archive, Kigali. For a history of genocide terminology, see Ntakirutimana, "Génocide" (2017).

13. My definition of *heritage* bears similarities to Richard Terdiman's compelling definition of memory as a past made present. However, in further narrowing the conceptual implications of present/presence, I emphasize that heritage has particular material and temporal dimensions that distinguish it from the broader category of memory. I also situate the formation of an especially charged trauma heritage not within European modernity, as Terdiman does, but within a late twentieth-century Global South geography of atrocity. See Terdiman, *Present Past* (1993).

14. I follow Battiste and Henderson, *Protecting Indigenous Knowledge* (2000); Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (2006); and Smith and Akagawa, *Intangible Heritage* (2009), in calling for a broader definition of heritage that includes intangible cultural production. Intangible heritage includes forms of labor, oral culture, expressions, knowledge, and performances as valued cultural and historical references. In my view, all heritage, whether tangible or intangible, is material in the sense that it involves some form of objectification and classification.

15. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* ([1925] 1980), 167.

16. Nora, "Between Memory and History" (1989).

17. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), 4.

18. Trauma heritage resonates with what Karen Till calls "wounded places," which are "understood to be present to the pain of others and to embody difficult social pasts." Till, "Artistic and Activist Memory-Work" (2008), 108.

19. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* (1996), 4.

20. Gobodo-Madikizela, "Aesthetics of Memory" (2020), 126.

21. Felman and Laub, *Testimony* (1992), 75–76; and LaCapra, *Writing History* (2001).

22. Gould and Harris, "Memory for Justice" (2014); Booth, "Unforgotten" (2001). Several Rwandanist scholars refer to the concept of *memory justice* to locate a key objective of genocide memorials: Ibreck, "Politics of Mourning" (2010); Longman, *Memory and Justice* (2017); and Viebach, "Aletheia" (2014).
23. Booth, *Communities of Memory* (2006), 116.
24. Booth, *Communities of Memory* (2006), 113, 116.
25. Sanford, *Buried Secrets* (2004).
26. Sanford, "'What Is Written'" (2003), 73.
27. Speaking about traumatic experiences is not always desired nor conducive to individual healing, especially in the context of gender-based violence. See Ross, "Speech and Silence" (2001); and Theidon, "Milk of Sorrow" (2009).
28. Prescod, "Archives" (2017), 84.
29. Prescod, "Gaming the System" (2020).
30. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams* (2002), 114.
31. Kelley, *Freedom Dreams* (2002), 10.
32. Jackson, "Rethinking Repair" (2014).
33. Jackson, "Rethinking Repair" (2014), 221.
34. Walter Benjamin, paraphrased in Booth, *Communities of Memory* (2006), 112. As a precursor to repair, Benjamin's angel of history moves forward into the future by facing the wrongs of the past.
35. Soyinka, *Burden of Memory* (1999), 81–82.
36. Salamishah Tillet elaborates this as the "poetics of reparations." Tillet, *Sites of Slavery* (2012), 136.
37. Philosopher Margaret Urban Walker notes that while wider publics typically consider the worst atrocities impossible to repair, those are precisely the harms that reparations advocates most often invoke. Walker, "Making Reparations Possible" (2015), 211.
38. Levi, *Drowned and the Saved* (1986), 23–35.
39. In suggesting that trauma heritage expands the field of historiography, I reference Rosalind Krauss's canonic essay that reconceptualized sculpture in the postmodern period. Krauss, "Sculpture" (1979).
40. Azoulay, *Civil Contract* (2008), 16.
41. Azoulay, *Civil Contract* (2008), 17.
42. On the twin methodological concepts of "thick description" and "deep listening," see Geertz, *Interpretation of Culture* (1973), 3–36; and Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli* (1991).
43. My research in Rwanda included historical and ethnographic research within government ministries responsible for rural development as well as research with 620 rural residents living in thirty-six villages that initially included semistructured interviews and mapping and later oral history and visual and spatial ethnographic research. The latter included return visits and oral histories with forty rural residents and others involved in preservation and conservation work, exhumations, and reburials in 1994–98. In rural villages I initially worked with a team of five recent Rwandan university graduates to conduct interviews. My primary research assistant and collaborator helped me to lead that team and worked with me as a translator on most interviews, which we conducted

in Kinyarwanda. Research also entailed two weeks in Chile in 2015 to interview Mario Ibarra, primarily in Spanish with the translation assistance of a dear friend (see chapter 1). Wendel, “Ethics of Stability” (2016); and Wendel, “Roof Politics” (2023).

44. The reflections of Rwandanist researchers are instructive to both doing research in the country and sensitively navigating the ethical dilemmas that arise in any field research. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us* (2012); de Lame, *Hill Among a Thousand* (2005); Fujii, “Shades of Truth” (2010); Ingelaere, “Learning ‘to Be’ Kinyarwanda” (2015); Jessee, “Limits of Oral History” (2011); Thomson, “Getting Close to Rwandans” (2010); and Thomson et al., *Emotional and Ethical Challenges* (2013).

45. See chapter 6 and similar observations of the same period in Baldwin, “Constructing Identity” (2019).

46. Purdeková, *Making Ubumwe* (2015); Reyntjens, “Struggle over Truth” (2015); Thomson, *Whispering Truth to Power* (2013); and Waldorf, “Censorship and Propaganda” (2007).

47. Jelin, *State Repression* (2003), 27–30. See also J. Scott, *Domination* (1990); and Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (2006).

48. GOR, Law No. 18/2008; GOR, Law No. 56/2008, Articles 3 and 11; and Jessee and Mwambari, “Memory Law” (2022).

49. Amnesty International, “Ensure Remedy” (2021); African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, The Matter of Ingabire Victoire Umuhoza v. Republic of Rwanda, Application No. 003/2014, Judgment on Reparations, December 7, 2018, <https://www.african-court.org/cpmt/storage/app/uploads/public/5fa/a78/40b/5faa7840b28df631183075.pdf>; and Mwambari, “Music” (2020). Suppression also includes assassinations of dissidents in foreign countries: Human Rights Watch, “Repression Across Borders” (2014).

50. GOR, Law No. 15/2016, Articles 15 and 43; and Grzyb, “Unsettled Memory” (2019).

51. Burnet, *Genocide Lives in Us* (2012), 111.

52. Buckley-Zistel, “Remembering to Forget” (2006); Doughty, “‘Our Goal Is Not to Punish’” (2015); Ingelaere, “Do We Understand?” (2010); and Wendel, “Roof Politics” (2023).

53. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* (1996); Eastmond and Selimovic, “Silence as Possibility” (2012); Malkki, *Purity and Exile* (1995); and Ross, “Speech and Silence” (2001).

54. Fujii, *Killing Neighbors* (2009).

55. Fujii, “Shades of Truth” (2010), 231.

56. “Do no harm” refers to beneficence, which, along with justice and respect for persons, are Belmont Report principles inscribed within codes of research ethics. National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, *Belmont Report* (1979).

57. J. Scott, *Domination* (1990).

58. Mullings, “Insider or Outsider” (1990), 340.

59. Kinyarwanda training was supported by three years of US Foreign Language and Area Studies grants. My research also required competency in French and Spanish.

60. I always introduced the purpose and topics of my research at the beginning of interviews. Midway through and at the end, I made space for respondents’ questions of me—which is when these follow-up queries were usually broached.

61. “180731_12–10,” interview, Rwanda, July 31, 2018 (translated from Kinyarwanda by the author). The majority of interviewees living in rural areas preferred not to be identifiable, so I instead reference the date and time of their interview transcripts (e.g., 180731_12–10, to make note of a recording begun at 12:10 p.m. on July 31, 2018) or provide a pseudonym.

62. “180731_12–10,” interview.

63. Jesse, “Limits of Oral History” (2011), 291–92.

64. Custodianship is a fraught concept within archive studies that refers to the legal and social responsibilities for possessing, organizing, and preserving historical knowledge. The custodial tradition typically refers to the roles of institutions, like national archives, in that work. Critical archive studies scholars, particularly those with Indigenous, feminist, and Black perspectives, argue that custodianship has historically been a nonneutral, paternalistic, and selective endeavor. See Agostinho, “Archival Encounters” (2019); Buchanan, “Decolonising the Archives” (2007); Caswell and Cifor, “From Human Rights” (2016); and Stoler, “Colonial Archives” (2002).

65. Caswell and Cifor, “From Human Rights” (2016), 36.

66. Glassie, *Passing the Time* (1982), 13.

67. Feldman, *Archives of the Insensible* (2015).

68. Feldman, “Epilogue” (1996), 251.

69. Bshara, “Lifta’s Ruins” (2022); Forensic Architecture, Tantura (2023); Khalidi, *All That Remains* (1992); Rajagopal, “Opinion—Domicide” (2024); Sharpe, “And to Survive” (2018); and Webber-Heffernan, “Remembering Differently” (2024).

CHAPTER 1. *EL OLOR Y EL DOLOR* (THE SMELL AND THE PAIN)

1. Mario Ibarra, interview, Chile, January 9, 2015. The photographs are indexed in Genocide Memorial Commission, *Rapport préliminaire* (1996). Our conversations took place primarily in Spanish but also in French and English. A dear friend, native Chilean, and professional psychologist, Carola Velasco Hodgson, kindly helped to translate my broken Spanish for Mario and convey the depth of his thoughts where I lacked understanding. All Spanish translations are mine.

2. Genocide Memorial Commission, *Les grands sites du génocide et des massacres, avril–juillet 1994*, Mapping Agency MINESUPRES, Kigali, April 1997.

3. Documenting evidence of the genocide was a collective effort apparent in several photographs. Figure 1.20 shows a staff member of the Genocide Memorial Commission moments before he photographed Mario photographing the *ibuye* (rock) near the mass grave in Rwamagana Préfecture (figure 1.21). The proliferation of images was facilitated by equipment that Mario brought to Rwanda.

4. Shortly after Louis added a brief mention of Mario’s involvement to his memoir, Rémi Korman, a prominent researcher of genocide memorialization for whom Louis was a key interlocutor, began to publish on Mario’s role in early genocide memorialization efforts. Korman, “L’état rwandais” (2014); Korman, “Mobilising the Dead?” (2015); and Korman, “Bury or Display?” (2015). These exchanges underscore historiographical work as iterative, incomplete, and constructed in part through personal networks and partial recollections and narrations.

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