

Introduction: Tele-evidence – On the Translatability of Modernity's Violence

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Later in the afternoon the captain announced that he would not be taking the usual route along the Nile valley over northern Sudan, but would instead fly farther westward over El Obeid (Al-Ubayyid) and from there over to Malakal before resuming a southern course over Ethiopia. For me that meant that we would be crossing the Nuba Mountains of South Kordofan, where I had lived for three years. There was not a cloud in the sky. I hurried into the cockpit – which was sometimes possible before September 11, 2001 – so I could finally catch another glimpse of my lost paradise, if only from the air. The captain – a native Nigerian – found it extremely exotic that I could name the mountains and rivers below us, so he offered me the third seat in the cabin. He knew that southern Sudan was caught up in an armed struggle and he thought that this was also the reason why he had to fly over Ethiopian territory as far north as Malakal. But he had never heard anything about the genocide in South Kordofan. I saw Mount Lebu for the first time since December 1983, recognizing the mountain immediately even from this bird's-eye view. From letters I received from Khartoum, I knew who had been left behind on the high plateau of the mountain, living – at the moment I was flying overhead – in stone-age conditions and desperately trying to avoid the horrors of ethnocide. When we were over Malakal I had to return to my seat since a snack was being served in the cockpit. It was hard for me to go back to the development experts. Most of these experts consider the African wars to be a return to the barbarian past rather than innovative reactions to the presumptions of mismanaged modernization that they themselves helped to bring about with their projects.

In this autobiographical scene of seeing from above, taking place on an airplane flying from Amsterdam to Dar es Salaam in 1997, Richard Rottenburg is confronted with the world in which he had lived and carried out anthropological inquiry between 1979-1984, up to the unfolding of yet another war in the post-colonial/independence Sudan.³ The translatability of a modernity of violence or the violence of modernity is no longer confined to human eyes and testimony, and comes to involve technoscience that shifts the epistemology of violence, and

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³ Richard Rottenburg, *Far-Fetched Facts: A Parable of Development Aid*, transl. A. Brown and T. Lampert (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2009 [2002]).

extends its reach across time and space in a manner unimaginable in 1980s. Technoscience is by now inescapable in the organization of violence as well as in the making and production of evidence and evidentialization, i.e. it is becoming important for providing proof and the prevention of modernity's violence. As this introduction and this special issue show, this historical shift entails unforeseen translations of violence worldwide; violence which is marked by global modernity and at the same time hides from view the untranslatable lived experiences of ever more technologized violence and its social, cultural, ecological, political and economic consequences. Our attention is then transformed, shaped and controlled by various translations rather than directed towards *the pain of others*.⁴ Thus, the area that Rottenburg surveyed from the air, and particularly the adjacent oilfields of Abyei along the Bahr al-Ghazal River (further west known as Bahr al-Arab River in the Sudan), has come to take on an epistemology of life pointing at an uncertain future.⁵

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In March 2012, at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the United States, Senator Tom Udall, Hollywood actor George Clooney and activist John Prendergast sustain that to prevent and punish state violence committed in Sudan requires a new technoscientific evidence. The hearing is video recorded and is available on the personal website of the Senator but also on YouTube for anyone anywhere in the world with access to the Internet.⁶ The 6:28 minutes long moving images display a question and answer session over the connection between satellite images, evidence, and state violence in a Sudan now defined and divided into two separate countries, Sudan/"Arabism" and South Sudan/"Africanism".⁷ As the co-founders of the Satellite Sentinel Project, Clooney and Prendergast are invited to testify to how they intend to proof past, ongoing and future violence in Sudan but also elsewhere in the world. At this point, the Satellite Sentinel Project (SSP) is operating in the space above the oil-rich area of Abyei that is located on the border separating Sudan from South Sudan and a short distance from the above mentioned Nuba Mountains. The area constitutes part of what is called the Sub-Saharan belt in Africa, which is also known as an *oil belt* and sometimes referred to as *an uranium belt*.⁸ The SSP is a

⁴ Susan Sontag, *Regarding The Pain of Others* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2003).

⁵ Richard Rottenburg, "Das Inferno am Gazellenfluss. Ein afrikanisches Problem oder ein 'schwarzes Loch' der Weltgesellschaft?" *Leviathan* 30 (2002) 1: 3-33; Enrico Ille, Guma Kunda Komey, and Richard Rottenburg. 2014. "Tragic entanglements: Vicious cycles and acts of violence in Southern Kordofan," *Sudan's killing fields. Political violence and fragmentation*, ed. L. Nyantung Beny and Sondra Hale, (Trenton: Red Sea Press, 2014), 117-137. See also <https://lost-research-group.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/NMSWP01.pdf>

⁶ The hearing is available at Tom Udall's personal website <<https://www.tomudall.senate.gov/news/videos/watch/tom-udall-and-george-clooney-discuss-sudan>>, accessed on November 2018. It is also available on YouTube <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kv7Z6bEtodc>>, accessed on November 10th, 2018.

⁷ Amal H. Fadlalla, *Branding Humanity: Competing Narratives of Rights, Violence, and Global Citizenship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019), 9.

⁸ Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (Cape Town: HSRC Press 2009), 55; Amal H. Fadlalla, "Humanitarian Dispossession: Celebrity Activism and the Fragment-

satellite-based violence surveillance infrastructure that is inhabited by a web of specific persons, organizations, national and global institutions, and tele-technologies that make it circulate on earth and in orbital space all at once. It configures conditions wherein the power of modern state and global politics is shifted, advanced, expanded, and transferred to corporations, “with the inevitable reinvention of politico-juridical space – of citizenship, governance, rights, ownership,” and inescapable ecological implications.⁹ SSP obtains satellite imagery, records and produces evidence and data, and circulates evidence-based knowledge about certain acts of violence. It is formed and sustained by Enough Project, Google, Trelon, UNITAR (United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Program), the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, DigitalGlobe, and Not On Our Watch.¹⁰ *Not On Our Watch* that had allotted \$750,000 for the launching of the SSP in 2010, is a human rights organization that is founded and sustained by George Clooney, Don Cheadle, Matt Damon, Brad Pitt, Jerry Weintraub (died in July 2015), and David Pressman.¹¹ Although, *Not On Our Watch* has been renamed *The Sentry* in early 2019, the concerns remain “... the war criminals most responsible for Africa’s deadliest conflicts and the corrupt transnational networks that profit from them”.¹² This change of name comes after the ongoing protests and political shifts in Sudan, resulting in the removal of Omar al-Bashir who had been the President of Sudan for three decades (1989-2019). The cost of SSP as an effective global surveillance infrastructure is exorbitantly high, and as such it is only available to a limited number of people and organizations who can pay for it. Moreover, the advancement and popularity of this masculinist intervention and binary articulation of humanitarianism/violence and its extension to the international realm is connected with the rise of the politics of human rights and protection.¹³ In a speech at the UN Security Council, organized by the US government in September 2006, Clooney states:

“I am here to *represent the voices of the people who cannot speak for themselves*. ... In the time we are here today, more women and children will die violently in the Darfur region than in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine, Israel or Lebanon. ... In many ways it’s unfair, but it is nevertheless true, that this genocide is on your watch. How you deal with it will be your legacy, your Rwanda, your Cambodia, your Auschwitz” (emphasis added).¹⁴

Nation of the Sudan,” *Humanity* 7 (2016) 1: 7-26; Gabrielle Hecht, *Being Nuclear: Africans and the Global Uranium Trade* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2012).

⁹ Cf. Philip Leonard, “A Secret Dispersal: Derrida’s Satellites,” *Parallax* 20 (1) 2014: 98–111, (100).

¹⁰ See SSP’s partner organization, available at <<http://www.satsentinel.org/our-story/partner-organizations>> accessed November 4th 2018; Fadlalla *op. cit.* 2016.

¹¹ See the website of the *Not On Our Watch* <http://notonourwatchproject.org/who_we_are> accessed on November 4th 2018; See also, Mamdani, *op. cit.*, 53.

¹² See <<https://thesentry.org>> accessed on May 15th 2019.

¹³ Lucy Nicholas and Christine Agius, *The Persistence of Global Masculinism: Discourse, Gender and Neo-Colonial Re-Articulations of Violence* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2018).

¹⁴ cited in Mamdani, *op. cit.*, 53-54.

The repetition of imperial epistemology and sovereignty is what is at stake in who can speak and who is not allowed to. The power to perform, to know and speak *for*, decide on what must be done, and to define and compare historical violence to justify protection of one human collective is reserved for Clooney's and/or Hollywood's celebrity *orientalist*¹⁵ performance and denied to women and children in Darfur, and activists and critics in Sudan.¹⁶ Furthermore, except Pressman – who is, since 2014, the United States Ambassador for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations Security Council – all the others are Hollywood actors/celebrities and film producers. While, C. Wright Mills writes celebrities as “The Names that need no further identification. ... [and] the material for the media and communication and entertainment”.¹⁷ “We are the antigenocide paparazzi,” George Clooney insists. Although, “we” refers to human celebrities, or “personalities of national glamour,”¹⁸ that are entrenched in people's memories as moving images (Hollywood movies) and reproduced without end by international mass and social/political media, it has entered into relationship and is operating with satellites that are silently circling north and southern Sudan “... to let the world watch to see what happens”.¹⁹ The “antigenocide paparazzi” is embedded in an infrastructure that entangles scientists, celebrity bodies, the film industry, neoliberal politics, money, tele-technologies, law, media and a “hegemony of activity and activism”.²⁰

Satellite *imagery* that is seen as instant and imperative evidence, guarding “human rights,” and the lives of *people who cannot speak for themselves* in distant places, is at the heart of this infrastructure. As an “erection toward height”, the satellite, Jacques Derrida writes, “is always the sign of the sovereignty of the sovereign”.²¹ It does not only exercise space sovereignty, flying over the national sovereign territory of post-colonial nation-states – Sudan and South Sudan – as well as other countries in the continent, but also articulates the need to *make known* and produce new planetary evidence based on satellite *imagery*. It places before the world and human eyes what they cannot see on their own, what has been previously impossible to see, and what has ethical, legal, political, and historical value. This planetary mode of instant visual evidence recording is imbued with ethics and politics of humanitarianism and the narrative of life-death, saving human life on earth, involving

¹⁵ See Talal Asad, “Two European Images of Non-European Rule,” *Anthropology and Colonial Encounter*, ed. T. Asad (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Ithaca Press and Humanities Press), 103-118; Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979);

¹⁶ Fadlalla, *op. cit.*, 2016; Fadlalla, *op. cit.*, 2019.; See also Philippe Gout, “Beyond the Law: The Evidentiary Making of the Darfur Genocide,” in this Special Issue.

¹⁷ C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71-93.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁹ See “Clooney's ‘Antigenocide Paparazzi’: Watching Sudan: Satellites — and some star power — will put Sudan's crisis in the spotlight”. *Time* (2010), available at, <<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2040211,00.html>>, accessed on December 13th 2018.

²⁰ This is borrowed from Gil Anidjar. See *Histories of Violence: Anatomy of Destruction*, Brad Evans interview with Gil Anidjar, available at <<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/histories-of-violence-anatomy-of-destruction>> accessed on October 5th 2018.

²¹ Jacques Derrida cited in Leonard *op. cit.*, 101; See also, Jacques Derrida, *The Beast and the Sovereign*, vol. 1, transl. G. Bennington (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 215.

“demographic power” and “... the power to see everything, to see the whole, having literally, potentially, a right of inspection over everything”.²² “It’s not a thing ... it’s everything. And you’re part of it,” is inscribed on the World Wide Web of the DigitalGlobe – “a business unit of Maxar Technologies” that provides “commercial satellites, space robots, high resolution Earth observation, and advanced geospatial solutions”.²³ As such it is seen as a radical translation of the world, turning “what used to be science fiction” into “reality”.²⁴ As “everything” the DigitalGlobe transcends national and human sovereignty, taking place as human/nonhuman all at once. What is more is that as “the first and only company to deliver true 30cm resolution imagery,” it is inescapable not only for the SSP but for “40 governments” that “trust DigitalGlobe for mission-critical information about the Earth”.²⁵ As the name suggests, it simultaneously connects and transforms national sovereignty politics and law, making the whole globe accessible as evidentiary images that “... empower better decisions.”²⁶ In other words, the DigitalGlobe produces a futuristic visual evidence paradigm that makes visible what is beyond the “common-sense experiences of earthbound creatures,” to borrow from Hanna Arendt.²⁷ Tracing the advance of satellite imagery to the “Cold War space race,” and militarized surveillance, Elizabeth DeLoughrey writes that the satellite produces a certain “vision of the globe” that both connects to and disconnects human eyes from the earth.²⁸ The intervention of the satellite armed with sensors into the everyday human life on the surface of the earth is as much transformative as it is equivalent to “heavenly spies, scanning the earth’s surface so as to gather information hidden even from people on the ground. That process links a synoptic view with probing”.²⁹ According to J. Hillis Miller, satellites can hardly be confined to the ways in which they divide and shape and shift our bodily and everyday existence, as globalization – economic, cultural, military – is brought into existence and set in motion by tele-technologies – i.e. “telephone, radio, cinema, television, cables, satellites, cell phones, iPods, and, finally, the most powerful of all, the Internet or the World Wide Web”.³⁰ He writes, how the use of Google Earth connects us to the Web by Wild Blue Satellite and thus detaches us from our worldly place as it connects us to a satellite circling the earth: “It makes me more than a little dizzy to look at the image and to think of it, since I seem to be in two places at the same time, in my study and 1,475 feet in

²² Derrida *op. cit.*

²³ See <<https://www.digitalglobe.com/about/our-company>>, accessed on November 10th 2018.

²⁴ See <<https://www.digitalglobe.com/the-digitalglobe>>, accessed on November 10th 2018.

²⁵ *Ibid.* “About Us, Our Company”.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Hanna Arendt cited in Elizabeth DeLoughrey, “Satellite Planetaryity and the Ends of the Earth,” *Public Culture* 26 (2014) 2: 257-280.

²⁸ DeLoughrey *op. cit.*

²⁹ Wolfgang Sachs cited in Elizabeth *op. cit.*, 261. See also, Hect *op. cit.*, 143-144.

³⁰ J. Hillis Miller, “Derrida’s Politics of Autoimmunity,” *Discourse* 30 (2008) 1 & 2: 208-225, (219); See also, Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 194-195; Manuel Castells, “The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance,” *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 616 (2008) 1: 78-93.

the air above it, looking down on its roof from above”.³¹ Jerry Brotton writes, “Of an estimated 2 billion people currently online globally, more than half a billion have downloaded Google Earth, and the figure continues to rise”.³² This entanglement that is an attachment to and detachment from the earth in the everyday, our vision of the globe, and globalization is increasingly built upon tele-technologies which “... involve[s] a general break with all sorts of pasts”.³³ In this context, the human individual, modernity, the national and global are entangled wherein surveillance and communication satellites advance the sovereignty of nation-state and at the same time shift the power away from the state to worldwide political, nongovernmental and commercial organizations and scientists and experts.³⁴ If during the Cold War the satellite was reserved for the modern state and its military operations, it is now commercialized and available for human rights and anti-genocide organizations such as The Sentinel Project, “a Canadian non-profit organization,” operating in Asia, Africa and Middle East.³⁵ It, too, is unleashed over the earth and narrated as “humanitarian aerospace,” insisting on guarding the lives of women, children and the disabled. This insistence is based on satellite imagery and their translation into unquestionable evidence, making demands on the organization to act responsibly or feel the obligation to protect the *Other*. The narrative of “democratizing” access to satellite imagery and information, helping “humanity,” assisting “people in developing countries,” and providing evidence-based knowledge about “climate change” is also repeated by a Silicon Valley company called *Planet*. In a Ted talk³⁶ in 2014, Will Marshall, co-founder and CEO of Planet, conveys to his audience how the time for old, big, slow and costly satellites are over, and how “you cannot fix what you cannot see”.

“What we would ideally want is images of the whole planet every day. ... if we want to understand it [Earth] much more regularly, we need lots of satellites. ... So me and my friends we started Planet Labs to make satellites ultra-compact and small and highly capable. ... It is 10 by 10 by 30 centimeters, it weighs four kilograms, and we have stuffed the latest and greatest electronics and sensor system into this little package, so that even though this is really small, it can take pictures 10 times the resolution of the big satellite. And we call this satellite “Dove,” ... our [satellites] have a humanitarian mission, so we wanted to call them Doves. ... We have launched them. And not just one but many. ... we are going to launch more than hundreds of these satellites over the course of the next year (i.e. 2015). It is going to be the largest constellation of satellites in human history. ... they are all cameras pointed down, and they slowly scan across as the Earth rotates underneath. The Earth rotates every 24 hours, so we scan every

³¹ Miller *op. cit.*

³² Jerry Brotton, *A History of the World in Twelve Maps* (London: Penguin Books, 2013), 406

³³ Cf. Appadurai, *op. cit.*, 3.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 194 ff.

³⁵ See, <<https://thesentinelproject.org/what-we-do/the-role-of-technology/>>, accessed on December 10th 2018.

³⁶ See “Tiny satellites that photograph the entire planet, every day,” Will Marshall, (2014) available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UHKebemburs>>, accessed on January 5th 2019.

point on the planet every 24 hours. ... we want to empower NGOs and companies and scientists and journalists to be able to answer the questions that they have about the planet”.

The increase of satellites in the orbital space imbued with the “rhetoric of modernity,”³⁷ promising *new* forms of evidenced-based knowledge necessary for progress, development and to shape and control human actions on earth and to watch the *Earth* also means more space or satellite debris.³⁸ Satellites are not “immortal,” they crash, “die,” shatter and become debris, fall out or spin uselessly in the orbit, suggesting unimaginable environmental consequences.

Wrapped in the promise of modernity, SSP’s aim is to obtain evidence by which the perpetrators of genocide or exterminatory violence are held accountable and punished, victims are identified, violence is documented and archived, global politics and law are advanced and peoples’ life chances are increased. To identify the perpetrators/victims and to monitor survival of target populations, to capture imagery, process and produce necessary evidence and proof that would in turn produce certain definitions of violence, for example genocide, and thus enunciate certain punishments would challenge the judicial system and partly imply “... *taking the place* of the judicial system”.³⁹ SSP is thus exercising a certain authority based on satellite imagery, its translation into evidence-based knowledge of what happened, is happening or about to happen or will happen if not stopped, and is the infrastructure that circulates this knowledge globally. DigitalGlobe is, then, indispensable to SSP. With their “clear eyes” that “see through smoke and haze”,⁴⁰ DigitalGlobe satellites fly over Sudan and South Sudan to witness and to capture images that register evidence of ongoing violence, military activities, mass graves, ruinations and destructions of villages, and visualizes the possibility of future violence. Depending on time and the space to be covered by the satellite image a “single shot” of an area of about 272 square kilometers costs 10,000 USD, and, and a “full strip” image of a 115 kilometer long and 14 kilometer wide area may cost 70,000 USD.⁴¹ The focus on the financial dimension of SSP needs to include how the satellite images lead to the creation of evidence-based knowledge production that in turn forms a web of power relations, which would bring us closer to, but also stretch Michel Foucault’s reflection on power/knowledge.⁴² The satellite images are transferred for analysis

³⁷ Cf. Walter D. Mignolo, “The Conceptual Triad: Modernity/Coloniality/Decoloniality,” *On Decoloniality: Concepts, Analytics, Praxis*, ed. W. D. Mignolo and C. E. Walsh (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018), 135-152 at 139.

³⁸ Timothy G. Nelson, “Regulating the Void: In-Orbit Collisions and Space Debris,” *Journal of Space Law* 40 (2015-2016) 1-2: 105-130; Alexandra Witze, “The Quest to Conquer Earth’s Space Junk Problem,” *Nature* 561 (2018): 24-26; Larry Hardesty, “Where to Grab Space Debris: Algorithm tested aboard the International Space Station analyzes the rotation of objects in space,” *MIT News*, (2014), available at <<http://news.mit.edu/2014/algorithm-spinning-space-debris-0910>>, accessed on January 18th 2019.

³⁹ Cf. Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*, ed. C. Gordon, transl. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepshaw, K. Soper (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 34.

⁴⁰ The Sentinel Project, *op. cit.*

⁴¹ See *Time* interview with Lars Bromley, a top UN imagery analyst, *op. cit.*

⁴² Foucault *op. cit.*

to image analysts at DigitalGlobe and Enough Project, a human rights branch of the Center for American Progress that has employed analysts from the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Program and others from the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative. The analysts see the images as a trustworthy “site and document of knowledge production,” and inscribe their meanings into them which specify their evidential qualities and produce reports.⁴³ The reports, as related writings, are extensions of the tele-technology⁴⁴ as they are composed somewhere, made accessible online, and travel across time and space. They are soon to be read as evidence of killings and destructions in distant parts of the world, underscoring the political responsibility to protect. As such the reports are circulated, entering another infrastructure that connects “the press, policymakers, news organizations and a mobile network of activists on Twitter and Facebook” and thereby travel worldwide.⁴⁵ As it is inscribed on SSP’s website, as “our story”: “SSP synthesizes evidence from satellite imagery, data pattern analysis, and ground sourcing to produce reports”.⁴⁶ At the hearing mentioned at the beginning of this article, the American citizens learn to think state violence in Sudan through satellite imagery that claims an evidential relationship to a violence that cannot be made known and seen without technoscience. The images that can be seen are thus expected to bring American and global attention to state violence and destruction in Sudan in general. This iterates what Susan Sontag wrote, namely “... the very notion of atrocity, of war crime, is associated with the expectation of photographic evidence”.⁴⁷ What is seeable is what the “clear eyes” – cameras – of the DigitalGlobe satellite sees, without regard to historical, political, economic and social context or the original violence.⁴⁸ The imagery that comes down to earth from “satellite-eyes [that] are omnipresent and omniscient”⁴⁹ and that can be archived and retrieved in turn shapes what Mahmood Mamdani calls “evidence of the eye”– human eyes.⁵⁰ The satellite imagery enclosed with a politicized narrative, therefore, becomes much more than just what can be seen. It claims to “bear witness to a state of affairs,”⁵¹ which transforms the human eyes/body into visual witness. Indeed, the SSP infrastructure transforms the camera into a unique digital technology that *transcends* the boundaries of the nation-state, capturing imagery and/or transmitting evidence that not only translates and globalizes local violence but shifts the

⁴³ Janet Vertesi, *Seeing Like a Rover: How Robots, Teams, and Images Craft Knowledge of Mars* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 242.

⁴⁴ Jacques Derrida and Bernard Stiegler, *Echographies of Television: Filmed Interviews*, transl. J. Bajorek (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2002), 38-39.

⁴⁵ See “Our Story” on SSP website <<http://www.satsentinel.org/our-story>>, accessed on November 10th 2018.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Sontag, *op. cit.*, 74.

⁴⁸ Cf. Mamdani *op. cit.*, 19.

⁴⁹ Wolfgang Sachs qtd in Elizabeth *op. cit.*, 263; See also, Wolfgang Sachs, *Planet Dialectics: Explorations in Environment and Development* (London: Zed Books, 2015), 115.

⁵⁰ Mamdani *op. cit.*, 7.

⁵¹ Wolfgang *op. cit.*, 112.

course of international law and politics.⁵² Tom Udall starts the hearing:

I cannot tell you how important it is, I think, George [Clooney], for you and John [Prendergast] to have gone over there and brought these images back. And I think, chairman Kerry was right, saying we should play them and have them up on the screen, because, I think, as painful as they are to see them, the thing that this does is allow all of the American people and people around the world to really get engaged with us, and say, we don't want this to happen again... The idea that Satellite Sentinel could be used by persecutors, I was a former prosecutor so I kind of... rally the idea of having the bad guys that know something is gonna be done to them... Have you visited with prosecutors at The Hague? Are they interested in your technology? Have you talked to them about the kinds of things that, maybe, could be utilized to strengthen cases on those kind of things?

George Clooney: You talk about the Hague. ... a second. It [stopping violence] requires constant drip of information. It requires you to keep piling it on. And sometimes that means it is not going to be effective in stopping it, but at the very least it is gonna be used later as evidence in a trial. We would like to use this information at the Security Council, because a lot of the times what happens at the Security Council, someone, we know the players, will veto any raising of the mandate of protection. Because, they'll say, well this is just rebel infighting. Well, we have imagery that shows, we got images yesterday that show an Antonov flying over the top, plumes of smoke, where it's bombed innocent villagers. Well that is not rebel infighting. So, our hope is not to just use it at the Hague, but our hope is to just try and use it as something to pry the Security Council towards raising the mandate from six to seven, trying to move that along.

John Prendergast: The current International Criminal Court mandate only involves crimes committed in Darfur, so basically as the arrest warrants have been issued for the three of the key regime leaders, they are greeted internationally with a lot of skepticism. There are still a number of governments that believe a lot of this evidence is manufactured... Part of the purpose of having this Satellite Sentinel Project is to create airtight evidence for future arrest warrants and prosecutions”.

SSP is translated as a *political technology* able to invert global politics, i.e. potentially transform the veto-system of the UN Security Council. It is described as that which can “create airtight evidence” that has to do with life and death – “We got images yesterday that show an Antonov flying over the top, plumes of smoke, where it's bombed innocent villagers”, as Clooney asserts.

⁵² Cf. John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (London: Macmillan Education, 1988), 1.

The satellite imagery is able “to see and make seen” the details of bombing and thus “to make-known to the whole world”⁵³ who the victims – innocent villagers – are, and what needs to be done to stop it and how to bring about legal, political and social justice. Clooney holds that knowledge alone cannot force us to action immediately, and that the images and the piling on of information are the making of an evidentiary archive for future trials. Herein, SSP is seen and made-known as the ontological foundation of humanitarian⁵⁴ intervention that points at new and *instantaneous* modes of political engagement in the face of destruction and violence, rendering the established legal and political practices and processes obsolete. It, therefore, requires global political attention as it is translated to introduce an *evidence-based* knowledge and politics to the UN Security Council. These unparalleled technoscientific practices and processes are narrated to be unique as they provide evidence of violence that has already taken place, is taking place, about to take place or is yet to take place. It is in this manner that SSP enters global politics, aiming to “... prevent members of the Security Council, chiefly China, from vetoing intervention for lack of proof”.⁵⁵ Thus, the control of *making-seen* and *known* goes hand in hand with the purchasing of political power that also demonstrates a future in which there are “existential interests [in] technical images,”⁵⁶ and not least a shift from the state to the techno-rhetoric of modernity or technopolitics of humanitarianism/violence.⁵⁷

In a special session of the UN Security Council on February 5, 2003, prior to the invasion of Iraq in 2003, Colin Powell, then United States’ secretary of state, had formed his address on the basis of politics, the UN Resolution 1441, and of surveillance satellite imagery as evidence of the Iraqi state’s weapons of mass destruction. The slideshow as an act of manufactured visual evidence “... was a global lie that shows the consequences of coloniality disguised”⁵⁸ by the rhetoric of modernity, promising to save “human life,” and bring well-being and security to everyone on earth.⁵⁹ This was one of those instants where the United States, a sovereign nation-state, not only “bought information from the satellites of worldwide surveillance,” for example DigitalGlobe and GeoEye,⁶⁰ but extended this to “a sensory way of representing the sovereign”⁶¹ and/or displaying as slideshow the “territorial

⁵³ Cf. Derrida *op. cit.*, 38.

⁵⁴ Cf. Fadlalla *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵⁶ Vilém Flusser, *Into the Universe of Technical Images*, transl. N. Ann Roth (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 4.

⁵⁷ Cf. James J. Hughes, “Human Enhancement and the Emergent Technopolitics of the 21st Century,” *Managing Nano-Bio-Info-Cogno Innovations: Converging Technologies in Society*, ed. W. S. Bainbridge and M.C. Roco (Dordrecht: Springer, 2005), 285–307.

⁵⁸ Mignolo *op. cit.*, 141.

⁵⁹ Andrew Herscher, “Surveillant Witnessing: Satellite Imagery and the Visual Politics of Human Rights,” *Public Culture* 26 (2014) 3: 469-500, (470); See also, Colin Powell’s Presentation to the UN Security Council On Iraq’s WMD Program (2014), available at <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErIDSJHRVMA>>, accessed on January 19th 2019.

⁶⁰ Lisa Parks, *Rethinking Media Coverage: Vertical Mediation and the War on Terror* (New York and London, 2018), 102-142.

⁶¹ Cf. Derrida *op. cit.*, 258, 215.

expansion of empire".⁶² If satellite imagery constituted an important part of the military infrastructure in the Gulf War of 1991,⁶³ the display of satellite imagery at the UN Security Council marked a global politico-legal shift. As Eduardo Cadava writes, like other modern wars the Iraq war "... depended on the technologies of sight: satellite and aerial photography, light-enhancing television cameras, infrared flashes and sighting devices, thermographic images, and even cameras on warheads".⁶⁴ Satellite imagery is becoming more and more central to the production and circulation of evidence, global ethical, legal and political organizations, humanitarianism, violence and the right to act, but also space debris and ecological harm.⁶⁵ At the same time, it renders the struggle "to control the sky with *finger and eye*: digital systems and virtually immediate panoptical visualization,"⁶⁶ an everyday human condition. In fact, SSP, The Sentinel Project and Planet maintain that "the panoptization of the earth – seen, inspected, surveyed, and transported by satellite images,"⁶⁷ is necessary to advance and produce evidence-based knowledge to make immediate and right political and legal decisions. In an interview Clooney attempts an analogy, saying, "This is as if this were 1943 and we had a camera inside Auschwitz and we said, 'O.K., if you guys don't want to do anything about it, that's one thing. But you can't say you did not know'".⁶⁸

In *Bilderkrieg* (War-Images), Harun Farocki returns to some aerial images of the extermination camps in Auschwitz that the US Air Force reconnaissance photographers had "unintentionally" captured in 1944,⁶⁹ and which the image analysts had failed to see. Published almost 34 years later, like Francisco Boix's photographs of everyday life/death inside the Mauthausen extermination camp,⁷⁰ the images are archived as documentary evidence.⁷¹ They show the barracks and gas chambers and other details of the camps but render the human figures in form of pixels, keeping the everyday annihilatory violence at bay.

⁶² Elizabeth *op. cit.*, 259; See also Eric Hobsbawm, *Globalization, Democracy and Terrorism* (London: Abacus, 2007), 155-167; Mills *op. cit.*, 216 ff. See also, Gabrielle Hecht, ed. *Entangled Geographies: Empire and Technopolitics in the Global Cold War* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2011).

⁶³ Chad Harris, "The Omniscient Eye: Satellite Imagery, 'Battlespace Awareness,' and the Structures of the Imperial Gaze," *Surveillance and Society* 4 (2006) 1–2: 101–22.

⁶⁴ Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 135; See also, Sheila Jasanoff, "Image and Imagination: The Formation of Global Environmental Consciousness," *Changing the Atmosphere: Expert Knowledge and Environmental Governance*, ed. C. A. Miller and P. N. Edwards, (Cambridge, MA and London: MIT Press, 2001), 309–338; Kelly Oliver, "Earth: Love It or Leave It," *Eco-Deconstruction: Derrida and Environmental Philosophy*, ed. M. Fritsch, et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 339-354.

⁶⁵ See Hannah Meszaros Martin, "'Defoliating the World,': Ecocide, Visual Evidence and 'Earthly Memory,'" *Third Text* 32 (2018) 2-3: 1-24.

⁶⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, ed. G. Anidjar (Routledge: New York and London, 2002), 61.

⁶⁷ Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Aporias*, transl. T. Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 21.

⁶⁸ Time *op. cit.*

⁶⁹ Antje Ehmann, "A War Diary: Harun Farocki," *European Urbanity*, ed. B. Vlay, et al., (Vienna and New York: Springer 2007), 364-375, at 364-65.

⁷⁰ Benito Bermejo, *Francisco Boix, der Fotograf von Mauthausen*, transl. J. Moser-Kroiss (Vienna: Mandelbaum Verlag, 2007).

⁷¹ See the documentary film, "Scrapbooks from Hell: The Auschwitz Albums," directed by Erik Nelson, National Geographic Channel, available at,

<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=me8dfmTxlgY>>, accessed on February 3rd, 2019.

Farocki's concern seems to be entangled with Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno's reflection on enlightened modernity and systematic violence.⁷² Thus, he engages the aporia of *die Aufklärung* and the aerial images of the extermination camps, and what the images make visible or how history happens in these images. By contrast, Clooney's translation of the promise of modernity and of the act of filming or being filmed while acting – being and making-seen – suggests that equipped with sensor, the satellite is able to both control, discipline and guard humanity on earth. The speculation has it that an inspecting eye that sees and makes-seen without being seen would have made the Nazis exercise surveillance over, and against, themselves to the extent that Auschwitz had been impossible to think. In addition, Clooney's translation sets satellites as what Michel Foucault calls "capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives".⁷³ This capillary power is now entangled with what Sheila Jasanoff reads as "market thinking and neoliberal forms of governance," "a neoliberal, marketized political order" according to Arjun Appadurai, or *neoliberalism as exception*, "... reconfiguring relationships between governing and the governed, power and knowledge, and sovereignty and territoriality" as Aihwa Ong discusses.⁷⁴ *The panopticism of the earth* is, however, inscribed not on architecture as it was the case in the eighteenth and nineteenth century,⁷⁵ but on satellite imagery, seen as fundamental to disturbing the dearth of humanity in the world and, above all, to the prevention of future genocides.

As one of the great enigmas of our time, modern genocides have turned into central matters of concern of critical inquiry across disciplines and are mostly conceived as one of the dystopian drawbacks of modernity.⁷⁶ The systematic and efficient state-sanctioned

⁷² See Anson Rabinbach, *In the Shadow of Catastrophe: German Intellectuals between Apocalypse and Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); See also Walter W. Mignolo, *The Darker Side of Western Modernity: Global Futures, Decolonial Options* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 181-209.

⁷³ Foucault *op. cit.*, 39.

⁷⁴ Sheila Jasanoff, *The Ethics of Invention: Technology and the Human Future* (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2016), 262; Arjun Appadurai, "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics," *Public Culture* 14 (2002) 1: 21-47 at 25; Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutation in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), 3.

⁷⁵ Foucault *op. cit.*, 148 ff.

⁷⁶ Arjun Appadurai, *Fear of Small Numbers: An Essay on the Geography of Anger* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999); Philippe Bourgois, "Foreword: Anthropology in the Global State of Emergency," *Engaged Observer: Anthropology, Advocacy, and Activism*, ed. V. Sanford and A. Angel-Ajani (New Brunswick, NJ and London, 2008), ix-xii; Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, transl. J. Pinkham (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1972); Robert Gellately and Ben Kiernan, *The Specter of Genocide: Mass Murder in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Alexander L. Hinton 2002b. "The Dark Side of Modernity: Toward an Anthropology of Genocide" *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, ed. A. L. Hinton (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 2002b), 1-40; Max Horkheimer and Theodor W.

annihilation of people and the destruction of their lifeworlds is emblematically translated into genocide as evidence of modernity's violence. In fact, as modernity's violence, genocide does not target humans alone – women, children and men, but like war and testing and explosions of nuclear bombs since 1945,⁷⁷ it also constitutes violence against the *Earth*, which is an "infrastructure of life".⁷⁸

For the last about 25 years, a great share of inter- and transdisciplinary studies on evidence-making has been devoted to the documentation and analysis of acts of genocide. The term genocide is a juridical determination that generally refers to acts of systematic annihilation and destruction of a "particular" human collective. This scholarly endeavor has contributed to a worldwide growth of knowledge that explains both the reasons for the occurrence of past genocides and the ways to prevent any recurrence. In the afterlives of the Holocaust, some studies more specifically explored the roots of why genocide had culminated in the twentieth century. By translating genocide into international law, the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention also marked a historical shift in the ways nations, states and global politics may deal with genocidal violence.⁷⁹ The Genocide Convention is distinguished from crimes against humanity, focusing specifically on "the intent to destroy" as well as on causing serious physical (*actus reus*) or mental (*mens rea*) harm to members of a particular group.⁸⁰ For the purpose of proving genocide, the Genocide Convention is unambiguous in its insistence on *concrete evidence*.⁸¹ In other words, it is impossible to deal with genocidal

Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, transl. J. Cumming (New York: Seabury Press, 1972); Mignolo, *op. cit.*, 2011; Dirk Moses, ed. *Genocide and Settler Society: Frontier Violence and Stolen Indigenous Children in Australian History* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2004); Dirk Moses, ed. *Empire, Colony, Genocide: Conquest, Occupation, and Subaltern Resistance in World History*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008); Hannibal Travis, *Genocide in the Middle East: The Ottoman Empire, Iraq, and Sudan* (Durham, North Carolina: Carolina Academic Press, 2010); Nelson Maldonado-Torres, *Against War: Views from the Underside of Modernity* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008). Jürgen Zimmerer, *Von Windhuk nach Auschwitz? Beiträge zum Verhältnis von Kolonialismus und Holocaust* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2011).

⁷⁷ Karen Barad, "Troubling Time/s and Ecologies of Nothingness: Re-turning, Re-membering, and Facing the Incalculable," *Eco-Deconstruction: Derrida and Environmental Philosophy*, ed. M. Fritsch, et al. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), 206-248.

⁷⁸ Ros Gray and Shela Sheikh, "The Wretched Earth," *Third Text* 32 (2018) 2-3: 163-175; See also María Puig de la Bellacasa, "Encountering Bioinfrastructure: Ecological Struggles and the Sciences of Soil," *Social Epistemology: A Journal of Knowledge, Culture and Policy*, 28 (2014) 1: 26–40; Jürgen Zimmerer, ed. *Climate Change and Genocide: Environmental Violence in the 21st Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2015).

⁷⁹ Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation, Analysis of Government, Proposals for Redress* (Clark, New Jersey: The Lawbook Exchange, 2008); Lippman Matthew, "A Road Map to the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime Genocide," *Journal of Genocide Research*. 4 (2002) 2: 177-195; Alexander Hinton, ed. 2002a. *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002a).

⁸⁰ Schabas, William. 2009. *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 172, 241.

⁸¹ Victoria Sanford, "Excavation of the Heart: Reflections on Truth, Memory, and Structures of Understanding," *Engaged Observer: Anthropology, Advocacy, and Activism*, ed. V. Sanford and A. Angel-Ajani, 19-41 (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Victoria Sanford, *Buried Secrets: Truth and Human Rights in Guatemala* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Uli Linke,

violence from a legal point of view without instantly turning to the collection and production of evidence which in turn involves the politics of genocide and/or naming.⁸² While the imperial annihilatory violence against the Armenians, the Herero and Nama, and the Maji Maji War in Tanzania, among many others, remain to be legally or politically recognized, the endless colonial violence in Palestine,⁸³ and the future existence of Rohingyas in Myanmar and Êzîdîs in Iraq, a country with a history of genocides,⁸⁴ seem to be too political to be submitted to international law. For these acts of annihilation to be legally recognized, evidence must take the form of legal procedures within different instances of the judicial system both at the national and international level – for example the International Criminal Court.

On a more general level, evidence today has become fundamental to various spheres of life and to a fully functioning society. The increasing demand for evidenced-based verdicts, evidenced-based policy, digital evidence, evidence of statistical surveys, evidence-based medicine, artistic evidence, photographic evidence, evidenced-based violence, and evidence and (legal) responsibility to mention but a few, is inescapable.⁸⁵ As it is outlined in this paper and this issue, evidence is a translation that takes various forms – institutional, visual, documentary, architectural, linguistic, political, algorithmic such as satellite imagery that is itself a network – and is produced through modernity's infrastructures. The quest for more sophisticated evidence also means legal, political, social and technoscientific shifts that in turn

"Archives of Violence: The Holocaust and the German Politics of Memory," *Annihilating Difference: The Anthropology of Genocide*, ed. A. L. Hinton, 229-271 (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2002).

⁸² Edward Hermann and David Peterson, *The Politics of Genocide* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2010); Mahmood Mamdani, "The Politics of Naming: Genocide, Civil War, Insurgency," *London Review of Books* 29 (2007) 5.

⁸³ Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London and New York: Verso, 2007); Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage books, 1980); Edward W. Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999); Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, "Deliberating the Holocaust and the Nakba: Disruptive Empathy and Binationalism in Israel/Palestine," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (2014) 1: 77-99; Seyla Benhabib, *The Reluctant Modernism of Hannah Arendt* (Lanham and Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); Elisabeth Weber, ed. *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).

⁸⁴ Fazil Moradi, "In Search of Cardinal Virtues in Iraq," *Opendemocracy* (2017), available at, <<https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/north-africa-west-asia/in-search-of-cardinal-virtues-in-iraq/>>, accessed on February 20th, 2019.

⁸⁵ João Biehl and A. Petryna, eds. *When People Come First: Critical Studies in Global Health* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2013); Julia Eckert, "Does Evidence Matter?" *Allegra Lab* (2016), available at, <<http://allegralaboratory.net/does-evidence-matter/>>, accessed on January 19th, 2019. Mark Maguire, U. Rao, and N. Zurawski, eds. *Bodies as Evidence: Security, Knowledge, and Power* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2018); Edward J. Mullen, "Reconsidering the 'idea' of evidence in evidence-based policy and practice," *European Journal of Social Work* 19 (2016) 3-4: 310-335; Michael Losavio, D. Wilson and A. Elmaghraby, "Prevalence, Use, and Evidentiary Issues of Digital Evidence of Cellular Telephone Consumer and Small-Scale Digital Devices," *Journal of Digital Forensic Practice* 1 (2007) 4: 291-296; Richard Rottenburg, S. E. Merry, S. J. Park, and J. Mugler, eds., *The World of Indicators: The Making of Government Knowledge through Quantification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

transforms society and points towards both an imaginary and an unknown future.

Inquiring into making, production and acts of evidence and proof of genocidal violence, the six papers in this issue turn away from satellites in the orbital space, turning to the making and production of evidence of genocide and its trans-formative effects in law, trials, forensic science, media, technoscience, social bonds, politics, museums, the visual, and the imaginary on earth. The issue is committed to exploring the infinite and untranslatable violence of modernity as well as its translatability in specific contexts in Sudan, South Sudan, United States, Colombia, Guatemala, India, Brazil, Poland, Germany and Rwanda. We learn how international law or the UN Genocide Convention and legal evidence have not prevented the recurrence of genocidal violence since the Holocaust, and how evidence as translation becomes urgent, interrupting the untranslatability of genocidal violence. Evidence becomes irreducible to the legal condition to re-member the past or the promise of a world in which life is protected and worth living. The issue takes up the general dilemma between the social and juridico-political necessity to tell true stories about the world and the persistent impossibility of overcoming the fallibility of all human knowledge, when the story is about acts of annihilation.

Regardless of the proliferation, global production, and circulation of both knowledge and normative disambiguation, genocide continues to be committed on the grounds of racial, ethnic, political, religious, national, and cultural identification and the claims of land, soil – for example Rohingyas in Myanmar and Êzîdîs in Iraq.⁸⁶ As systematic acts of annihilation and destruction, colonial genocides and the genocides of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries are neither explicable by the action of any single individual or nation-state, nor can their impossible realities be reduced to matters of legal evidence. They rather implicate *modernity's particular form of distributed agency* – distributed between politics of nation, race or religion, science and technology, bureaucracy, law, neoliberal politics, capitalist calculations, territorial expansion and particular forms of subject formation. Seeking evidence for one responsible agency seems impossible and entirely misguided.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Ibrahim Azeem, *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Hidden Genocide* (London: Hurst, 2016); Fazil Moradi and Kjell Anderson, "The Islamic State's Êzîdî Genocide in Iraq: The 'Sinjâr Operations'," *Genocide Studies International* 10 (2016) 2: 1-33.

⁸⁷ Arjun Appadurai, "Dead Certainty: Ethnic Violence in the Era of Globalization," *Genocide: An Anthropological Reader*, ed. A. L. Hinton (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 286–303; Candace Vogler and P. Markell, "Introduction: Violence, Redemption, and the Liberal Imagination," *Public Culture* 15 (2003) 1: 1–10; Fazil Moradi, "The Force of Writing in Genocide: On Sexual Violence in the al-Anfâl Operations and Beyond," *Gender Violence in Peace and War: States of Complicity*, ed. V. Sanford et al. (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2016), 102-115; Frantz Fanon, *Les Damnés de la Terre* (Paris: La Découverte, 2002); Herbert Marcuse, *Technology, War and Fascism: Collected Papers of Herbert Marcuse*, ed. D. Kellner (London and New York: Routledge, 1998); Homi K Bhabha, "On Writing Rights," *Globalizing Rights*, ed. M. J. Gibney (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 162-183; Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Marc Nichanian, *The Historiographic Perversion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Veena Das, *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of

Against this backdrop, scholarship within the diverse areas of genocide studies has expanded and interrupted the untranslatability of genocidal violence. As the separate but interconnected studies in this issue demonstrate, translation takes place in various forms that aim at making systematic/genocidal violence comprehensible, something that can be narrated, seen, known, remembered, and legally and ethically defined and condemned that in turn produces and circulates certain interpretations that guarantee their provisional meanings in our everyday and the future world. Herein any rendition of past violence performs an act of translation that acts independently of the past violence.⁸⁸ It is translation that writes⁸⁹ and visualizes, and thus renders public past violence, making it transnational, transgenerational, transitional, transcultural, and global.⁹⁰ But, as is detailed in Fazil Moradi's contribution, *Un translatable death, evidentiary bodies: after–Auschwitz and Murambi–in translation*, "... translation entails that genocidal violence leaves nothing "original" to go back to". The untranslatability lies in the destruction of collective memories through the irreversible extermination of the target population in whole or in part – something that remains unthinkable due to the acts of annihilation.⁹¹ This produces a *void* that keeps unfolding, shifting, resisting and escaping knowing, and that interrupts any form of judgment as it remains unreadable and inaccessible in the afterlives of genocidal violence. Although actual acts of genocide are unimaginable and, as Giorgio Agamben remarks, "impossible to bear witness to,"⁹² evidence is nevertheless made and produced to legally define and prove

California Press, 2007); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁸⁸ Fazil Moradi, *Hosting Femicide-Genocide: On the Living On of the Un Translatable in Kurdistan, Iraq*, (Forthcoming); Fazil Moradi, "Genocide in Translation: On Memory, Remembrance, and Politics of the Future," *Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation*, ed. F. Moradi, et. al., (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 57–74

⁸⁹ Cf. Jacques Derrida, "Des Tours De Babel," *Difference in Translation*, ed. J. F. Graham (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), 165-207; Benjamin, Walter, "The Task of the Translator," *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. H. Arendt, (New York: Schocken Books, 2007), 69–82.

⁹⁰ Fazil Moradi, M. Six-Hohenbalken and R. Buchenhorst "Introduction: The Past in Translation," *Memory and Genocide: On What Remains and the Possibility of Representation*, ed. F. Moradi, et. al., (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), 1-9. Richard Rottenburg, "Crossing gaps of indeterminacy: Some theoretical remarks," *Translation and Ethnography: The Anthropological Challenge of Intercultural Understanding*, ed. T. Maranhao and B. Streck, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2003), 30-43; Matthias Kaufmann – Richard Rottenburg, "Translation and Cultural Identity," *Civiltà del Mediterraneo XII* (2013), 329-347; Spivak, Chakravorty Gayatri, *Outside in the Teaching Machine* (New York and London: Routledge, 1993), 195.

⁹¹ Ifi Amadiume, and A. An-Na'im, eds. *The Politics of Memory: Truth, Healing and Social Justice* (London and New York: Zed Books, 2000); Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling: Variations on a Theme by Hannah Arendt* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2013), 13; Mieke Bal, J. Crewe, and L. Spitzer, eds. *Acts of Memory: Cultural Recall in the Present* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1999); Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (New York: Basic Vivitas, 2009); Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004); Ward Churchill, "Genocide by Any Other Name: North American Indian Residential Schools in Context," *Genocide, War Crimes and the West: History and Complicity*, ed. A. Jones (London and New York: Zed Books, 2004), 78-115.

⁹² Agamben *op. cit.*, 13.

genocide as a historical fact. “The production of fact,” as Rottenburg writes, involves as much technologies of inscription as modern institutions.⁹³ The making and production of evidence become essential both to the conduct of the trial of human perpetrators, and to proving the occurrence of genocide in the past and to the prevention of future genocides. In this context, the law produces genocide as merely a human phenomenon – human violence committed against other humans. The modern state and bureaucracy and technologies of violence – weapons – are never considered genocidal.⁹⁴

Evidence becomes a non-human tele-technology that travels in time and space, which in his contribution, Moradi has coined as tele-evidence. It is imagined to make and produce responsible human beings, preventing more human inflicted injustice in the world, and giving birth to a world without human violence. The world that tele-evidence dismantles and the one it assembles, clarifies what it *is* against, and is thus an inescapable foundation *for* a non-violent humanity and world. Moreover, as this issue shows, the making and circulation of evidence is impossible to imagine without modernity’s infrastructure, encompassing legitimate institutions, science, technology, bureaucracy, economy, law, national and global politics, photographs, satellite imagery, artistic installations, museums, architecture, literature, survivor and expert testimony, global or local activism, and scholarly writings. And as discussed above, satellite imagery is giving birth to other modes of making and producing of tele-evidence. It is through modernity’s infrastructure that we are expected to have access to, remember and engage justice, recognize vulnerability, condemn the past, and safeguard memory and the future.

With contributions predominantly focusing on the twentieth and twenty-first century, this issue examines concrete acts of tele-evidence that are constitutive of contemporary ways of making known, seen, remembering and denouncing the multiple dimensions of the violence of genocide. In his contribution, *Beyond the law: the evidentiary making of the Darfur genocide*, Philippe Gout delves into what he calls, “parallel translation processes of indeterminate acts of annihilation” that made the name Darfur global. He examines how the International Criminal Court’s standardized legal regime of evidence-making to prove the genocidal *intent* of Sudan’s President, Omer al-Bashir, encounters American humanitarian activism’s insistence on its own production of evidence of genocide. While the International

⁹³ Richard Rottenburg, “On Juridico-Political Foundations of Meta-Codes,” *The Globalization of Knowledge in History*, ed. J. Renn (Berlin: Max Planck Research Library for the History and Development of Knowledge, 2012), 483-500 at 488. Rottenburg’s investigation draws on; Barbara Herrnstein Smith, “Making (Up) the Truth: Constructivist Contributions,” *Belief and Resistance. Dynamics of Contemporary Intellectual Controversy* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997), 23-36; Theodore M. Porter, “Objectivity as Standardization: The Rhetoric of Impersonality in Measurement, Statistics, and Cost-Benefit Analysis,” *Annals of Scholarship* 9 (1992) 1-2: 19-60; Niklas Luhmann, *Legitimation durch Verfahren* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1993). See also Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin, 1963); Jacques Derrida, *Force de loi - Le “Fondement mystique de l’autorité”* (Paris: Galilée, 1994); Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, “The Reality of Moral Expectations: A Sociology of Situated Judgement,” *Philosophical Explorations* 3 (2000): 208-231; Michel Foucault, *Die Wahrheit und die juristischen Formen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2002).

⁹⁴ Moradi, “The Force of Writing in Genocide,” *op. cit.*

Criminal Court respects the established norm of individualization of genocidal violence, humanitarian activism disturbs the legal calculation by introducing “facts” based on satellite imagery evidencing genocide committed in Darfur. Law, science, ethics, tele-technologies and humanitarian activism are entangled and become fundamental to how evidence is made, how histories are written; raising questions as to what and whose justice is served in the politics of classifications, selections and omission. Gout also attends to the legal implications of the recent removal of Omer al-Bashir.

Jennifer Trowbridge, in *Do bones speak? forensic scientific translation of mass violence in Colombia*, pays special attention to how translational practices make past violence intelligible. Translation is at work in the forensic pursuit of justice and memory following mass political violence. Jennifer’s encounter with shopkeepers in the beginning of the paper sets off her research trajectory: “Do they [bones] speak all by themselves?” Yet, another one follows, “But there are many things that you all can *deduce*”. The author follows by saying, “Exactly, you have to interpret the bones”. By virtue of being human remains, bones speak not only as they are embodied in public memory but also through forensic science and anthropology. Jennifer’s examination shows how forensic consolidation of evidence bring about and circulates evidentiary narratives that in turn graft civic lives onto the exhumed bones.

Jo-Marie Burt, *Gender justice in post-conflict Guatemala: the Sepur Zarco sexual violence and sexual slavery trial*, focuses on the evidentiary practices of the landmark Sepur Zarco trial in Guatemala in 2016. Jo-Marie is concerned with how women survivor and expert witness testimonies, forensic evidence, geospatial images, and three-dimensional maps were essential for the court to produce its “legally binding verdict” of systematic rape, slavery and murder in Guatemala in the early 1980s. The trial re-writes memory, engages justice and citizenship, and points at power relationships in postwar Guatemala. As a mode of addressing, the women-survivors’ testimonies fuse evidence and the ethical need to account for what resists language – sexual violence, enslavement and rape. The application of law and the legal verdict seen as the manifestation of *doing justice* and the multiple acts of violence that keep haunting women-survivors’ bodies lives on as an aporia.⁹⁵

“Nicole Wolf’s *In the wake of Gujarat: the social relations of translation and futurity*, explores the challenges to audio-visual and narratorial testimonies of the genocidal violence committed against the Muslim population in Gujarat in the North Western state of India in 2002. Wolf, writes, “It [the violence of genocide] haunts because of frequent news reporting the lynching of Muslim men, the rape and killings of Muslim women and girls and the attacks on Islamic sites of prayer”. To attend to violence that annihilates as “poetics of evidence,” – artistic grafting of moving images and words – long after its occurrence and in places far away from your dwelling is to not only encounter haunting but to actively engage with *wake work*, as proposed by Christina Sharpe and here thought as translation as social relation. Visual, sonic and haptic sensual poetics as wake work are born out of audio-visual writing of

⁹⁵ Cf. Victoria Sanford, K. Stefatos and C. Salvi, *Gender Violence in Peace and War: States of Complicity*, ed. V. Sanford, K. Stefatos and C. Salvi (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press, 2016).

the acts and violence of genocide. Citizenship, political and judicial practices are undone as “radical solidarity” as well as the quest for justice become urgent, as wake work acknowledges violence as constitutive of democracies.

The concern with historical acts of annihilation is also at the heart of Gustavo Racy and Vinícius Rodrigues', *Translating slavery: the Valongo Wharf as evidentiary site of “black” genocide and world heritage*. The surprising excavation of Valongo Wharf that had been built in early nineteenth century as a hub in the web of the Transatlantic Slave Trade in Rio de Janeiro demands remembering. The archaeological, ethical and political need to know what happened leads to the formation of a different relation to “slavery”. The national recognition of Valongo Wharf as an *evidentiary site* and its registration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site includes a “total of 1,200,000 archaeological items”. Gustavo and Vinícius elaborate how translational practices of national and global institutions and international law engage the history of enslavement (slavery) and the annihilatory violence committed against Afro-Brazilians, and how Valongo Wharf becomes a site of great significance for the history of slavery and collective memory in Brazil. Similar to the other contributions in this issue, they suggest that if classifying organized violence as “genocide” means insisting on its occurrence in the past, then evidence of genocide is ongoing interruptions.

Finally, Moradi's contribution engages the question of *After*, translation, tele-evidence and hospitality as “interruption”. He lives through as he submits his eyes/body to seeable, legible and intelligible tele-evidence of “modernity's infrastructure of annihilation” – Auschwitz in today's Poland and Murambi in Rwanda. He inquires into how we come to experience the inexplicable death of genocidal violence as a web of translation as tele-evidence that is produced at a certain time in history and travels in time and across epistemological, visual, virtual, political, and geographical borders. As translation, which Moradi writes, “... is *not* genocidal violence, but the condition of possibility for state sanctioned violence to inhabit the world,” it produces and circulates a dictionary of human condition and an evolving memory.