

Shake Hands with the Devil

- Dallaire didn't begin writing the book until 7 years after his return
- Writing took several years
- 1993 Shaughnessy Cohen Award for Political Writing
- 2004 Governor General's Award for Non-fiction
- 2004 documentary film, *Shake Hands with the Devil* dir. Peter Raymont
- Feature film slated for 2006

Forward

- Forward functions as epitaph; text as elegy

Preface

- Gives motivations for writing
- Accepts accountability
- Contextualization of events in moral terms
- Speaks of “evil” and “the devil”
- Rather unfashionable to use the word, ‘evil’

- Preface also provides outcome – we know from the beginning what happened
- We read to find out ‘why’, ‘how’

Introduction

- Begins *in media res*, on May 1994, almost one year after arriving in Rwanda
- *in media res* – Latin, for in the middle of things
- Contrast between beauty of landscape and horror of human brutality
- nature = pure; humanity = depraved
- Failure to protect 3 year old orphaned Rwandan child becomes emblematic of “all our failures in Rwanda” (4).
- Confessional tone: “how ineffective and irresponsible we were when we promised the Rwandans that we would establish an atmosphere of security that would allow them to achieve a lasting peace” (4) .

- Moves into present – 9 years later (2003):
“I could not forget even if I wanted to. For many of these years, I have yearned to return to Rwanda and disappear into the blue-green hills with my ghosts. A simple pilgrim seeking forgiveness and pardon” (5).

- Pilgrim: someone who makes a journey to a sacred place – may seek forgiveness, appeal for healing, do penance, act of devotion, to give thanks, or to re-enact a religious event
- Medieval period, Christian pilgrimages were very common; roads and hostels were built to handle the large numbers of people journeying to sacred sites such as Canterbury, Santiago de Compostela. 7th of July was the date of annual pilgrimage; contemporary time – Muslims journey to Mecca
- Pilgrims, unlike heroes, may be foolish, confused, uncertain of their identity; less concerned with ideal behaviour
- Take no weapons and expect no earthly reward
- Objective is not accomplishment, but rather to move out of linear time into cyclical time into some sacred space

- Dallaire tells us, “the time has come for me to make a more difficult pilgrimage: to travel back through all those terrible memories and retrieve my soul” (5).
- His encounter with evil changed him; drained him
- Book becomes a literary pilgrimage in which Dallaire can perhaps find healing, forgiveness
- Desire to lift himself up and out of the depravity that he witnessed
- Desire to make sense of horrific conditions

Introduction, cont.

- Ostensibly, book is about events in Rwanda
- But also about one man's personal journeys – the first, when he encounters the ‘evil’ present in Rwanda; the second, when he relives it in his mind in writing his account

Introduction, cont.

- Dallaire blames nations with representatives on Security Council of UN (U.S., France, U.K.)
- Critiques attempts to make a scapegoat of Colonel Luc Marchal
- “how we all helped create the mess” (5)
- Also himself: “A public account of my actions, my decisions and my failings” (6)
- Red tape, penny pinching, political maneuvering, racism, inept UN mandate, and “fundamental indifference of the world community to the plight of seven to eight million black Africans in a tiny country that had no strategic or resource value to any world power”(6).
- Yet – look at pages 6-7; further motivations

Introduction, cont.

- More than military or academic study which would look objectively at cause-and-effect
- Not simply about apportioning blame
- Instead, it is a *cri de coeur*
- Failure to adapt to new paradigm
- Story of loss and horror; story so traumatic that he still does not identify himself as “I”; instead, he refers to himself as “a commander”
- Encounter with the devil

Trauma Narratives (recap)

- In face of a traumatic event, survivor can't assimilate event; either buries the event or represses it
- At the same time, the survivor has a desire to reveal the trauma
- Survivors alternate between "feeling numb and reliving the event", trauma narratives show both "truth-telling and secrecy" (Herman)
- In order to heal, need to fully integrate the event
- Happens when the event is recounted and heard
- story must include smells, sounds, sights of the traumatic event

- Survivor requires assurance of safety
- Also require a witness; someone must be present to acknowledge that the trauma occurred
- Survivor often fears that they won't be believed
- survivors ask 'why me?' and 'why?'
- survivors question identity, relationships, belief systems, faith in an orderly universe.
- Problem is to find a place in history and in memory for to the traumatic event
- May transform their experiences and offer testimonial as "a gift to others" (Herman)
- Trauma is then no longer meaningless

- In first few pages of *Shake Hands with the Devil*, see markers of a trauma narrative
- Admits he couldn't write the book for 7 years
- In Preface and Introduction, Dallaire returns repeatedly to the same topics of genocide, guilt, blame and then sidesteps them – see 'truth telling and secrecy'
- Wants to include "sounds, smells, depredations, the scenes of inhuman acts" (xi), the recollection of which are part of a fully integration of the trauma
- Wants his account to be useful to others
- Desire for pilgrimage acknowledges his need for healing

Chapter 1

- Begins with his childhood
- Odd place to begin novel about genocide in Rwanda
- Adds support to contention that this book is also about Dallaire's personal journey
- Beginning the novel with his own birth provides an opportunity for him to integrate the trauma into his personal history as well as world history

- We learn about his value system:
- “saw in my parents a courage that led them to look beyond their own self-interest, to offer their own lives to defeat an evil that threatened the peace and security of much of the world. It was a model of self-sacrifice that I tried to follow, playing with my soldiers on the rug” (12).
- For him, the military offers sense of connection, “emotional attachment” (16)
- Criticism he experience “for being an ‘emotional’ leader, for not being macho enough...” (26).
- Learn of his model of command: “openness, in being both sympathetic to the troops and at the same time being apart, in always projecting supreme confidence in my own ability and in theirs...” (26).

- Such a declaration allows Dallaire to establish his strengths/weaknesses
- explains his later decisions as couched in early value system
- Provides framework for reader’s later evaluation of Dallaire’s decisions and reactions

- Chapters 2-9 relate events, largely without analysis or emotional content
- We are party to Dallaire's experiences, optimism that the objectives of the Arusha peace accord can be achieved
- We see his confusion as he tries to understand the power dynamics of both the UN and Rwandan political parties
- Assumption that all parties to the accord are committed to peace

- Chap. 2 - his path through the early adulthood – family and military
- Chap. 3 – tensions
 - Ideals of UN vs. realities
 - abstractions vs. practicalities of military command
 - Family vs. career (53)
- Chap. 4 – lands in Rwanda
 - Experience of refugee camp galvanizes him (64)
 - Foreshadowing of genocide and political manipulations (79)

Chap. 6 – beginning of confusion:

- “Coming in one morning, I was hit with a strong sense of déjà vu: the whole affair looked exactly like the command – post war-games that we’d undertaken back home before exercises, except here there was no clearly defined enemy and I wasn’t so sure about the friendlies, either” (100).
- Rumours of “mysterious third force” (121) set on sabotaging peace process

- Chap. 7 – informer, “Jean-Pierre”,
 - plan to sabotage the peace accord: provoke Belgian troops to open fire; kill Belgians and remaining forces will be recalled
 - Open way for Tutsi extermination

- Chap. 8 – Belgian soldiers disobey orders and behave in unseemly ways,
 - assassination of Félicien Gatabazi, head of one of the political parties
 - Rioting

Chap. 9 – “Easter without a Resurrection of Hope”

- references the Christian belief system;
- Easter commemorates the crucifixion of Christ and his subsequent resurrection from the dead
- leads us to anticipate gruesome death without relief
- troops are being mustered on both sides threatening the truce

Chap. 10 – President Habyarimana’s plane is shot down

- Bagosora decides the military should take control of country, rather than the Interim government led by Madame Agathe
- UN insists that UNAMIR cannot fire unless fired upon; instructed to avoid conflict
- leaves Dallaire’s forces unable to protect Tutsis and moderate Hutus from genocide
- calls for help to UNAMIR from Rwandans begin: (231)

Chap. 11 - -feeling “truly hopeless and trapped, a feeling I determinedly shunted to one side...” (274).
-First scene of genocide in the Polish Mission: (279)
- destruction of identity cards (281)
- French and Belgian para-commandos, U.S. Marines available nearby, but not made available
- Questioning of belief system (289)
- Belgians abandon 2000 Rwandans
- The swift evacuation of the foreign nationals was the signal for the *génocidaires* to move toward the apocalypse. That night I didn’t sleep at all for guilt” (291).

- Dallaire gets ambiguous directions: (291)
- refuses to leave
- Tours King Faisal Hospital; emotion a luxury: “I wanted to scream, to vomit, to hit something, to break free of my body, to end this terrible scene. Instead I struggled to compose myself, knowing composure was critical with so many despairing eyes upon me. I thanked the medical teams for their efforts and promised them all supplies as soon as I could get them” (303).

- Chap. 12 – uses media to “spark the conscience of the world” (332).
 - Learns of assassination plan for himself
 - Meets with leaders of Interahamwe (335)
 - Arranges to transfer civilians RPF and RGF
 - Transfer from Hotel Mille Collines aborted

 - Film *Hotel Rwanda* – dramatization of events at Mille Collines during the genocide

- Paul Rusesabagina, the hotel manager, sheltered over 1000 people in the Hotel for over 2 months
- Contacted foreigners by FAX and telephone
- Bribed Hutu officials
- No deaths in the Hotel
- Shows situation from one Rwandan perspective
- However, movie portrays Force Commander of UNAMIR as a Southern American (Nick Nolte)
- Clearly makes Americans seem more involved than they were and caters to American movie going public
- Recommended as background on the genocide and Rusesabagina’s story, but don’t mistake it for an authentic account of Dallaire’s experience

Chap. 13 – UN gives Dallaire authority to stop the killing
Chap. 14 – French troops enact chapter-seven force,
but from outside UNAMIR

Chap. 15 – “We were simply putting off our feelings until
later” (462).
– Dallaire’s nightmares (467)
– “Clinton’s fibbing” (472)
– Dallaire begins to question Kagame’s motives (476)
– Still no troops (478)
– Recognizes signs of his own stress (488)

Conclusion

- “accountability, not blame” (513); prevention of future genocides
- Short and long term effects
- Responsibility
- Prevention
- Rationale for future intervention
- Warning

Short and Long Term Effects

- 800,000 dead in first genocide, of which 300,000 are children
- Children become killers
- Children orphaned
- Young girls raped
- Boy soldiers with no future but refugee camps
- Rape victims with HIV/Aids and early childbirth shunned by communities
- 3.7×10^6 refugees and displaced persons
- Families and culture decimated
- Destabilization of region
- Second wave of genocide in 2003 – 4×10^6 deaths in Congo and Great Lakes region

Responsibility

- perpetrators of genocide
- Paul Kagame for delaying response and sacrificing Tutsis for long term control of area
- UN – corrupt and decadent
- 5 permanent members of Security Council, especially U.S. and France
- Media – short attention span and failure to tell the story
- NGOs – reacting too slowly and inefficiently
- Peacekeepers – failure of resolve
- Dallaire – failure to convince international community
- Humanity's failure to move beyond self-interest

Prevention

- “toxic ethnic extremism” (513)
- Hasten effective military and civilian police force at outset of signing of truce
- Making intelligence available to UNAMIR
- Providing UNAMIR with diplomatic and political muscle to ensure peace
- Administrative and logistical support
- More troops
- Commitment from international community
- Larger budget
- Training in conflict resolution
- cold war ≠ civil war + genocide

Rationale for Future Intervention

- Previous situations – UN forces applied only if favoured by international public opinion
- Leads to moral relativism where 'good' and 'evil' are seen as old-fashioned terms
- We don't engage unless we think it worth risking our soldier's lives:
- "riskless warfare in pursuit of human rights is a moral contradiction. The concept of human rights assumes that all human life is of equal value. Risk-free warfare presumes that our lives matter more than those we are intervening to save" (Michael Ignatieff in Dallaire, 517).
- Revise UN
- Develop "international pool of multidisciplinary, multi-skilled and humanist senior leaders...." (516) capable of handling troops in conflict situations

Warning

- Cost of self-interest is high
- Economic terms – cost of troops vs. cost of economically and politically destabilized country for years after conflict

- First World/Third World inequities:
- World's population:
 - 57% in Asia
 - 21% in Europe ↑
 - 14% in North and South America
 - 8% in Africa ↓

- 50% of world's wealth in hands of 6 Americans
- 70% illiterate
- 50% malnourished
- 35% lack adequate water
- 80% have substandard housing
- 1% has a university education
- Poverty and despair lead to desperation and rage

Style

- Conventional, linear narrative
 - with the exception of the Introduction, events told in chronological order
 - Action peaks mid-way in chapters 10 and 11, as per traditional narrative
 - Clear beginning, middle and end
 - single narrator, one perspective

Style, cont.

- attempt to provide factual and objective account
- Given specific dates, places, names
- Footnotes, glossary and index provided along with list of additional reading
- Possible to check and verify Dallaire's account
- Story telling takes back seat to desire to provide all the details

Style, cont.

- Dispassionate account –
 - Colloquialisms are few and stand out:
“Maurice’s overextended desk officers particularly admired the way he stickhandled around the clumsy bureaucratic UN procedures ...” (50 underlining mine).
 - Language is formal, rather than personal (eg. No contractions)
 - Book is a personal account, but told from the perspective of a professional where facts are more important than subjective experiences

- Very little obscenity:
“A media crew joined us as we went, though I didn’t realize it at the time. The newscast the next day showed Joe and me standing on the old Belgian trenches, binoculars in hand, as I pointed father afield. I am saying, in the most collegial of fashions, ‘If you don’t dig in here and place a heavy machine gun under cover there, the f-----s are going to be right on top of you before you can even fart’ “ (345).

- Relates events of deprivation and horror with little emotional language:
“Over the course of the mission, we rescued ten thousand people in this fashion, never knowing whether we would be fired upon” (405).
- Occasional references to hunger, thirst, fear
“...I had not tasted fresh bread for nearly two months” (400)
- As commander, Dallaire can't afford the luxury of being emotional when he must make “life-and- death decisions” (365)

- Recall that the response to trauma is often to bury events:
“I could not absorb the carnage” (361); “We were simply putting off our feelings until later” (462)
- Accounts of trauma tend to shift from telling to eliding, so his occasional expression of emotion may be result of inability to experience the events fully
- Failure to report full emotional context may have the effect of minimizing trauma for reader or witness
- May appear that the survivor is indifferent to the trauma, when in fact they are overwhelmed by it

Format

- Book-length account
- Available as film documentary

Audience

- Humanity – everyone is culpable
- The United Nations -
- The United States, France and the United Kingdom
- Belgium
- Rwandan extremists
- Rwanda dead
- Dallaire's family
- Military personnel who may experience similar situation
- Personal narrative to face the trauma of the genocide with the safety of time and geography

Dispatches vs. Shake Hands with the Devil

Dispatches

- Lack of linear narrative
- Informal account
- Emotional
- Blends fiction and non-fiction
- Anecdotal, contributions from multiple sources
- References pop culture

Shake Hands with the Devil

- Linear narrative
- Formal account
- Dispassionate
- Accurate, documented with secondary sources
- Only Dallaire's perspective
- References previous cataclysms (e.g. Hiroshima)

- Profanity as means of subverting official account
- "I was there to watch"
- No clear objective
- Anxiety about response to fear (bloody nose)

- Almost no profanity
- "I remain fully responsible and accountable..." (xiv)
- Clear objective, but prevented from accomplishing it
- Appears to stand firm in face of fear that shakes others (381)

- Critique of heroic myth as perpetuated in pop culture;
- Underlying critique of imperialism
- Subverts notions of masculinity defined as aggression
- Offers model of leadership rather than heroism
- Explicit critique of human indifference
- humanity linked to honor, morality, integrity, care for others, ability to express emotion

Criticism

- Lack of brevity – details are sometimes tedious
- Minimal emotional content can undermine the extent of the horror for the reader
- Eg. Compare to *Hotel Rwanda* in terms of eliciting emotional response
- White, outsider perspective, but little from Rwandan perspective

Summary

- Style
 - Conventional narrative
 - Factual account with effort to minimize emotion
 - Elements of trauma narrative – revelation and ellision

- Format – book and documentary film
- Memoir, confession, justification, trauma narrative

- Audience

Content

- The genocide could have been avoided
- Without change, it will happen again
- Everyone is responsible
- “Are all humans human, or are some humans more human than others?”
- *Peuce ce que veux. Allons-y.* (If you want it, you can do it. Let's go).