IRP Notes Package: “Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda”

**First 30-50 Pages:**

1. The title of the novel *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*, is not only long but also seems self-explanatory. The second half of the title that states “the Failure of Humanity in Rwanda” is clearly an allusion to the apathy of the western world towards the genocide in Rwanda. However, it could also be referencing the failure of humanity within Rwanda itself. There is not much place for humanity in mass killings with the intent to wipe out a race.

The first half of the title, “Shake Hands with the Devil,” leaves more to the imagination. The most prevalent thought in my mind when I initially read the title was wondering what exactly constitutes as the devil in the case of Rwanda. After researching the background and political state of Rwanda, I was able to come up with a couple of different theories. The “devil” referenced could be symoblic of the western ideals and theories that made Rwanda the racially conflicted country that it is, and also the ideals and beliefs that prevented the first world countries from stepping in and helping to prevent a genocide as they could have had they had sufficient compassion for human lives. As with the second part of the title, it could also be a reference to those within Rwanda who were instigators and perpetuators of the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of lives. It could also be a reference to being forced to witness the death of all these people and being almost entirely unable to help them. However, after reading the preface I came to the conclusion that it is more likely the latter two of these three options rather than the former, because Dallaire states, “follwing my return from Rwanda, a Canadian Forces padre asked me how, after all I had seen and experienced, I could still believe in God. I answered that I know there is a God because in Rwanda I shook hands with the devil. I have seen him, I have smelled him and I have touched him. I know the devil exists, and therefore I know there is a God” (Dallaire xvii). This implies that the aforementioned devil was something within Rwanda that Dallaire directly experienced, rather than the factors that created the initial strife in the country.

1. [all information taken from Wikipedia unless otherwise cited] In Rwanda, there are three main racial groups. There are the Tutsis, who make up a smaller percentage of the population, the Hutus, who are a majority of the population, and the Twa, who are a very small portion of the population. When Rwanda was colonized by Germany, the Germans also brought their western ideals with them. Initially, the Germans were very dependent on the indigenous governemnt, which they allowed to continue to lead the country, although the Germans introduced to them the concept of cash taxes. The German colonization of Rwanda initially caused racial strife because the Germans decided that the taller and paler Tutsis were “more European” than the shorter and darker Hutus, and favoured them over the Hutu masses, despite the fact that the Tutsis were the minority. Germany was the colonizing power in Rwanda from 1885-1919. After World War 1, the League of Nations handed over the colony to Belgium.

Belgium took what the Germans had done and pushed it to further extremes. They agreed with the idea that the Tutsi population was somehow “more European” than the Hutus and gave every chance to promote Tutsi supremacy. The Belgians continued to rely on the Tutsi power structure the Germans had helped implement (all those who were in power or rich were the minority Tutsis, while the poorer or more average people were Hutus).

The Belgians also increased the racial divide into what would later become a deeply rooted resentment as well as means for the mass killings that occurred in the Rwandan genocide. The Belgians began issuing race cards to every citizen of Rwanda. Every person was issued a race card that identified whether the individual was Tutsi, Hutu, or Twa. However, these racial cards also had to do with wealth. In Rwanda, wealth is measured by the amount of cattle an individual owns. Often, Hutus or Twas that were wealthy with cattle would be issued Tutsi idendification cards instead of Hutu or Twa ones. Belgium contributed even further to the racial divide by implementing forced peasant labour. Those who were poorer (i.e. the Hutus) were forced to work in coffee fields to generate income for the governemnt. Until Belgium entered the country, forced labour was unheard of. This labour essentially reinforced the racial divide between the politically powerful Tutsis and the working class Hutus.

After being officially colonized by Germany in 1987, Rwanda reached independence on September 25, 1961. However, independence from its colonizing powers did nothing to quell the strenthening racial tension between the Hutu and Tutsi populations.

Key Events/Figures in Rwandan History

1. Initial colonization by Germany followed by Belgium’s League of Nations mandate to govern Rwanda. Both countries introduced racial tensions where previously there had been none.
2. After independence, Mwami (King) Rudahigwa abolished the “ubukake” (forced labour) system and redistriubed cattle and land equally between everyone, regardless of race.
3. Electoral representation was introduced and the Hutu began to take back political power because they were the majority, leading to the Hutu emancipation movement. The movment also lead to killings which caused the Mwami at the time, Mwami Kigeli V to fleed under Hutu killings to Uganda as one of many refugees.

Germany and Belgium each brought their own major neo-colonial influences to Rwanda when they colonized the country. Germany initially introduced cash taxes and the idea of coffee as a cash crop, which entirely changed the economy of Rwanda, since before colonization these ideas had never been heard of. Germany also brough over the belief of Western supremacy, and began a racial divide between the Tutsi and the Hutus. When Belgium replaced Germany, they introduced forced peasant labour in the coffee fields in order to generate income and boost the economy. The introduction of race cards that Belgium brought with it also enforced the idea of Western supremecy and the resulting racial divide.

Currently, Rwanda is continuing to improve their economy through trade with countries such as Belgium, Germany, and China. After the genocide, the Clinton Hunter Development Initiative aided Rwanda in improving their agricultuer, water, sanitation, and health services, all of which had been virtually non-existent after the genocide. Up until 2012, Rwanda used the Gacaca court (a community justice court) to put on trial those responsible for the Genocide (“Rwanda Country Profile”). Key players in the genocide are put on trial in a International Criminal Tribunal in Tanzania (“Rwanda Country Profile”). Although some violence still exists between political parties within Rwanda, in both 2007 and 2009 Rwanda applied to join the Commonwealth of Nations, succeeding in 2009. While there is much impressive political and economic progress in Rwanda, the government still maintains tight control of freedom of expression and association (“World Reports 2015: Rwanda). The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) still holds control of the country, and this makes it challenging for opposition government forces to operate (“World Reports 2015: Rwanda”). The media in Rwanda is also contains predominantly pro-governemnt views (“World Reports 2015: Rwanda”) which makes it challening for other opinions to be expressed or even held by the general population. While Rwanda has come remarkably far since it’s genocide just over twenty years ago, it has a long way to go to before becoming a stable country.

In terms of the setting, I have taken the liberty of moving this question to the list of questions that should be answered in the middle of the book. The first 30-50 pages do not have a definitive setting, and while the overall setting does play a role in how Dallaire approaches Rwanda, it does not have a large amount of importance within the overall book without being able to explain a direct correlation to the establishment of the setting within the middle part of the book. The modes of inquiry and political bias are also challenging to identify when the current focus of the book is the early life and military background of LGen Dallaire.

1. In the first 30-50 pages of *Shake Hands With the Devil*, the thesis is most clearly represented in the preface. Dallaire’s point of view is that catastrophe is being forgotten far to quickly, and the people of the devoloped world are becoming apathetic to the suffering of others. In the case of Rwanda, the Western world did not do nearly enough to aid the helpless victims of genocide, because the Western world simply cares more about resources than human lives. After World War 2, we said “never again,” and then we let Rwanda suffer the same fate. His thesis is eloquently summed up in the introduction, where Dallaire states, “What I have come to realize as the root of it all, however, is the 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. An overpopulated little country that turned in on itself and destroyed its own people, as the world watched and yet could not manage to find the political will to intervene. Engraved still in my brain is the judgement of a small group of bureaucrats who came to ‘assess’ the situation in the first weeks of the genocide: ‘We will recommend to our government not to intervene as the risks are high and all that is here are humans’” (Dallaire 6).

The thesis is hardly controversial, unless one could somehow argue that resources are more important than human lives (which is, of course, possible, but an average person could not in good conscience hold this point of view). However, Dallaire’s thesis is extraordinarily topical. It doesn’t take much digging to discover other terrible situations in the world, be it Al Qaeda in Iraq, ISIS in Syria, or Boko Haram in Nigeria. The problem with those in the West is that we continually present a sense of “othering” towards developing nations. There is this idea that if they are not as advanced as us, or if they are not economically valuable to us, then they are not worth our time. While we no longer resort to name calling such as “savages” to those we view as less important and technologically advance, the concept of “othering” still applies in our world. Dallaire’s idea that the Western world needs to do more to help countries in desparate situations is an important concept to help battle this sense of “othering” that seems to come with being a first world country. It is not a new idea, nor is it an idea that will be outdated soon; not as long as there is violence in the world, and not as long as there are countries that cannot act alone to defend themselves.

1. The first fifty pages of this book were a challenge to get through. Dallaire has an extraordinary ability to keep a reader interested throughout the most boring part of the book, however this did not really make it any easier to get through. The book starts off with a stellar, attention grabbing introdcution, but in the first few chapters must do the necessary introduction of Dallaire’s military background and other important politics that take place in the book.

One of the largest challenges was keeping track of the different departments in the UN and all the short forms for longer words and terms that exist between the military and the United Nations. The initial large information dumb also contains a lot of names that were clearly important to Dallaire’s upbringing in the military, but whose involvment in the book ends after the beginning few chapters. Essentially, the first 50 pages is a large information dump, but one that is essential to the understanding to the rest of the book.

However, Dallaire combats the almost painful information dump with plenty of tidbits of information and foreshadowing that kept me engaged with a strong desire to continue reading the book. In retrospect, I probably read the initial fifty pages faster than everything else, because Dallaire was able to keep me curious about reading more, but there was not so much graphic descriptions of the slaughter that I had to read the novel pieces at a time so as not to be overwhelmed. One of the lines that stood out to me strongly was when Dallaire observes, “a soldier, if he was going to be content, had to understand that no civilian, no government, sometimes not even the army itself, would recognize the true nature of the sacrifices he made” (Dallaire 18). This phrase caught my attention simply because of the seeming strength of Dallaire’s belief in this statement. It also caught my attention because of what I knew of Dallaire before reading the book (the character “Sarge” in Eric Walter’s novel *Shattered* seems to be losely based on him – in fact, Dallaire wrote the foreward for the book – especially his life post-genocide and how he lived after returning from Rwanda) was that after the genocide he spiralled into an extraordinarily challenging battle with PTSD and other mental illnesses that typically accompany it. His mental illness problems, post-genocide, seem to stem mostly from the lack of desire to commit to aid in Rwanda by the UN and the resulting inability to save innocent lives. This struck me clearly as a phrase that can only be uttered by someone who has experienced hell with minimal recognition but has found peace with many of his demons. Naturally, it also was a phrase that largely foreshadowed many of the incidents in Rwanda and the reaction of the world to these things that the book was going to explore.

While I found the first portion of the book relatively boring, it was absolutely essential in developing a basis in knowledge of how the army and United Nations works and an abriged history of Rwanda for those who would not already be familiar with the subject.

**Middle 30-50 Pages (approx p 255):**

1. In *Shake Hands with the Devil*, Dallaire does not use many techniques to support his thesis. In fact, there is really only one major technique that Dallaire ever employs, which is an appeal to ethos. He uses a raw honesty in his portrayal of the situation, as well as some intense scenes that create graphic imagery to get the message through to his readers that the Western world did not do enough in Rwanda. He uses either descriptive imagery of the destruction that faced the civilians of Rwanda as well as the troops of his mission, UNAMIR, or blunt phrases that directly describe the level of brutality by the guilty Rwandans and the lack of commitment by the United Nations. The imagery is often sickeningly clear; for example, when Dallaire describes “a heap of mangled and bloodied white flesh in tattered Belgian para-commando uniforms. The men were piled on top of each other, and we couldn’t tell how many were in the pile. The light was faint and it was hard to identify any of the faces or find specific markings. We counted them twice: eleven soldiers. In the end it turned out to be ten” (Dallaire 255). The imagery in this description is graphic but clearly a direct appeal to ethos, as Dallaire attempts to put readers in his shoes and cause them to see the carnage of the genocide as he saw it. Dallaire also puts things much more bluntly, such as when he describes the strategy of the extremests in “[securing] first a Belgian, then a UN withdrawal…They knew that Western nations do not have the stomach or the will to sustain casualties in peace support operations. When confronted with casualties…they will run, regardless of the consequences to the abandoned population” (240). This statement is a blunt explanation of the Wester world’s reluctance and refusal to aid in Rwanda. It is still an appeal to ethos, because it pulls on the heartstrings of the reader and places the Western values into the context of a struggling developing country.

Dallaire also uses a small amount of data to further his thesis. The only data he predominantly uses is the number of lives that were lost in the Rwandan genocide: 800,000. The use of this data tied in with the ethos he calls upon throughout the book creates a stunningly clear image of the amount of lives lost and the amount of lives that could have been saved had the UN stepped up their involvement and cooperation with UNAMIR.

Foreshadowing is another smaller technique that Dallaire uses. He uses this technique in the way that only an omniscient narrator can, which is espeically effective in the context of non-fiction because he has already lived through what has happened. The foreshadowing mostly exists to further his strong appeal to ethos by instilling a sense of dread at the events that are to come. For example, before the reader learns of the deaths of the ten Belgian soldiers or Prime Minister Agathe at the hands of the extremists within the RGF, it is revealed that the ten Belgian soldiers had been trapped at camp Kigali. Dallaire tells of confronting Ndindiliyimana about the Belgian soldiers, to which Ndindiliyimana tells Dallaire that he will make sure his soldiers look into it. In response to this, Dallaire reflects that “[he] didn’t realize that these [the Belgians] were the soldiers who had been the escort and guard for Prime Minister Agathe” (Dallaire 240). In the context of the book, this foreshadowing causes a gut-wrenching fear intially for the Belgian soldiers, but then, as two and two are put together, a fear for Prime Minister Agathe as well. The fear for these people directly appeals to the sympathy and compassion of the reader.

1. In *Shake Hands with the Devil*, Dallaire rarely actively anticipates opposition to his thesis. Because much of his book is an appeal to ethos, as is his thesis, he seems to base the thesis under the assumption that it is next to impossible to argue. The thesis is almost presented in such a way that to disagree with the thesis would prove exactly why his thesis is correct. If it is aruged that the western world was correct in withholding aid from Rwanda, the person behind the argument becomes simply a representation of the type of attitude that Dallaire’s novel speaks out against. There are occasions throughout the first half of the book where Dallaire states that perhaps the outcome of certain events would have been different had he made different decisions, but to me this seems to be less of an anticipation of possible opposition to his thesis. Rather, this seems like a small attempt to assuage some of his internal guilt, as well as to identify the fact that he is only human and simply did what he could to save as many lives as possible.
2. [initally part of question 2 from the first set of questions] The first 50 pages of the novel are set in many different places to give the reader a sense of the Dallaire’s military background. While this is important to aiding an understanding of how Dallaire made certain decisions and dealth with situations throughout the book, it is not the main setting of the book and not extremely important or pivotal within the plot.

The setting of Rwanda is introduced just after the first fifty pages, but the establishemnt of UNAMIR in Rwanda doesn’t happen until past page 100. This is the piece of the setting that is essential to the understanding of what happens in the novel, and the setting continues to be established and developed until the beginning of the genocide, as it takes some time to explain the politics surrounding Rwanda and the requirements of the mission in a way that a reader without much political background can understand. The novel is set mostly in Kigali, the captial city of Rwanda. It is here that UNAMIR, the RPF, and the RGF all have headquarters, and here where they all interact. Rwanda is a multilingual country (they speak English, French, and Kinyarwanda), which neatly ties in Dallaire’s background in being bilingual in Quebec, which is a province whose language is predominantly French. When writing about how he grew up, Dallaire speaks of being friends with both anglophones and francophones, stating that “the francophone kids and the anglophone kids formed separate neighbourhood gangs and were bitter foes; the fact that I had friends on both sides marked me as suspect, possibly a traitor” (Dallaire 13). This is almost perfectly reflected once the setting is established in Rwanda. Dallaire must work with both the RGF and the RPF who, under the surface, are bitter foes due to racial tension. He finds himself caught in the middle and often suspect as a traitor, especially in the opinion of the RGF who continually accused him of being an RPF sympathizer. The initial setting of Dallaire’s early life almost perfectly reflects the situation he finds himself in when he enters the mission in Rwanda. Because he grew up being part of both sides, he clearly understands how to recognize the point of view of each side and mediate between them, which also contributes to the strength of his thesis. He is someone who grew up as a member of two sides to everything, and yet when he is caught between Rwanda and the UN, cannot find a single way to side with what the UN was doing at any point in the mission.

Being French also caused Dallaire significant trouble in succeeding in the army, which was fairly biased against its French speaking troops. He fought hard for things that seem as though they should be already established, such as the ability to give orders in French to a French contingent of soldiers, which he fought for during his time as commanding officer of the 5ième Régiment d’artillerie légère du Canada (Dallaire 34). This transalted to the setting in Rwanda, because it instilled a sense of “*peux ce que veux*” (the best approximation of this phrase in English being, “where there’s a will, there’s a way”). It allowed Dallaire to fight tirelessly to be given anything from the UN, and while he never got much in the way of anything, I don’t think there was a person better suited to be the one in charge of pestering the UN for all the basic necessities. This method of thinking also drove him to fight so hard to be named Force Commander for the mission in Rwanda, proving that he had what was needed to fight for every inch that he was given through to the end of the mission.

As a memoir, there is no true mode of inquiry to the novel. It doesn’t inquire much about anything. Instead, Dallaire uses it as a way to express an honest retelling of the horrors he experienced. He is not an outsider looking in on the genocide, which would require methods of in inquiry in order to understand exactly what happened and why. Instead, he was a key component of aid in the country throughout the entire genocide, and relived each and every horrible memory one by one as he put together this book.

Dallaire’s thesis calls for a change in the way the UN approaches peacekeeping missions around the world. He also calls for a change in the way the goverments of Western countries approach the problem of donating troops for UN organized missions. He feels that it should be the responsibility of the governments of Western countries to come to the aid of the countries that cannot help himself. This call for this kind of change within governments, which Dallaire clearly views as progression, can be viewed as having a left-wing political bias.

There are also politics within Rwanda, and they are specifically influenced by race. Those trying to set up a proper transitional government are mostly the moderate Hutus (RGF). For the most part, the Tutsis (RPF) seem to have the intention of setting up the BBTG (broad-based transitional government), however they are often unyielding in their opinions and make it hard for even the moderate Hutus to work with them. Lastly, the extremist Hutus (RGF, specifically the Interahamwe and Impuzamugambi) spend the time that should be used organizing a BBTG to plan and commmit the genocide of 800,000 Tutsis. While Dallaire is supposed to keep neutral ground with each party, he is often accused of being an RPF sympathizer. In general to this point in the book, it also seems as if this would be his political leaning in Rwanda, simply because it is clear that at least some portion of the members of the RGF are behind attacks on members of the RPF, and have no desire to create peace under the Arusha agreement or to create the BBTG.

**Last 30-50 Pages:**

1. In the last fifty or so pages, Dallaire reflects on the aftermath of the genocide that killed a total of 800,000 people. He presents a heart-wrenching summary of the ways in which humanity really did fail in Rwanda. In many places, without even mentioning the refusal of the Western world to help, he is able to instill a sense that as developed countries that were able to provide aid, the West could have done more. For example, without even mentioning the role the West played in turning a blind eye to the genocide and thus allowing it to continue, Dallaire still manages to show the damage this apathy caused. He uses data to explain the horrors that the country of Rwanda experienced as we stood by contrasting it with the return of people to living in Kigali. As he describes life returning to Kiglali, he also states that “with almost ten percent of the pre-war population murdered in a hundred days there were very few families who did not lose at least one member. Most lost more. It has been estimated that ninety percent of the children who survived in Rwanda saw someone they knew die a violent death during that time” (Dallaire 478). Without him needing to explain, the reader is able to make the connection the fact that if the Western world had stepped in and provided sufficient aid, these statistics would never exist. He also explains how water was scarce because “wells were dry or tainted and the only other sources were the creeks and rivers that flowed through Kigali, and they didn’t bear thinking about” (479). Dallaire does not need to go into detail for the reader to remember his request of the UN for drinking water, and how they only came through with barely enough after his troops had gone days without water. And that was only enough for UNAMIR, not the rest of the country that so desperately needed it.

After employing these vague comparisons, Dallaire directly condemns the apathy of the rest of the world, saying “On a daily basis, delegations of politicians, bureaucrats, NGO staffers, celebrities, actors, singers and any Tom, Dick or Harry who could manage it (if my tone seems harsh, I have to say that’s what it felt like to us) came to Rwanda requesting that we coordinate their visit” (Dallaire 480). The bitterness in his tone is immediately recognizable and understandable; Dallaire had tried to get aid from people such as this to help throughout the whole genocide, but no one was interested in lending a hand until after it had all happened, and after it had become a tragedy. Rather than trying to prevent it, they arrived late simply to appear as though they had done something to help, when really, the damange had already been done by their initial apathy towards the situation. He also illustrates this apathy that the world brought with it into the post-genocide Rwanda. Dallaire explains that “even now [he] has trouble sourting out [his] own reaction to the mostly well-meaning people that came into Kigali to help. Perhaps it was their apparent detachment…perhaps it was the attitudes of some of them or the photo ops they arranged of themselves beside mass graves or the way they were able to step over bodies without seeming to notice those people had once had names” (491). This is a blantantly clear explanation of the damage that the apathy of the world had done to Rwanda. While the genocide had been occuring, those who should have cared did not. They did not experience it as it happened or frustratingly attempt to help when no one would give aid. Dallaire understands that they were well meaning, but also as the title of the chapter indicates, they gave “too much, too late.” Had they come in the same way when Rwanda was on the verge of genocide, it never would have happened. But they hadn’t, and they had not had involvement with Rwanda during the genocide. So at the end of it, the statistics were simply statistics, not people with names or stories to them. They visited, they offered their belated help, and they took photos in front of mass graves because that way, they could prove they did something when the rest of the world didn’t, even though they did not really do much at all, compared to what should have happened.

Dallaire uses the aftermath in comparison to what should have happened in order to give strength to his thesis that the world needs to begin viewing countries that we wouldn’t normally give much attention to as important, simply because, just like any wealthy country, they have human lives, and no human life is less valuable than another.

3) Dallaire did not have a large political bias in his novel, however it could be said that he had a slightly left-wing bias, because of his point of view that it is the governments responsibility to look after people, and that the governments of the Western world need to change and begin to value lives regardless of the economic value of a country. This point of view is the basis of his thesis and forms how he tells the story of the UN’s involvmement (or lack thereof) in Rwanda.

4) There is no way in which this text cannot be applied to the modern world. Espeically in develpoing countries, war and terrorism are a constant threat to the survival of people. Even when the conflict is not purely genocide, as it was in Rwanda, often innocent civilians are caught up in the crossfire or still intentionally targeted. In *Shake Hands with the Devil*, Dallaire creates such a strong call to the compassion of those in the Western world that are capable of helping those in need. His goal is that we should not forget the mistakes we made in the past, but instead learn from them and apply that learning to the future for the safety of others. He calls on governments to take a lead and help the developing countries that need it, as soon as they need it, in order to prevent slaughter similar to this. After the genocide of World War 2 happened, the world was appalled and promised “never again,” but then we let it happen in Rwanda. Arugably, we turned more of a blind eye to the genocide in Rwanda than we ever did in World War 2, by refusing to help until the 800,000 had been killed and an unstable (and ultimately temporary) ceasefire had been reached.

Since the failure of the UN to provide sufficient help to Rwanda and the ensuing genocide, Canada has majorly stepped down from its involvement in peace keeping missions. Canada was the only nation throughout the genocide to continually willingly give what we had when we could to the troops that were part of UNAMIR, other than many developing nations who could not support troops as part of UNAMIR without aid from the developed nations. It will be hard for Canada to begin again with their work in peacekeeping unless other countries firmly decide that this should not happen again, and that they are willing to step in and aid those countries that need it.

However, on the opposite side of the spectrum, the recent commitment of many first world countries to accept large amounts of Syrian refugees shows just how far we have come since Rwanda. Dallaire called on countries to learn from their mistakes, and this time, instead of turning away a boat of Jewish refugees, who would ultimately die, we are willing to accept thousands of Syrian people and save them from what could be the same fate.

Dallaire wrote this novel to tell his story, with the purpose of making the world see where it went wrong so as to not repeat the mistakes. This is a lesson that will always be applicatory to the world, no matter what year we find ourselves in, and thankfully it looks like we are finally beginning to learn from our mistakes.

**Personal Response**

I am hesitant to say that I enjoyed *Shake Hands with the Devil*, because, after all, it is a book about mass slaughter due to race. Mostly, it was heart-wrenching and sickening, but after reading it I am also of the opinion that it should be a necessary read for anyone living in the developed world. Often when living in a privelaged society people tend to forget that we are not a representation of the entire world; we are a small portion of it, and yet we hold much of the power. I can’t agree more with Dallaire’s opinion that we should be using that to aid countries that need it, no matter their economic value to our country. Their value in humanitarian crises should be that they are human, just as we are.

A majority of the book took me a lot longer to read than a normal book because the atrocities were very hard to process, and I had to go piece by piece through the book so as not to be overwhelemed. The violence in *The Orenda* pales so much in comparison to the violence described in this book. In terms of the violence of the book, one of the things that struck me most was the nonchalance of those who initiated and continued the genocide towards the people they were killing. The line that stood out to me the most in the book was when Dallaire met with representatives of the RGF, where he describes “I nearly lost my composure when I noticed that the middle guy’s open-collared white shirt was spattered with dried blood. There were small flecks on his right arm as we shook hands” (Dallaire 346). Because Dallaire was the middle ground, he had to continually meet and make deals with both the RPF and RGF in order to attempt to secure peace. He describes how, after the RGF essentially admitted they were behind the killings, he then had to thank them and praise them for their cooperation. He then describes, “On the way back to the Force HQ, I felt that I had shaken hands with the devil. We had actually exhanged pleasantries. I had given him an opportunity to ake pride in his disgusting work. I felt guilty of evil deeds myself since I had actually negotiated with him. My stomach was ripping me apart about whether I had done the right thing” (347). This was really the phrase that made Dallaire’s internal struggle of how to manage the genocide and resulting civil war while attempting to maintian a neutral stance become painfully real. He had to comply with his UN mandate, even if it meant shaking the devils hand in order to maintain neutrality, instead of stopping the slaughtering as he wished he could.

The book is saturated with intense emotions like these throughout. It was published in 2003, and I honestly believe that it should be a required reading for either a high school English or history course. Fiction novels will always be my favourite thing to read, but I don’t think high school curriculum explores enough of other types of texts. This book should be studied by high school students, because it is capable of stimulating important conversation, providing a much broader world view, and it provides a text that is not fiction and therefore can be analyzed in different ways than what a high school student is typically exposed to.

The thing in this book that broke my heart most, however, was the dedication at the very beginning of the book. I didn’t notice it until after I finsihed the book and came up on it by chance, because almost it’s hidden before the maps and the preface. Dallaire opens the dedication with a Bible verse from Matthew 5:9, which is part of the Beatitudes, that states “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” He then dedicates the book to the Rwandans that the world abandoned, followed by the fifteen UN soldiers who lost their lives (who he lists by name, country, and date of death). It is simply a heartbreakingly beautiful dedication, because, in the case of the UN soldiers, it provides names to go along with the numbers of people that were killed, while with the Rwandan civillians it provides an all encompassing statement to go along with the smaller and more intimate stories of death contained within the book.

Essentially, this book largely shook me up and stretched my emotions to the breaking point as I read, but I am extremely glad that I did read it. I cannot imagine the courage it would have taken Dallaire to write it, and I cannot imagine how it must feel to live with the ghosts of the Rwandan genocide as he does, as well as the other men who served on UNAMIR.

“The world is nothing but a battle between God and the Devil, between good and evil.” – *Shattered*, Eric Walters

**Quotes Analysis**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quote** | **Analysis** |
| “We were not in a war of victors and vanquished. We were in the middle of a slaughterhouse, though it was weeks before we could call it by its real name.” (Dallaire 281) | This quote occurs at the beginning of the genocide, after the peacekeepers decide they cannot rescue the survivors of the slaughter inside the church. They leave them overnight and when they come back to remove them, they found that the killers had returned to kill the survivors and burn all the bodies. Often war in books is considered as something black and white, where there is good and evil and one will win. In Rwanda, this was not the case. This quote represents the terrible evil of the genocide, even in its initial days. In a war, one side wins and the other accepts defeat but still lives to tell the tale. In a slaughterhouse, the victors do not stop after vanquishing their foe but instead seek to destroy them entirely. This is the nature of the Rwandan genocide. |
| “I wanted to scream, to vomit, to hit something, to break free of my body, to end this terrible scene.” (Dallaire 303) | This is Dallaires reaction to the death and disaster at King Faisal Hospital, where they had been bombed the day before. There was extreme carnage, with trampled children and shredded and entirely exploded bodies littering the area. Dallaire, in this quote, represents his frustration with the scenes of the genocide that he sees but can do nothing about, because he has been provided with neither the authority nor the men to be able to step in and put a stop to the genocide. He can only watch, despite the fact that he would do anything to make it stop. |
| “Ultimately, led by the United States, France and the United Kingdom, this world body aided and abetted genocide in Rwanda. No amount of its cash and aid will ever wash its hands clean of Rwandan blood.” (Dallaire 323) | This quote simply states that the blood of Rwandans is in the hands of the not only the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, but the entire UN. And in the aftermath, they rushed in to give aid to the country, but had they accepted the genocide for what it was and stepped in in the first place, none of the aid would ever have been needed because 800,000 lives would not have been lost. Their refusal to help aided the extremists in causing the genocide, and because they could have prevented it, nothing can make up for that. |
| “I see-sawed from rage to tears and back again, with brief interregnums of numbed-out staring. I could not look away. All those eyes staring back at us. Tired, red, sad, fearful, mad, bewildered pairs of eyes.” (Dallaire 329) | The genocide in Rwanda touched the lives of every single person living there. The raw emotion that plays out in this passage as Dallaire passes by people who so desperately need help represents how torn he is between his morals and his mandate. What Dallaire wanted was to save the Rwandans from the killings, but all he could do was sit back and watch. |
| “I couldn’t help thinking, ‘Too bad this slaughter was not in a market in Yugoslavia – maybe somebody outside Rwanda would have cared.’ As it happened, the Rwandan genocide was having a hard time knocking the South African elections and American figure skater Tonya Harding’s criminal troubles off the front pages.” (Dallaire 349) | This quotation is another of the endless examples of the apathy of the world towards the genocide in Rwanda. The Western world cared more about it’s own trivial problems, such as Tonya Harding’s criminal troubles, than the death of hundreds of thousands of people. While people were dying in Rwanda, the developed world still cared only about their own entertainment and their own lives. |
| “I looked out over burnt huts, some still smouldering, carrion birds overhead, black lumps in rags moving ever so slowly downstream as others piled up on a curve in the river. I was filled with a sense of gross ineptness. I had come to apradise in full bloom and now, on my favourite hillside, I saw myself walking these hills and vallyes, crossing streams and sitting in the shade of banana trees, talking without anyone being there, ripped apart by failure and remorse. I had come to Kinihira looking for a little peace, but peace had been murdered here, too.” (Dallaire 366) | Peace was the purpose of UNAMIR’s presence in Rwanda, however because of the intentional ignorance of the Western world the tentative peace that had been in place was not only destroyed, but completely abolished from Rwanda. The comparison of the appearance of Rwanda at the time Dallaire sits on the hill in contrast to how Rwanda looked when he initally came highlights this lack of peace and the introduction of not just war, but extermination. While Dallaire had done all he could, he still felt remorseful and could not find peace, because he could not convince the United Nations to stop turning a blind eye, and to care about what was happening in Rwanda. |
| “In this case, while most nations seemed to agree that something had to be done, every nation seemed to have a reason why some other nation should do it.” (Dallaire 374) | There is more than just the continual apathy of the developed nations represented in this quote. Aside from apathy, it shows the greed of many of these nations. No nation wanted to help themselves, because Rwanda was not valuable to them, which mean that nothing was in it for them if they were to help Rwanda. So instead of helping to stop a genocide before it happened, or even partway through, they debated who should be more responsible to help, as if their lives were more important than the lives of the Rwandans who were dying. |
| “Several officers taking a short coffee break saw a strange-looking dog wandering around in the compound, then realized it was a rat that had grown to the size of a terrier. One of the officers, who was from Ghana, said that he had seen this after natural disasters back home: the rats fed and fed on an inexhaustible supply of human flesh and grew to an unbelieveable size.” (Dallaire 379) | There were enough dead bodies to allow rats to feed and grow to the size of terriers. This shows the sickening levels of murder that took place over the 100 days of the Rwandan genocide. The only thing that UNAMIR could do was watch the rats grow to this size, and hope they would be given means to help the Rwandans. The imagery of this story is probably the one area of the book that best shows the number of people killed. To say 800,000 people were killed is a large statistic, but to say enough were killed to have rats grow to the size of dogs paints a mental image of exactly what 800,000 dead would look like. |
| “Instead, we watched as the devil took control of paradise on earth and fed on the blood of the people we were supposed to protect.” (Dallaire 7) | Dallaire uses the imagery of the devil taking control of paradise to show how quickly and efficiently evil took over Rwanda and allowed the slaugher of hundreds of thousands of people to take place. The use of the phrases “we watched” and “we were supposed to protect” directly demonstrate how useless UNAMIR seemed to be as soon as the genocide began, because they were not allowed to do anything to stop it. |
| “As I said goodbye to Beth and the bustling city of Nairobi, I was caught in an emotional mental battle that pitted what I now considered the ‘real’ world – genocide in Rwanda – and the ‘artifical’ world – the detachment and obtuseness of the rich and powerful.” (Dallaire 419) | The comparison of the “artifical” and “real” worlds in this passage exemplifies the apathy of the rest of the world towards the Rwandan genocide. “Artificial” is a perfect word to describe the what was happening outside of Rwanda at the time, because compared to the tears and death of an entire nation, living in comfort and security is not real. It simply exists as a creation to placate the guilt that should exist within the countries standing by while the Rwandans died. |
| “I had to accept that I had become a casualty, he said. Just like other casualties, I needed to be evacuated. There was no guilt in that.” (Dallaire 509) | When the entire world has turned its back on a country, the last thing someone who had spent every breath within that country fighting for its rights, safety, and lives would want to do was to leave. To leave and enter back into the world that was sitting in its comfort and wealth after experiencing and being unable to stop a civil war and genocide. Phil reminds Dallaire in this passage that he should not feel guilty, because just like other UNAMIR troops and other Rwandans he had simply become a casualty of the war, and that was out of his control. The war had gotten the best of him, too. |

Works Cited

Boyden, Joseph. *The Orenda*. Toronto: Hamish Hamilton, 2013. Print.

Dallaire, Roméo. *Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda*. Toronto: Random House Canada, 2003. Print.

"Genocide Alerts." *World Genocide Watch*. Genocide Watch, n.d. Web. 14 Dec. 2015.

"Rwanda Country Profile." *BBC*. BBC, 4 June 2014. Web. 14 Dec. 2014.

"Rwanda." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, n.d. Web. 17 Dec. 2015.

Walters, Eric. *Shattered*. Toronto: Viking Canada, 2006. Print.

"World Report 2015: Rwanda." *Human Rights Watch*. Human Rights Watch, 2015. Web. 14 Dec. 2015.