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LIGNE EDITORIALE ET DOMAINES DE RECHERCHE

1. LIGNE EDITORIALE

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Volume : 18 à 20 pages ; interligne : 1,5 ; pas d'écriture : 12, Time New Roman.

- **Ordre logique du texte**

- Un TITRE en caractère d'imprimerie et en gras. Le titre ne doit pas être trop long ;
- Un Résumé en français qui ne doit pas dépasser 6 lignes ;

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Un résumé en anglais (Abstract) qui ne doit pas dépasser 6 Lignes ;

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Les articulations du développement du texte doivent être titrées et/ou sous titrées ainsi :

- Pour le **Titre** de la première section

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Pour le **Titre** de la deuxième section

1.2. Pour le Titre de la première sous-section de la deuxième section etc.

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Elle doit être brève et insister sur l'originalité des résultats de la Recherche.

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Les sources consultées et/ou citées doivent figurer dans une rubrique, en fin de texte, intitulée :

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Les rapports et des documents inédits mais d'intérêt scientifique peuvent être cités.

- **La présentation des notes**
- La rédaction n'admet que des notes en bas de page. Les notes en fin de texte ne sont pas tolérées.
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- Education et Formation,
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- Sciences Politiques et Relations Internationales,
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La Revue Internationale de Recherche en Communication, Education et Développement (RIRCED), publiée par l'Institut Universitaire Panafricain (IUP), est une revue ouverte aux enseignants et chercheurs des universités, instituts, centres universitaires et grandes écoles.

L'objectif visé par la publication de cette revue dont nous sommes à la dixième publication est de permettre aux collègues Enseignants-Chercheurs et Chercheurs de disposer une tribune pour faire connaître leurs travaux de recherche. Cette édition a connu une légère modification au niveau du comité de rédaction où le Professeur Titulaire Gabriel C. BOKO, devient le Directeur de Publication et le Professeur (Maître de Conférences), Innocent C. DATONDJI est le Rédacteur en Chef.

Le comité scientifique de lecture de la RIRCED est désormais présidé par le Professeur Médard Dominique BADA. Ce comité compte désormais huit membres qui sont tous des Professeurs Titulaires.

Pr Gabriel C. BOKO &
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WORDS OF WOUNDS AND WORDS OF HOPE IN *MURAMBI THE BOOK OF BONES* BY BOUBACAR BORIS DIOP

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ABSTRACT

This articles examines, in a first level, the language of fear, anger and post traumatic disorder of victims and perpetrators of the 1994 Tutsi genocide. It explains that through the chain of voices bearing witness to the massive extermination of Tutsis, Diop is anxious to demonstrate that ethnic cleansing has fragmented the lives of Rwandans who are all haunted by the barbaric violence of the carnage. Such a disintegration of the social fabric is expressed in the attitudes and behaviors of characters but also in the discourse used to speak the unspeakable tragedy that has stricken the Rwandan society. In a second level, the analysis digs out the sparkles of characters' hope, buried under the gloomy context of agony and pain of the narrative of Diop's novel. I argue that the author

writes not only for a duty to memory, but also, through the use of the splintering of characters' narratives cut across by third-anonymous account, he highlights a tenacious hope that constitutes a chance to step over the ages-old hatred between Hutu and Tutsi.
Keywords: Rwandan genocide, Hutu, Tutsi, trauma, violence.

RESUME

Cet article examine, dans un premier temps, le langage de la peur, de la colère et du désordre post-traumatique des victimes et des auteurs du génocide rwandais de 1994. Il en ressort à travers les témoignages sur l'extermination massive des Tutsis que Diop tient à démontrer que le nettoyage ethnique a fragmenté la vie des Rwandais qui sont tous hantés par la violence barbare du carnage. Une telle désintégration du tissu social s'exprime dans les attitudes et les comportements des personnages mais aussi dans le discours utilisé pour parler de l'indicible tragédie qui a frappé la société rwandaise. Dans un second temps, l'analyse se penche sur les lueurs d'espoir des personnages, lueurs enfouies dans le sombre

contexte d'agonie et de douleur du récit du roman de Diop. Nous pouvons en déduire que l'auteur écrit non seulement pour un devoir de mémoire; mais à travers l'insertion d'un troisième récit anonyme dans celui des personnages, il veut aussi mettre en évidence un espoir tenace qui constitue une chance de surmonter cette vieille haine entre Hutu et Tutsi.

Mots clés: génocide rwandais, Hutu, Tutsi, traumatisme, violence

INTRODUCTION

Murambi, the Book of Bones is Boubacar Boris Diop's fictional representation of the horrendous 1994-Tutsi Genocide in Rwanda. The disconcerting savagery of the hunting season of Tutsi by Hutu brought writers to probe into the tragedy and go as far imagination allows, to fathom the historical, political, and socio-cultural causes of what is to be remembered as one of the most infamous genocide in the world.

More than historians and journalists, African writers, at first stunned by the extreme brutality of the killings, had consciousness that revisiting the time of the

genocide, allowing both perpetrators and victims to share their stories of the carnage would be a unique opportunity to dig out its causes, to comprehend what has driven Rwandan society to disintegration and trauma. This is essentially what urged Diop and other African scholars to inquiry about the genocide. The Senegalese writer tells Veronique Tadjo in an interview that, "although genocide is as collective tragedy, each person experienced that tragedy very differently. When we look beyond the cries of hate and terror, beyond the general confusion, each person is absolutely alone" (Diop, in Tadjo, 2010, p. 425).

Taking the act of writing, in a context of genocide, as a duty to memory, the Senegalese writer accepted, at first, with difficulty the idea to recount the unspeakable things that happened, through the Festi project[1]. With fellow writers as Véronique Tadjo, he was finally able to measure the importance of the act of writing as testimony: "Rwanda is a small African country where, over a period of three months, every single day without interruption

[1] The project sent a groupp of 10 writers, among which Diop, to Rwanda for a period of 2 months to bear witness to what had happened in 1994.

10,000 people were killed, the equivalent of 3 or 4 times the number of people killed at the World Trade Center" (Diop, in Tadjo, 2010, p. 426)

Other cataclysmic situations, like the holocaust, between 1941 and 1945, have called to the responsibility of intellectuals and writers. The latter are convinced that the act of remembering the unforgettable through writing is one effective way to prevent the reproduction of war, conflicts and other forms of traumatic events in societies. British-born Paul Gilroy elaborates much on the capacity of literature to make vivid representations of inhuman events as genocide, in *The Black Atlantic*. He argues that literature can help to preempt other forms of violence; he adds that "the idea that suffering of blacks and Jews has a special redemptive power, not for themselves alone but for humanity as a whole" (1993, p. 222). Such a restorative power of literature is corroborated by Soyinka in his exploration *of Africa,* and the violence of slavery upon Africans. He opines that it is vital for a people to remember past traumas, otherwise forgetting can stir present terror (2012, p. 208). For Soyinka, then, collective amnesia; not a paradigm of victimhood, allows war,

despotism, and genocide to continue plaguing the continent (as cited in Montesano, 2010, p. 90). As for Boubacar Boris Diop, he agrees on the absolute necessity to bear witness to the genocide and echoes Elie Wiesel's position about the inspiring effect of tragedy on literature. Wiesel holds it that the right to bear witness to the genocide should be reserved for those who endured it; testimony was for the initiated alone (as cited in Montesano, 2015, p. 92).

Such is, also, the conviction of the initiators Festi project, and of Diop. The latter has understood that, face to the brutality of the ethnic conflict, and the chaos in the lives of Rwandans, his responsibility as intellectual and writer is to make a poignant choice which is "a compromise… between the wish for precision and the desire to render things truthfully" (Diop as cited in Brezault, 2000). As he says it in his conversation with Tadjo, what Rwanda has taught him is that every happening on the continent must have its own special reading – it has to be placed within its historical context, and the internal and external struggles of power identification (2010, p. 426). Hence, the momentous

option to create a many-voiced account of the genocide, a candid, concise novel (Montesano, 2010, p. 94) a beautiful expression of the horror genocide is. *Murambi*, is made of a tapestry of voices, of stories by "future victims, family of those pressured to participate, low-and-mid level militiamen, as well as orchestrators of massacres" (Montesano, 2010, p. 94). The embedded narratives, combined with a third-anonymous voice, share with the reader the appalling and terribly shocking occurrences of the genocide, a painstaking representation through which the author urges Rwandans and the whole humanity to realize the immensity of the tragedy that happened in 1994. The representation is, in fact, a preemptive act against future atrocities.

The narrative option to give a polyphonic allure to his story is diversely analysed and interpreted. While Montesana considers it as a way for the author to pinpoint that each voice, each witness is a single and unique experience of the genocide (2010, p. 94), Elizabeth Apple Gate takes it as the sign of African writers at pains to define what they had seen, struggling to describe violence and cruelty of an unimaginable scope. (2012, p. 71).

Meanwhile, in her review of the book, Catherine Kroll argues that it is a many-voiced text and that, "in creating a novel out of multiple narratives, and thereby causing us to circulate along perspectives of narrator, narrate, and the story's characters, Diop reveals the characters defining interconnections, as well as their direct address to us" (2007, p. 657). The different stories colluding and coalescing in the meta-narrative, are the characters' attempts to give body to the still gaping wounds, diversely experienced. The study posits the hypothesis that the genocide has brought both victims and tormentors into the terrain of trauma, haunted they are by historical and political demons, which have, since time immemorial, taken hold of their lives. Through the fear and anger felt in the testimonies of Tutsi and of moderate Hutu, but also through the accounts of the perpetrators of ethnic cleansing, it can well be assumed that such carnage could be perpetrated only by individuals and communities consumed by ancient 'tribal' hatreds (Julien, 2006, p. xi). The latter are driven into breakneck killings by an irrational "conviction that their victims are totally

inhuman and as such their presence on earth is a stark mistake of nature. (Diop, 2009, p. 376)

That is why, this analysis examines in a first level, the words of suffering, so as to see how verbal and non-verbal languages serve to give an image of the fear and trauma of the victims during and after the genocide. In doing so, a particular attention is brought to the stories of orchestrators of the carnage, to the dark irony and animal images they use to refer to their future victims. As well, signs of their obsession, a sort of compulsive attitude which leads them to a systematic violence towards the Tutsis are decoded.

However, amid the spine-chilling stories in the novel, there are traces of hope of the author, a staunch optimism in the capacity of characters to transcend ethnic strife and political markers in favor of shared, human affiliations (Kroll, 2007, p. 660). The evocative power of images and symbols of hope, built from the characters and their different testimonies are put into the limelight, in a second level, so as to affirm that the Senegalese writer has succeeded in drawing an indelible imprint of the trauma of the genocide.

To work out the analysis, the existing canon of trauma scholarship is revisited, so as to explore the manifestations of post-traumatic stress disorder, noted both in the victims and perpetrators of the killings. Insightful analyses on combat or war trauma (Schonfelder, 2013; Luckhurst, 2008; Caruth, 1995; Herman, 1992;) but also on rape trauma syndrome constitute the backdrop to the explications of the wounds, expressed in a crude style in the different narratives.

1. WOUNDS IN WORDS: EMBEDDED NARRATIVES OF THE AGONY

The pronounced splintering of the narrative in *Murambi* allows an insightful representation of the historical and political causes of the strife and animosity characterizing the interrelationships between Tutsi and Hutu. By letting antagonistic voices recount the unspeakable events that have befallen on their lives and country, the Senegalese writer aim was to "reclaim the narrative of the genocide and restore respect for its dead and survivors" (Kopf, 2007). The keen attention on both

victims and criminals not only allows a representation of the tragedy from multiple perspectives, but it was also an occasion for the author to restore the humanity in them, through a mourning ritual, which makes the book a kind of tombstone, on which simple sentences of brutality and suffering are inscribed[2] (Diop, p.376). The idea of restoring to the victims their dignity is further explained by Eileen Julien, in her foreword to the novel, where she argues that "Murambi's significance lies elsewhere. It does what a creative and transformative work alone can do. It distills this history and gives voice to those who can no longer speak – recovering, as best we can, the full complex lives concealed in the statistics of genocide and rendering their humanity." (Julien, 2006, p. x)

The story contains, then, eleven first-person narratives of eight characters, as well as two prolonged third-person narrations of the return of Cornelius to Rwandan after a twenty-five year-exile in Djibouti. These alternating stories provide insights into the characters'

[2]La fiction « leur restitue au moins leur humanité en un rituel de deuil qui fait du roman une stèle funéraire. Et sur celle-ci sont écrits des mots très simples » de violence et de brutalité.

knowledge of the intersubjective histories between ethnic groups, but also of painful images of the unbelievable brutality at the heart of the massive carnage. A cross analysis of the victims' and perpetrators' accounts will surely allow a broad understanding and explication of the genocide and the subsequent trauma that deeply afflicts them.

The structural design of the story, (divided into four parts corresponding to crucial stages of the time of the genocide) is an esthetic expression of the horrific circumstances preceding the genocide, the bloody days of the massacre, with the complicity of international forces, but also the after-war periods, strongly marked by post traumatic disorder. The time, place, and forms of the genocide are carried by a concert of voices, and we readers "simply 'overhear' the thoughts of fictive victims and killers who lived through those terrifying and horrific days" (Julien, 2006, p. x). The testimonies of Michel Serumundo, Faustin Gasana and Jessica, inform the reader about the background to genocide, with the fear of Tutsi, stirred by the rage and determination of the Hutu to finish with them once and for all. The Hutu are *incensed*

by the “incendiary messages of hatred [of Radio Mille Collines], goading people to murder”. (Mc Laughlin, 2006, p. xvii)

The part of the story relayed by the young Tutsi, Michel Serumundo, owner of a video shop, has the merit to serve as an exposition of the fear in the Tutsis and the event which seems to make the latter’s killing inevitable: the assassination of Hutu President Juvenal Habyarimana. On his way back home, Serumundo is frightened to the bones at the sight of the Interahamwe militia, the armed-wing of the Hutu community, whose sole mission is to erase the Tutsis from society. This is how the narrative voice describes his agitation:

> I tried to look inconspicuous in my corner. Most of the passengers agreed with the man and repeated that this time it wasn’t going to happen that way. They said it was going to be field day for the militia. My blood froze. The Interahamwe militia, whose only purpose in life was to kill Tutsis. Someone announced that he had seen a ball of the fire from the sky (....) I was apparently the only one who didn’t know that our president Juvénal Habyarimana’s plane had just been shot down

> in full fight by two missiles on that day, Wednesday, April 6th, 1994" (Diop, 2006, p. 6-7).

The temporal precision, here, is not at all fortuitous, as the date is memorable for being the onset of the most savage murder of the Tutsi community. Michel Serumundo cannot but feel his blood freeze as he realizes very well, at this point of the story, what the assassination of the Hutu president hold for them, and that death is on the prowl. Truly, the Hutu, in the light of the extremist positions of Faustin Gasana, the second witness and his hatred-ridden father, are decided to hunt down the Tutsi, whom they take as responsible for the death of their beloved president. The visceral animosity and the inevitable assault on the Tutsis is here delineated in the exchange between father and son:

> Father asks me straight away:
> "Do those people take us for real men or for women?" (…) They have gone too far".
> Politics has always been his favorite topic of conversation, but I have never heard him pronounce the word "Tutsi".

> He always calls them "them" or Inyenzi", literary cockroaches".
> "We'll teach them to respect us, I say after a moment of reflection. "We're ready." (Diop, 2006, p. 14)

"Them", "Inyenzi", are lexical images of the profound hatred that Hutu nourish towards the Tutsis, who are no more than cockroaches to be hunted and crushed. Not only does the animal imagery express the dark anger incensing the Hutu, but it also represents the vulnerability of the Tutsis, who are aware, faced with the age-long frustration of the Hutu group (the remote causes of which date back to colonial time), that they are, once again, on death row, in the 1994 context. Such a deeply-seated animosity is daily borne by members of this group who, like, Michel Serumundo and his family, have fear in their heart. The Tutsi young man wants to reassure himself that they will not be again the objects of the ethnic persecution; he says to his all scared wife, Séraphine: "The situation was becoming clear and clear, but I didn't want to make her any more worried. "Don't worry, Séra, the entire world is watching, they won't be able to do anything. (…) In my heart of hearts I knew I was wrong" (Diop, 2006, p. 9). The

same lost hope for peace among the Tutsis is echoed in the words of fear of Theresa, here reported by her friend Jessica Kamanzi, third witness to the massacre: "Jessie, they'll never be able to do anything, knowing that God can see them" (Diop, 2006, p. 271). But both Serumundo, and Jessica, knows what is in store for them, and that an outpour of violence is inevitable. Serumundo can already imagine what is doomed to happen:

> … the looting could start at any moment. Looting, and one or two thousand dead, that would almost be the least evil. I'm not exaggerating. This country has been completely mad for a long time. In any case, this time the murdered had the perfect excuse: the death of the president. I didn't dare to hope that they would be satisfied with just a little blood. (Diop, 2006, p.11)

This prediction of the character-narrator is given shape in the heinous project to wipe Tutsis away from the Rwandan society, the guidelines of which are ironically brought to the forefront by Faustin Gasana, the Interahamwe leader, who is getting ready for the hunting season. Through this part of his atrocious and detached account of the genocide, the

reader has an essential gist of the sentiments of repulsion and ingrained loath he and his fellows have for the Tutsis:

> I have studied the history of my country and I know that the Tutsis and us, we could never live together. Never. Lots of shirkers claim otherwise, but I don't believe it. I'm going to do my work properly. And I agree with the old man; every time you hurl insults at someone who's about to die, you give someone else time to escape. (…) And all those Tutsis to kill. I didn't think there were so many of them. I have the feeling that the planet is inhabited by Tutsis. That we are the only people in the world wo aren't Tutsis. (Diop, 2006, p. 19)

The sarcastic and the ironical style wrapping this profound conviction of the character gives a full dimension of the intensity of the violence against Tutsis. The savagery of the assault on the latter is much more explicated in the first testimony of Jessica, a Tutsi who, as "one of the liaison agents with the guerillas in Kigali during the genocide" (Diop, 2006, p. 44), presents herself as a Hutu, so as to carry out her dangerous mission. With such a position, she finds herself at the heart of the genocide, from its inception, up to its last days, giving

crude and comprehensive account of the multilayered barbarism upon Tutsis.

Truly, Diop has conscience that in the narration of catastrophic events as genocide, the minutest detail in the representation bears importance, as it suggests the most intimate and hard trauma borne by the victims. Analysing Véronique Tadjo's and Boubacar Boris Diop's depictions of the genocide, Montesana correctly writes: the two o artists "…warn against silence by showing the devastating consequence of anomie. Writing in duty to memory means learning to speak out" (2010, p. 96). At each level of the story, Jessica, a pivotal figure, is called on to unveil the abominable and unspeakable terror that motivates hundred thousand murders in three to four months. Her first testimony is mostly informative, as it discloses the early warning signs of the genocide, the detailed account of which constitutes the gist of the third part of the story in *Murambi*.

Jessica is meticulous in her narration of the first moments of the massacre, putting much focus on the internal organization of the militia who receive well-set

indications from their leaders and international allies, in the heinous project to exterminate the *Inyenzi*. She says:

> [t]heir straw men got the army generals and commanders together. They uttered the terrible words; *Muhere iruhande*. Literary, "Begin with one side." Neighborhood by Neighborhood. House by House. Don't spread your forces out in disorderly killings. All of them must die. Lists had been drawn up. The prime minister, (…) and hundreds of other moderate Hutu politicians have already fallen to the bullets of the presidential guard. (…) After the so-called *Ibyitso*, the collaborators, it'll be the Tutsis' turn. What they're guilty of is just being themselves: they're barred from innocence for all eternity. (Diop, 2006, p. 28)

Besides, even before the bloody feast starts, tension and fear are in the air, with people who seem to have become walking ghosts, because they feel that they will soon fall under the machete strokes of the Interahamwe and their cliques. There is hardly no way left for them to escape the sinister project. Fear and restlessness are expressed through their fidgety movements, captured by the inquisitive eye of Jessica.

This is how she describes the terrible situation of those who are on the brink of death:

> If only by the way people are walking, you can see that tension is mounting. By the minute. I can feel it almost physically. Everyone is running or at least hurrying about. I meet more and more passerby who seem to be walking around in circles. There seems to be another light in their eyes. I think of the fathers who have to face the anguished eyes of their children and who can't tell them anything. For them, the country has become an immense trap in the space of just a few hours. Death is on the prowl. They even dream of defending themselves. Everything has been meticulously prepared for a long time: the administration, the army, and the Interahamwe are going to combines forces to kill, if possible, every last one of them. (Diop, 2006, p. 28-9)

These future victims of genocide perpetrators are not only entrapped in their own country, but they are also already traumatized by what is soon to happen to them. Scared, they are walking dead, whose restless movements, and the strange light in their eyes are words speaking loudly of the anguish stirred by the conviction that they

will soon be killed, in the most brutal way. Jessica's first narration is crucial in as much as it shows how well thought-out the genocide is. This explains the extremely alarming scenes of moral torment and physical violence hovering over the boundaries of the book. As the author, Jessica is anxious to known why

> ever since 1959, every young Rwandan, at a moment or another in his life, has to answer the same question: should we just sit back and wait for the killers, or try to do something so that our country can go back to being normal? Between our futures and ours, unknown people had planted a sort of giant machete. (Diop, 2006, p. 30-1).

Therefore, the decentered narratives, at the heart of which is a tapestry of images of violence, turn out to be a mostly relevant option for the writer and journalist, whose keen eyes and deft ears capture the images and sounds of suffering, persecution and agony of the Tutsis, targets of the machetes of hatred of the militia. The chain of voices relaying the story is Diop's essential gesture, which allows him to look at the Rwandan society from the inside, and strives to draw a realist image of the killings. At least 800,000 Tutsi and many politically moderate Hutu have

fallen under the deadly machetes wielded by the militia. As Diop confides, *Murambi* has been written with total disregard for novelistic conventions because what was important, for him, was to make of the fictional form to pass on information and produce a text that was simple and direct. (Diop, in Tadjo, 2010, p. 427)

Besides, driven by a desire to struggle against avoidance and attempts at forgetting in genocide context, Diop lets his characters learn to speak out after the trauma. Going against the grain of those who hold that only the victims of violence should be called to speak about it (Elie Wiesel), the Senegalese writer opens his narrative both to victims and perpetrators. The third part of the story, entitled "genocide" is made of alternating accounts from different perspectives of the carnage, which inform the reader about the dreadful singularity of the Rwandan case.

Indeed, while Aloys Ndasingwa, an Interahmwe militia, exposes the orgasmic pleasure in killing *en masse* the Tutsis, who, in their naivety, thought that they were protected from danger in church, Jessica's second narration largely unveils the use of rape in time of conflict. Should we repeat it, rape is time of war as the genocide is

a weapon used to morally wound individuals. “It is an ancient form of genocide (…) you conquer a nation by bastardizing its children”, Achmat Dangor writes in *Bitter Fruit* (2005, p. 204). Ndasingwa’s words confirm this: “we spent the night on the grounds. We had a good time with women. When they’re not too bad looking, we liquidate them last. After all, we’re young, and you’ve got to live it up” (Diop, 2006, p, 84). Violated and killed, this is the lot of women who are not “bad looking”, under the hold of the militia. The sinister words used by the voice to take as natural and even trivial such an outrageous act, is a reflection of their ingrained conviction that Tutsi women are no more than objects to quench their thirst for sexual pleasure and violence.

The vulnerability of women in zone of war is taken up in Jessica’s second testimony. This key figure in the nest of characters in Diop’s story denounces the cowardliness of some clergymen who did not shy away to profit from the fragility of women. Indeed, Jessica is emotionally shaken by the thrilling story of the young anonymous and much beautiful woman, roaming like a ghost. She absolutely needs to share the trauma born from

her rape by a priest. This is how she talks to Jessica: “I’m too beautiful to survive. I’m as beautiful as the sun, and like the sun there’s nowhere for me to hide. They won’t believe their eyes when they see me walking peacefully down the street” (Diop, 2006, p. 91-2). The girl is aware that she has no way to escape the sexual voracity of the Interahamwe, like many other women whose bodies have been flouted and violated. The veracity of her words are reinforced by Jessica’s, when she avers: “Yes, that young woman had an almost supernatural beauty. (…) They were going to rape her a thousand times before they killed her. She knew it, and she was going out of her mind” (Diop, 2006, p. 92). The most alarming scenes of physical violence contain rape. Brutal rape as weapon of war is the most horrifying act the reader encounters. A genocide deprives humanity of its dignity, rape embodies that depravation (Montesana, 2010, p. 96). The story of the unnamed young women is common to almost all women in Rwandan during the killings, women who are horrified by the savage way the Interahamwe gang-abuse of them. Jessica draws this graphic image:

> Twenty or thirty guys on a bench. Some of the them old enough to know better. A woman, sometimes just a frail child, is stretched out against a wall, legs spread, totally unconscious; It had chilled my blood to see them chitchatting right at the moment when a whole life was coming apart under their very eyes. And among the rapist there are almost always, by design, some who have AIDS. (Diop, 2006, p. 93)

The violence of the text, in the passage, is in line with the tragedy lived through by women, as the anonymous figure. Through the evocation of the monstrosity of rape at the time of massacres, Jessica castigates the hypocrisy of some members of the Church, who are the accomplices of the killers. Actually, the stranger, all smiling amid pain, and who is calling on to Rwandan people to overcome ethnic division, to become a united nation, is traumatized by the terrible things she has experienced. The priest, as well, is mentally deranged, as he burst into tears after the rape.

Thus, what Jessica contends in her narration is that the woman's smile, and predictive words, the priest's cries, but also the demented crying of the Interahamwe,

shouting their hatred at the top of their lungs, are a multiform verbal expression of the trauma of a violence-ridden and panic-stricken nation. These utterances are symptoms of hysteria, which is caused by psychological trauma, according to Judith Herman. Referring to the work of Sigmund Freud and Brewer, Herman adds that "unbearable reactions to traumatic experience produced an altered state of consciousness (…) called dissociation, manifested in hysterical symptoms." (Herman, 1990)

The situation is so desperate for the Tutsis faced to the fierce acts of terror that they come to the point of negotiating how they should be killed. Jessica informs that "[b]ack then in the barricades, only the very luckiest ones could negotiate their death with an Interahamwe. They would tell: "I'll give you such and such sum of money and in exchange, you'll kill me with a gun and not with a machete." This care for dignity had a big price, then." (Diop, 2006, p. 112). This is the scariest and most pathetic thing ever heard by both the character and the reader. But, in the particular context of Rwanda, where "even words don't know any more what to say" (Diop, 2006, p. 96),

such a language expressing the despair and complex trauma of Tutsis has become hackneyed.

Beyond the multi-perspective narration of events before and during the genocide, the narrative strategy calls for a break and a look into the past, so as to dig out the unsuspected reasons that have brought communities to become life foes. This is where lies the relevance and importance to squeeze, among the multiple voices, a third-person narration. The interest to blend narrative agencies is justified by the need to give additional information to the background to genocide, so as to reinforce the narratives of the witnesses, and draw a more comprehensive board of the cataclysmic situation in 1994-Rwanda.

The he-voiced sequence corresponds to the return of Corneluis, a Hutu-born and exiled son of Dr Joseph Karakezi, known by everybody, except the prodigious son as the "Butcher of Murambi". Cornelius is the childhood friends of Jessica and Stanley, both Tutsis, in a social context where this is taken as an abnormality. Through Cornelius' recollections of horrific episodes of the bloody contacts between communities at loggerheads, a precise

report is drawn of the ethnic antagonism consuming the nation. Inter-community massacres started early then, when he and his two Tutsi friends were children and Siméon, his uncle, "led them to Burundi through swampy paths along the Nyabarongo River. Many of their playmates would join them later, because massacres were continuing in Rwanda. Ten dead. Thousands dead. Repeated assassinations of political opponents. The tragic routine of terror" (Diop, 2006, p. 41). The consequence of this displacement due to violence is terror and trauma, expressed not in words in a country where silencing the other in the most terrible way is commonplace, but through exile to Djibouti. The narrative voice exposes the bubbling thoughts of the character, who is torn between suffering, regrets and a certain feeling of guilt, for having been away when his country was ablaze: "Was he so ashamed of them [his countrymen]? No he didn't think so. Basically, it all boiled down to one thing; ever this his childhood, Rwanda frightened him." (Diop, 2006, p. 43)

Despite being terror-stricken and traumatized, Cornelius needs to know and understand what happened to his family and country. He is decided, come what may,

to go to Murambi, the heart of the Tutsi massacre. Therefore, the third-voice narration has the merit to give a much detached account of events and the terrible death of scores of Tutsi, to whom Cornelius feel so close for the first time, in Ntarama. There, with Jessica, the returnee realizes the full dimension of the unspeakable savagery of the genocide, echoes of which he only had through the media. The shock of the character is made worse by the blunt and frightening calm of the caretaker, on a visit in one of the many churches which served as shelters for the dispirited Tutsis, during the genocide: "[in] Rwanda, (…) since 1959 one part of the population, always the same one, massacres the other, always the same one. When there were rumors of massacre in the hills, thousands of Tutsis converged on God's House. Then, two days later, the soldiers and the Interahamwe arrived with grenades, guns, and machetes" (Diop, 2006, p. 74). This is a stark and succinct revelation of the historical domination of the Tutsi by the Hutu and a speaking image of the abnormality of the society.

Besides, the images of cadavers on display in churches, as living memories of the brutalities, the

ambient odor of agony and death, which Cornelius hardly can stand, are piercing words of wounds, that are still open and that calls on survivors not to forget. The on-site discovery of the genocide and Jessica's revelation that his father, Joseph Karekezi was the orchestrator of the massacre of several thousand people in Murambi, including his own Tutsi-mother and his siblings, is the onset of a psychological restlessness in Cornelius, whose reaction is to smile, a seemingly simplistic reaction but which, in reality, is a sign of a complex trauma. The narrator says: "[i]t was only then that he understood, why survivors of the genocide had recounted their suffering to him, interrupting themselves sometimes by nodding their heads and laughing incredulously" (Diop, 2006, p. 77). Others, like Gerard, the first to guess the macabre project of Karekezi in Murambi, express trauma through cries, in their reenactment of the dreadful event (Diop, 2006, p. 152).

Thus, the crafted shift in narrative voices and perspectives is a symbolic image of the fragmentation and instability, at the heart of the Rwandan society. Indeed, "people who have survived atrocities often tell stories in a

highly emotional, contradictory, and fragmented manner which undermines their credibility and thereby serves the twin imperatives of truth telling and secrecy" (Herman, 1992). Diop's avowed objective to get to understanding the genocide from the victims' and perpetrators' perspectives can be also an explanation of the plural narration in the story. The introduction of he-voiced narration is mostly accurate as it constitutes a historical backdrop to the set of stories on the genocide. The relevance to have a span of the story told by an anonymous voice (essentially focusing on the return of Cornelius, and his visit to Murambi) is that it offers at the same time personalized impressions of the traumatic experience and also a comprehensive situation of the post-genocide traumatic disorder of Rwandans, encoded in the words of wounds of characters, their acts but also in the sensory and visual images scattered in the narrative. But, whatever gloomy and horrific life has been in 1994-genocide, what can be felt in the chain of voices is a shared preoccupation for the country and its future. At this level of analysis, there is need to demonstrate that characters, in spite of their separate accounts of the unspeakable, are driven by a

shared desire to understand what happened to them, so as to fall back again into normalcy and humanity.

2. WORDS OF HOPE FOR THE RESURRECTION OF THE LIVING

Amid the gloomy air wafting through the violence of the text of Boubacar Boris Diop, bouts of hope and optimism, suffocating under the weight of the words of suffering, are resolutely sprouting. These are essentially contained in the powerful words of the inspiring Siméon, the patriarch and uncle of Cornelius, in the desperate need of the genocide survivors to speak away the agony and progressively overcome post-traumatic stress disorder but also and most importantly, on the necessity to address head-on the past to redress the present and build a future for the nation. Hope is as well suggested in the structural flow of the last chapter, which is longer than the preceding parts, which can be read as a symbol of continuity of life after trauma.

Cornelius is lost and dispirited after his visit to Murambi, where he was able to measure the immensity of the carnage orchestrated by his father. His uncle Siméon

is the light in the darkness that has suddenly fallen into his life. The latter's words have the power to make him dig out the historical circumstances that have lead up to massive killings, but also they are a means to help him renew with himself and face up with the present. Truly, "remembering and telling truth about the terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims" (Herman 1992).

While teaching Cornelius the history of violence in Rwandan, Siméon declares that "since president Kayibanda's time, people were always killing Tutsis and then going home to play with their children. Tens dead. Hundreds dead. Thousands dead. They couldn't bother to count any more. Little by little it became routine" (Diop, 2006, p. 155). This is not for the old man overlooking the ingrained violence between the two communities, neither is it a way to tell his aghast nephew, Cornelius, that there is no more hope left to end the spiral of violence that has, for so long, taken hold of Rwanda. This is rather a deft strategy for the old man to bring to the forefront how emergent it is for the post-genocide generation to face and accept the extreme savagery of the carnage, if they hope

to save the country. He has understood that like traumatized people, they need to understand the past in order to reclaim the present and the future. Therefore, an understanding of psychological trauma begins with rediscovering history (Herman, 1992).

The words of optimism of Siméon are much more pronounced in the powerful speech he addresses to the infuriated young who wanted to attack the house of Dr. Joseph Karekezi. The words are all meaningful to Cornelius as they are reported by Gerard, a survivor of the Murambi tragedy. Here is the gist of the old man's words:

> When I was young, that's how things started. After destroying this house, you'll go back home. On the way some of you will say: a Hutu lives here, let's take his things and kill his children out of revenge. But afterwards, you won't be able to stop for many years. I want to tell you this: you have suffered, but that doesn't make you any better than those who made you suffer. They are people like you and me. Evil is within each of us. (…) Now, go back home and think about it: there comes a time when you have to stop shedding blood in country.Each one of you must have the strength to believe that the

> moment is here. My brother's house will not be destroyed. It will be a home for all the orphans who hang about on the streets of Murambi. And I'm going to say one last thing to you: let not one of you try, when the moment comes, to find out if those orphans are Twa, Hutu, or Tutsi.' No one dared insist. In Murambi, everyone knows who Siméon Habineza is." (Diop, 2006, p. 164)

The truth and humanity that are hovering over this resounding message of the respected old man calls for a reconsideration of social relationships between ethnic groups. The old man, as well as the author, is conscious that the time has come to renew the natural blood ties between communities of the nation, and which have been destroyed by alien forces. Indeed, Diop is much anxious to demonstrate, through the juxtaposed first-person narrations, emanating from characters from different walks of life, that there is need to rebuild the bridges which are still existing, even after death and anomy. For Siméon, identity and ethnic affiliations should no longer be the determinant of the social condition of individuals. In this respect, Catherine Kroll correctly argues:

> …in bringing such characters to life that Diop shows the inexplicable contingences of identity as well as the sometimes contorted affiliations that define relationships. The result is that we fell a deep sense of the fluid arbitrariness of identity, one that in turn suggests a transcendence of ethnic and political markers in favor of shared, human affiliations. (Kroll, 2007, p. 660)

Simply put, then, what Siméon is teaching to the youth is that it is neither a sacrilege nor an abomination to have sane, safe, and perennial interrelationships between members of the different ethnics. There has been, since childhood, more than friendship, a filial bond, between Jessica and Stanley, both Tutsis, and Cornelius, Hutu and son of Karekazi, the Butcher of Murambi. In spite of the tensed social atmosphere, of the suffering of the one and the other that is still too present, Stanley and Jessica show care and sympathy towards the Hutu returnee. They are fully aware of the traumatic moments he must have been facing in Murambi: "Stanley was quiet. Cornelius noticed that he was watching him attentively, just as he had the day when he had come with Jessica to welcome him at the airport. Cornelius thought that in the end, of the two of

them, it was Stan who suffered the most." (Diop, 2006, p. 172)

For reconciliation to be possible, everyone has to step out of ethnic ego and no longer pay heed to biased narratives about the implications of identity. It is only in this way they can find their own truth. Siméon, addressing Cornelius, (who hankers for explicative words about the drama of Rwanda), uses the image of the traveler, alone, soul-searching, on the path of redemption. In the context of post-genocide, everyone, especially Cornelius, needs to become the solitary traveler. Siméon says that

> if he gets lost, he looks up at the sky and the trees, he looks all around him. But the traveler could have said to himself, bending down toward the ground: 'I'm going to ask the path, who has been here for such a long time, he'll surely be able to help me'. Now, the path will never show him the way to go. The path does not know the way. (Diop, 2006, p. 167)

In other words, Cornelius should not expect the old man to account for the tragedy. Rather, according to the latter, the young man, and every Rwandan, should travel into their mind, into themselves, and take up their part of responsibility in the catastrophe. "Everyone has to

look for his truth alone. No one will be able to help you" (Diop, 2006, p. 167), he adds. Actually, this is the prerequisite for social reconciliation and cohesion: every Rwandan needs to explain to themselves and to posterity, the hateful joy that has gone with the murderous acts, "to make raucous fun of dying human beings, (…) the crowd's joy, which to [Siméon] seemed much more difficult to bear than the moans of the dying. Each time he thought of it, he felt ashamed of being a Rwandan. (Diop, 2006, 168)

Furthermore, images of the hope of the author and characters are expressed in the voice of Siméon from the distant past, telling Cornelius about the long way to the 1994-tragedy, highlighting, at the same time, common responsibility of their forefathers who made it easy for imperialists to implement policies of division and antagonism. The old man opines that all of them have failed to ensure and see to cohesion and unity; embittered, he acknowledges that "there is only one name for what happened four years ago: defeat. (…)" (Diop, 2006, p. 171). Therefore, his wise and informative words make the young Cornelius have full consciousness of the necessity to rise up to the challenge, and to learn from the

experiences, so as to set to the building of the nation. The narrative voice discloses the effects the old man has on him; “Siméon’s words were very pure. In the autumn of his life he still dared to behave like the solitary traveler. In the end, what he was saying was simply this: all the spilled blood should make people pull themselves together” (Diop, 2006, p. 171).

Such is the conviction of Cornelius, Gerard and the other characters who all are aware that speaking about trauma, facing and accepting the past is a paramount step to rebirth. While Gérard feels the need to speak with the crudest words about what he lived through in the Polyclinic – persuaded that otherwise, “the pain will get lost in opaque words and everything will be forgotten until the next massacre” (Diop, 2006, p. 176) -, Cornelius relishes the idea of narrating again and again the horror. Speaking is not only a therapy for him but is it also his combat against the dreadful silence genocide imposes to both victims and perpetrators. This is how the narrator describes his enthusiasm and hope for a peaceful Rwanda:

> He did not intend to resign himself to the definitive victory of the murdered through

> silence. (…) He would tirelessly recount the horror. With machete words, club words, words studded with nails, naked words and-despite Gérard-words covered with blood and shit. That he could do because he saw in the genocide of Rwandan Tutsis a great lesson in simplicity. Every chronicler could at least learn-something essential to his art – to call a monster by its name. (Diop, 2006, p. 179)

In this way, the dead-living are on the way to resurrection, strong with the enlightening and inspiring words of Siméon, the conviction that acceptation of tragedy, speaking of horror can bring them from trauma to rebirth, the *sine qua none* condition for reconciliation and a perennial peace.

CONCLUSION

Murambi, the Book of Bones is Boubacar Boris Diop's tremendous contribution to the literature on the 1994-Tutsis genocide. The particularity of Diop's text is the polyphonic narrative he uses to listen to actors and victims of the tragedy so as to reveal the motive and impacts of the massacre on individuals and the nation.

The cross analysis of the decentered narration of the trouble moments of the killings, and the multiple perspectives from which events are relayed to the readers are an ingenious technique for the author to affirm that the trouble with Rwanda dates back to the 1950s and that the bloody massacre is the logical outcome of a sustained repression of one part of the population (Tutsis) by another (Hutu).

The occurrence, at strategic moments in the story, of he-voiced narrations, provides the reader with important insights into Rwandan History. The analysis has demonstrated that this has allowed a full awareness of the many stories taken in charge by a selected set of characters. In the end, Diop pens a novel extremely painful to read and digest because of the horrific events described in the narratives, but a novel booming with hope, as words of sympathy, of hope are there to counter those of agony and horror. The string of hope, lost in the puddle of blood and suffering, are what help characters overcome post-traumatic stress disorder, and set on the path of self-reconstruction, emboldened by the truth that after the

darkness the genocide is, there should be light in the life of Rwandans.

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