

**A POSTMODERNIST CRITIQUE OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY'S RESPONSE TO THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA:
HOW THE UN'S RHETORIC CONTRIBUTED TO
HUMANITARIAN FAILURE**

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Abstract

The gruesome savagery displayed during the events in Rwanda astounded the entire world. Even more outrageous is the fact that the international community did not have a strong response to the massacre and allowed millions of lives to be affected by the actions of Akazu. In this essay, I wish to propose that, drawing on the notion that postmodernist international theory's metanarratives can be created inside the framework of international politics, I look at a horrific incident that shocked the public. This study aims to address the issue, "Why was the rhetoric of the United Nations potentially fueling the brutality of the Rwandan genocide?" to demonstrate that the international community's rhetoric played a significant role in these sad events. All of

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them point to the fact that the way we classify and prioritise humanitarian situations can be considerably influenced by a international organisation with accepted authority in the international community. We saw the construction of a "Rwanda Civil War" metanarrative that only showed one side of the conflict before collapsing in the face of the terrible truth of what had actually occurred.

Keywords: Rwandan Genocide, humanitarian intervention, discourse analysis, United Nations, postmodernism.

Introduction

Respect for many sets of rules and values, such as international law, diplomatic procedure, or even historical background in contacts between countries, can be used to define international relations. Since the founding of the United Nations, one of the fundamental tenets of international security has been the respect for human rights; yet there have been instances where this ideal has not been upheld, most notably the genocide in Rwanda. Even though it is now obvious that there was a genocide in Rwanda, the UN Security Council struggled to condemn the slaughter of the Tutsis and to call for a humanitarian intervention throughout the terrible event's history. It is crucial to revisit Rwanda and evaluate the key concerns that dominated world discourse at the time in order to determine whether they are still present in the current quo and how we might shift this paradigm because humanitarian missions are still being discussed in the international arena.

But what is the nature of these international norms imposed by the international community? The norms reflect a set of social customs that are upheld by the global society, but it is crucial to recognise who sets these norms. The answer to these questions is highly dependent on the theoretical angle we take. According to some theorists, these norms are an unchanging universal reality that has existed since the inception of the international society; rather, they are what motivate actors on the global stage to act in a particular way. Those who contend that norms are a social

construction of international reality and that international players not only influence but also are impacted by them are on the opposing side of this argument.

In this paper I want to suggest that, building on the idea that metanarratives can be constructed in the context of international politics, I investigate a shocking incident that shook the public, notably the genocide in Rwanda. A sad incident that caused waves of refugees and more than a million fatalities in this instance, I'll try to describe how the building of global vision is accomplished using a reflectivist method, more especially postmodernism.

The Rwandan Genocide archives, UN resolutions, press reports, and a thorough literature review on both the events in Rwanda and postmodernism in international relations theory served as the foundation for the methodology. Another crucial element was the discourse analysis of the main actors in the conflict, which helped to dissect their perspectives on the tragic reality of Rwandan civilians.

In order to understand how the identities of the two populations implicated in this genocide were constructed and how this inter-ethnic problem was perceived in the framework of international politics, we will analyse the context of the events in Rwanda in my work. The subject of my study will be the international community's response to the main research question: "Why was the United Nations rhetoric potentially contributing to the violence of the Rwandan genocide?" In order to have a post-modernist critique of the UN's inaction, the United Nations Security Council's discourse on the genocide in Rwanda is the major variable that I examine. Other important questions will tackle the democratic case in post-revolutionary Rwanda. ("What democratic results could the United Nations expect from a country with two deeply divided populations?"), the importance of authority in selecting humanitarian cases ("Who defines what the humanitarian problems we really face are?") and The UN's refusal to change their Rwanda resolution ("Why was the resolution not changed following the violent developments in Rwanda?").

A Brief Introduction to Postmodernism as an International Theory

Around the 1980s, post-modernism emerged as a theory of international relations¹, although it didn't really take off until much later. In order to define this theory, we shall approach it from two different angles: knowledge discovery and postmodernism, which holds that we are living in a new historical epoch. We are particularly interested in the section of this study that discusses new forms of knowledge since they are relevant to this reflexive approach's attempt to comprehend how international reality is constructed. In order to describe postmodernism in the context of international relations, we can think of postmodernism as the dismissal of metanarratives in this field.

The concept of metanarratives is an extremely important one in the postmodernist approach because it represents extremely well the idea of constructing international reality. Postmodernism criticises theories that see international reality as a static entity or as a set of "natural" laws governing how international relations should work, like other reflectivist theories do as well. Theorists of this method are sceptical of the "truth" that is purported by these narratives and work to understand much more completely how international narratives are constructed through discourse. Jean-François Lyotard, a renowned writer who popularised this strategy, defined postmodernist philosophy as a "distrust of metanarratives."² Thus, in order to comprehend the nature and construction of metanarratives, Lyotard and other postmodernist authors attempted to dismantle them through their works.

Postmodernism starts a deconstruction process to examine how truth has changed through time and how it came to take the form it has today in order to comprehend how metanarratives are constructed. In

¹ Roland Bleiker, "Postmodernism" in Richard Devetak, Jim George and Sarah Percy (eds.), *An Introduction to International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 189-212.

² Jean-Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1979, p. 14.

order to achieve this, postmodern theorists emphasise the analysis of discourses. However, in this context, discourses should not only be defined as the discursive act but also as socially constructed epistemes, and postmodernist analysis seeks to understand the underlying assumptions of the discourse. To achieve this process, the French writer Jacques Derrida proposes two concepts: deconstruction and double-reading³. Deconstruction is the process of proving that certain ideas that appear to be natural are actually man-made structures of society that are organised hierarchically to impose an order that benefits a particular segment of the population. Double-reading is a reading of both reality and the parts that make it up. In particular, in the first reading, it is important to comprehend the coherence of the artificial ideas that form the narrative, and in the second reading, it is important to comprehend the tensions created by the artificial component of this construction and how they undermine the idea that reality is constructed.

Another essential aspect of the postmodernist approach is the constitutive relationship between power and knowledge. Postmodernists primarily criticise rational theories in this context for making the false premise that knowledge is unique and unaffected by external factors. What postmodernism tries to demonstrate is that power and knowledge are interdependent variables because historical truth is imposed by those in power, and thus truth takes on a different value depending on who the actor in power is. Michel Foucault's theories⁴ had a big impact on how they approached the subject of power and knowledge. According to his view, power and truth are ideas that work in tandem and are not ideals that exist outside of society. Through his writings, Foucault tried to show that certain epistemes evolved over time in order to show that truth does not belong to history and that in many of these metanarratives, truth has its own history.

³ Maja Zehfuss, "Jacques Derrida" in Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (eds.), *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, Oxford: Routledge, 2009, pp. 137-149.

⁴ Andrew W. Neal, "Michel Foucault" in Jenny Edkins and Nick Vaughan-Williams (eds.), *Critical Theorists and International Relations*, Oxford: Routledge, 2009, pp. 161-170.

Richard K. Ashley has used Derrida's theory of deconstruction and Foucault's⁵ studies of the power-knowledge relationship to the field of international relations. Ashley used deconstruction to show the metanarrative's attempt to support the idea of sovereignty in its relationship with anarchy. In the analysis, he showed how sovereignty must be placed at the centre of the functioning of the state for it to be effective, but he also emphasised the tension between this idea and the existence of an anarchic system in the international community that does not negatively affect the smooth running of international interactions. Also, starting with Foucault's ideas, he spoke about the construction of power in the context of international relations, a construction that was not based on a truth but actually on a regime of truth.

Therefore, despite postmodernism's relatively recent addition to theories of international relations, it has significantly increased our understanding of how people interact on a global scale and provided a critical examination of how we justify particular behaviours. There are a number of objections to this theory, according to which postmodernism only criticises the existence of a few international features. However, this theory is still relatively new and has the potential to develop a new perspective on international relations by correcting the discursive elements criticised.

Rwandan Genocide: Historic Contextualization

The gruesome savagery displayed during the events in Rwanda astounded the entire world. The primary reasons for these acts of genocide are the subject of very extensive discussion. Identity issues and conflict between Hutus and Tutsis were the most obvious responses. However, it is crucial to consider how the ethnicity of the two groups participating in the violence was produced rather than just blaming their identities while

⁵ Richard Devetak, "Postmodernism" in Scott Burchill *et al.*, *Theories of International Relations*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp. 170-172.

studying this element of the Rwandan genocide. And in order to accomplish this, we must consider a number of elements that served as the foundation for the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi identity.

To begin with, a quick explanation of the parties involved is necessary so that we can identify Hutu and Tutsi. Specifically, the two groups do not represent two different ethnicities⁶, despite being extremely similar genetically, culturally, and especially linguistically because they spoke the same language. The two parts have different names, but these names do not represent ethnic divisions; rather, they represent status differences that predated colonisation. According to etymology, Hutu means "peasant" and Tutsi means "noble." Prior to colonial rule, this distinction existed and signified the relationship between the Hutu workers who served the Tutsi, who made up the majority population, and the Tutsi, who controlled the land.

In 1884, as colonisation got underway, Germany invaded what is now Rwanda and incorporated it into German East Africa (composed of Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanzania). These two groups underwent the polarising experience of being divided by the Germans in terms of race and the rights they had in accordance with their racial affiliation, in addition to losing their independence and joining the realm of colonialism. The racial ideas of the era, which were supported by Germans and other Europeans and claimed that certain races are superior due to skin pigment or skull shape, represent another crucial contextualization. Small distinctions between the two groups—like the Tutsi members' lighter skin tone—were used to categorise them, and as a result, they were given separate rights and status under German occupation.

The League of Nations-mandated Belgium gained control of this province after Germany was defeated in World War I. Tutsis and Hutus made up the majority of the population in Rwanda-Burundi, which was

⁶ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda*, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002, pp. 41-75.

governed by Belgium. Belgium institutionalised ethnicity in Rwanda⁷ in addition to continuing to use racial discourse to establish racial disparities between the two populations. Different identity cards for Hutu and Tutsi were established by Belgium based on quasi-research into factors including skin tone, skull size, and height. The Tutsi were still subject to a distinct judicial system than the other side, which benefitted them. Due to Hutu exploitation in the labour force and Tutsi propensity for services, segregation between Tutsi and Hutus under Belgian authority was strongly influenced. Until the UN significantly intervened in Rwanda at the end of World War II and ordered Belgium to start preparing Rwanda for independence, this situation persisted.

The United Nations required Belgium to respect democratic norms during this era of independence preparation in order to create a representative state in the best interests of the people. Because of this, majority rule was implemented, which resulted in the transfer of power to the Hutu group, which represented the majority in a detached way. Additionally, Belgium turned its focus to the Hutus during this time, allowing us to see their emancipation through the equalisation of rights. They desired a democratic state for the future, but what results could they expect from a country with two deeply divided populations?

A revolution began in 1959⁸ precisely as a result of these disagreements between the two populations. The Hutu initiated the revolution to overthrow the Tutsi-led monarchy and install a republic that was unmistakably governed by the Hutu majority. The death of Hutu political leaders by Tutsi extremists served as the catalyst for this revolution, and after a string of violent events, members of the Hutu community finally gained control. However, the violent episodes continued with a counter-offensive attempted by the former King Mwami and the Tutsi political leaders.

⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 88-102

⁸ Gerald Caplan, "Rwanda: Walking the Road to Genocide" in Allan Thompson (ed.), *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*, London: Pluto Press, 2007, pp. 20-23.

With a military intervention, Belgium put an end to this conflict and bring stability back to Rwanda. They later organised a referendum and the first elections to choose Rwanda's leaders in order to decide the destiny of the state. The vote was overwhelmingly on the side of the Hutus, who voted for Rwandan independence and the establishment of a republic as a form of government. In response to this choice, over 300,000 Tutsis fled Rwanda and sought safety in Burundi and Uganda, where they planned to launch a new round of attacks.

Paul Kagame, a member of the Tutsi group who desired to return to Rwanda and expand the accessibility of Tutsis in political representation, founded the RPF⁹, or "Rwandese Patriotic Front," in Uganda. The attacks in 1991 were the RPF's first major victory because they applied the necessary pressure on the government to begin peace talks with Rwanda's Hutu leadership. Due to radically divergent viewpoints, no consensus could be achieved throughout the negotiations, which led to their failure. Following the collapse of the peace talks, Kagame once more assaulted Rwanda, this time approaching perilously close to Kigali, the country's capital. However, under pressure from the international world as well, he decided to halt the attack in order to restart peace talks. As a result, the Arusha pact was struck, which would have given the RPF the equal representation it sought. Additionally, the UN dispatched a peacekeeping mission known as "UNAMIR"¹⁰ under the command of General Romeo Dallaire in order to maintain peace during the negotiations for this accord.

⁹ Filip Reyntjens, "Rwanda: Genocide and Beyond" in *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1996, pp. 245-248, accessed on 19.10.2022.

¹⁰ "Rwanda – UNAMIR Mandate", *United Nations Peacekeeping*, Completed Peacekeeping Operations, <<https://peacekeeping.un.org/sites/default/files/past/unamir.htm>>, accessed on 1.11.2022.

The coming genocide in Rwanda was fuelled by all of these incidents. It is crucial to take into account the Interahamwe and the "Free Radio and Television of a Thousand Hills"¹¹ as actors in order to comprehend the logic behind the genocide in Rwanda. The Interahamwe was a Hutu paramilitary group, and this radio station broadcast extremist messages to the Tutsi community in Rwanda. What characteristics unite these actors? Both were coordinated by Akazu, the hard-line Hutu political organisation that was run at the time by Agathe Habyarimana, the wife of the president. The eradication of the Tutsi community as a whole was Akazu's aim.

The Interahamwe had already started plotting the genocide¹², but it was President Habyarimana's murder—the identity of the killer is still unknown—that really set off the unspeakable violence. For the next 100 days, Tutsis were massacred in a systematic manner. The international community's response was incredibly feeble; they removed their own countrymen and UN personnel while the streets of Rwanda were littered with the bodies of Tutsis or moderate Hutus. The RPF took control of Kigali in the midst of the genocide's mayhem, putting an end to it for good. Parallel to this, a French mission intervened to help Rwanda get back on track by establishing a protective line that spared roughly 17,000 Tutsis but allowed many Hutus who had participated in the genocide to flee the country and seek safety in the Congo.

In addition to bringing peace back to Rwanda, Paul Kagame ideologized his victory over evil by downplaying his own war crimes. Former Akazu members sought sanctuary in the Congo together with millions of other Hutus, where they planned an assault against the new ruler that would serve as the starting point of the "Congo Wars." The UN, and implicitly the rest of the world, failed miserably to halt the genocide,

¹¹ "Transcripts from the UN International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda archives", *Genocide Archive of Rwanda*, Reports, <https://genocidearchiverwanda.org.rw/index.php/Radio_T%C3%A9l%C3%A9vision_Libre_des_Mille_Collines>, accessed on 3.11.2022.

¹² Caplan, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-40

and Romeo Dallaire, one of the UN officials in Rwanda, has argued that the lack of precise information about the murder in Rwanda excused the lack of intervention.¹³

The United Nations Rethoric Towards Rwandan Genocide

It is crucial to first explain why a terrible incident in an African nation might be seen as a major moment for the international community. In particular, the UN's and implicitly the international community's inability to defend human rights and freedoms was responsible for the genocide in Rwanda. The world community responded casually and failed to recognise the humanitarian crisis as members of the Tutsi community were massacred repeatedly for 100 days. To better understand why the international community's metanarrative to preserve human rights was disregarded, we shall analyse the main mistakes made in this tragic event in this section from a critical postmodernist perspective.

The investigation of metanarratives and their deconstruction in order to comprehend how they were constructed is a crucial part of postmodernist analysis. We are currently discussing genocide in Rwanda, but during the course of this macabre episode in Rwandan history, the UN treated the situation strictly as an internal problem within the state, describing it as a civil war based on inter-ethnic conflict. In light of the observation of non-intervention and the non-recognition of humanitarian crimes, the international community was able to defend its little engagement in the conflict's resolution once this metanarrative had gained acceptance. We can use Jacques Derrida's theory of double reading¹⁴ to grasp this construction.

¹³ Romeo Dallaire, *"Shake Hands with the Devil: the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda"*, New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers, 2005, pp. 328-373.

¹⁴ Zehfuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 137-149.

According to Derrida's theory, in the first reading, one must read the metanarrative in order to understand the coherence of the constructs that compose it. The Rwandan conflict was referred to by the UN as a "civil war" between the government of Habyarimana and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. Hutu and Tutsi were also believed to be at odds during this time. The United Nations had no right to interfere in Rwanda's internal affairs because it was a civil war; instead, their involvement was justifiable on the basis of maintaining international security and peace. This speech helped us to understand why the international community must uphold the principle of non-intervention and why a far harsher stance was not taken in response to the conflict's escalation. However, when this story is read a second time, several significant conflicts relating to how the UN has viewed the situation in Rwanda come to light.

The justification of non-intervention based on respect for sovereignty is as legal and legitimate as possible, but equally important for international security are human rights. We must specifically inquire as to why the UN has not acknowledged the Interahamwe's systemic violence for this reason. Obviously, we could assume that there was no certainty at that time regarding their involvement in the genocide, but here the attempt to involve the commander of the UNAMIR mission, Romeo Dallaire¹⁵, who submitted a report on the genocidal actions¹⁶ and the pressures of other actors, comes into contradiction. The UN declined Dallaire's request, claiming that it lacked the authority to take any further action in that situation, although having the opportunity to put into effect a new resolution that would have extended its authority by imposing peace. We can deduce from this initial version of the "Rwanda civil war" story that the UN was complacent in accepting the idea that the events were internal and did not take more aggressive action to stop human rights violations. So,

¹⁵ Dallaire, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-97,

¹⁶ Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers Humanitarian Intervention in International Society*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002, pp. 208-218.

rather than being forced to act to defend people, the international community approved a situation that justified its lack of involvement. The reason for this choice is still unknown, but we can assume that it has something to do with a lack of interest in the Rwandan situation and, more specifically, a concern for the potential dangers of a botched humanitarian effort, like the one in Somalia that resulted in the deaths of American soldiers¹⁷.

Another tension that appears at the level of this narrative is the problem of the approach to ethnicity. The ethnic component was frequently cited as the primary cause of the conflict in discussions of the violence in Rwanda in the international community. Including the international media, which was instrumental in portraying¹⁸ the massacres as the outcome of racial tensions. Which is correct, but we also need to consider how this idea has changed through time when analysing the ethnicity-related variable. Once more, it is crucial to identify the epistemes present in particular discourses when using the postmodernist method. And in the context of the Tutsi and Hutu populations, we must keep in mind that the colonial era served as another cause to exacerbate the interethnic strife between these two groups. Different privileges were granted based on racial criteria during the Belgian and German colonial periods, which really solidified the ethnicity of the two groups in Rwanda. Paradoxically, Akazu assembled the genocide lists using the identity cards left over from Belgium that had previously been used to separate Tutsis from Hutus. The Interahamwe organised the genocide, but colonial history also supported the way they cultivated an extremist view of the Rwandan Tutsis.

We can examine the interaction between power and knowledge as we continue the postmodernist critique of the response of the international community to the horrific events in Rwanda. At the beginning of the 1990s,

¹⁷ Walter Clarke and Jeffrey Herbst, "Somalia and the Future of Humanitarian Intervention" in *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 75, no. 2, 1996, pp. 70-85.

¹⁸ Anne Chaon, "Who Failed in Rwanda, Journalist or the Media?" in Allan Thompson (ed), „*The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*“, London: Pluto Press, 2007, pp. 160-167.

it was assumed that we live in a world of globalism where we are increasingly connected and that information itself is no longer limited by national barriers. Thanks to greater American influence after the Cold War's bipolar narrative was abandoned, the UN has reinforced its position as a defender of human rights. A meta-narrative has emerged in the realm of international relations that assumes to protect civilians suffering abuse through humanitarian interventions, but an essential question is: Who defines what the humanitarian problems we really face are? The requirement for an authority to define the issues and wrongdoings that are acceptable from the standpoint of the international community demonstrates the significance of the relationship between the notions of power and knowledge. In our context, the United Nations Organization is that institution, whose Security Council considers the resolutions outlining the humanitarian issues that pose a threat to peace in international relations. Because of this, the UN's choice to interpret the situation in Rwanda had a significant impact on how the world community responded to the genocide.

The UNAMIR mission is the first factor that characterises the UN approach. The Akazu members were able to carry out their genocidal strategy due to the United Nations' standing because this mission was always one of peacekeeping¹⁹. Peacekeeping missions have a limited mandate by deploying neutral forces based on agreement between the belligerents, who attempt to facilitate order while the parties involved seek a solution to resolve the dispute. We question why this mission did not change in the wake of the horrific events in Rwanda, even though it was initially justified given the circumstances during the negotiations between Kagame and President Habyarimana. We go back to the scene where Romeo Dallaire alerts the Council to a potential genocide but the UN remains steadfast in its stance. Therefore, in Foucault's ideas, knowledge existed but had no impact due to a lack of power. The worldwide

¹⁹ Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-230.

judgement that the situation in Rwanda is not grave enough to warrant humanitarian assistance has been validated by the UN's continued maintenance of a peacekeeping operation. As the UN represents the viewpoint of the world community, the way it described the events in Rwanda influenced the perception that the mass executions in Rwanda had among the international community.

In reality, the ruling establishment in Rwanda orchestrated a genocide that claimed about a million lives, but the international community simply saw it as a civil war. Furthermore, despite the fact that the genocide in Rwanda was still ongoing and becoming increasingly obvious as a result of the information provided by organisations like "Doctors without Borders"²⁰ and "Human Rights Watch,"²¹ the UN continued to dispel false narratives because it did not want to lose credibility by doing nothing and classified the violence as the result (only New Zealand and the Czech Republic proposed to categorise these events as genocide within the Security Council). I was able to see a lack of accountability on the side of the UN and the international community through this action. As a result, it is clear how the UN greatly influenced how the international community perceived the development of the events in Rwanda by distorting the truth and failing to uphold its responsibility as a defender of human rights.

Today, we can say with certainty that there was a genocide, but this knowledge is only possible because other actors were also involved in the Rwandan tragedy and revealed its genuine circumstances. Even the foreign media at the time was unable to depict the mass executions and those responsible in a straightforward manner. Understanding the reality that the

²⁰ "Remembering the Rwandan genocide 25 years on", *Doctors Without Borders, News & Stories*, 12 April 2019, <<https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/latest/remembering-rwandan-genocide-25-years>>, accessed on 4.11.2022.

²¹ "The Rwandan Genocide: How It Was Prepared", *Human Rights Watch, A Human Rights Watch Briefing Paper*, 2006, <<https://www.hrw.org/legacy/background/africa/rwanda0406/rwanda0406.pdf>>, accessed on 4.11.2022.

civilians were experiencing was substantially influenced by the way the UN treated the genocide from its position as the most potent decision-making factor in international affairs. And if postmodernism speaks of the use of metanarratives as a form of favouring one group over another, in this context it is clear to us who the disadvantaged group was. What is the payoff after nearly a million people have died and millions more have suffered as a result of a distorted narrative in the international community? Perhaps this is a very significant criticism of how the UN is often unable to address humanitarian issues²², but this component could only be categorised as a gain in the event of a change that has not yet materialised. Even though the UN made several attempts at humanitarian interventions, there was always a problem in choosing the nations or contexts to advance human rights. As a result, we can still see how the relationship between power and knowledge is still an important consideration when deciding on a humanitarian act. In both the intervention in Libya²³ and the non-intervention in Syria, the metanarratives persisted, and they will continue to do so. However, in order to create a better metanarrative for the global community, it is crucial to understand them, to deconstruct them in the style of Jacques Derrida, and to understand the relationship between power and knowledge of Michel Foucault.

Conclusions

I could see how crucial race is to coexisting in a culture. Many have cited the situation of Rwanda as a prime example of how racism can result in mass murder. But it's crucial that we consider the growth of ethnic factors over time as well as this complexity of inter-ethnic animosity while analysing them. We were able to see how the colonial era, which even

²² Ana Pantea, "The Moral Dimension of Humanitarian Intervention. The Dialect of Justification", in *Studia Europaea*, vol. 58, no. 1, 2013, pp. 49-62.

²³ Laura-Maria Herța, "Jus in Bello and the Solidarist Case for Humanitarian Intervention. From Theory to Practice", in *Studia Europaea*, vol. 58, no. 1, 2013, pp. 5-48.

institutionalised ethnicity in Rwanda, contributed to the emergence of the Hutu-Tusi conflict through this postmodernist study of the concept of ethnicity.

In addition to the horrors committed inside the African nation of Rwanda, the genocide there horrified the entire world with its brutality. However, we also saw the failure of the international community to uphold its commitment to human rights. The Interahamwe were committing genocide, and the UN might have intervened to stop them, but instead it decided to restrict its intervention mission and stay out of it. Furthermore, based on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, it saw the unrest in Rwanda as the outcome of a civil conflict and justified the community's inaction. All of this was accomplished by creating a favourable narrative that disguised the reality that the Rwandan civilians who were killed experienced.

We were able to show, in conclusion, how an international organisation with acknowledged authority at the community level can significantly affect how we categorise and prioritise humanitarian situations. We witnessed the creation of a meta-narrative of the "Rwanda Civil-War" that only depicted one side of the violence but eventually crumbled in the face of the awful reality of what had happened. Thus, postmodernism applied in the context of international relations can help to understand the discourse of extremely powerful actors in the sphere of international relations and how they use their influence to shape regimes of truth that sometimes favour their interests to the detriment of other groups or communities.

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