

Simon Harrison, *Dark Trophies: Hunting and the Enemy Body in Modern War* (New York/Oxford, Berghahn Books, 2012, 233 pp., £18.50 paperback).

Social anthropology has long been concerned with societies whose war practices – based on hand-to-hand combat – take the removal and conservation of enemy body parts as trophies to be ordinary and legitimate. In contrast, modern wars led by western powers appear to be marked by technologies that involve eminently disincarnated impersonal relations and combat at a distance with interposed objects, where the element of rational planning is important. Yet, we should note the persistence – both during the decolonisation wars of the second half of the twentieth century, and more recently still in Iraq – of these practices in which European or American soldiers remove one or more parts of a defeated combatant's body from the battle ground. However, it is most often represented by the media in the form of a sordid miscellaneous news item.

One of the main aims of the work of Simon Harrison, emeritus professor of social anthropology at the University of Ulster, is to take the persistence of trophy hunting seriously. He does this by choosing to consider it not as a deviant practice, resulting from psychiatric pathology, but rather as a recurring social reality which can be usefully highlighted by a comparison with other war practices carried out elsewhere or at other times. The comparative study put forward by Harrison is thus based on the analysis of varied and extremely rich sources; these bring together, on the one hand, the autobiographical accounts of western soldiers, osteological collections (mainly skulls) from colonial wars and numerous medico-legal reports established to facilitate the identification and the repatriation of human trophies brought back to the US illegally during the Pacific and Vietnam wars; and, on the other hand, the sources include the existing solid ethnographies on war within different indigenous societies in Amazonia, Melanesia and Southeast Asia.

The British anthropologist thus proposes a double and ambitious intellectual objective. Primarily, the work shed lights on the impact and efficiency of the metaphor of the hunt on which the behaviour of enemy mutilation is based, in the western world as much as in indigenous societies. Harrison demonstrates that the analogical representation of war as a hunt arises from language practices

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that are very widely spread throughout ages and communities. The behavioural models of animal hunting are thus projected in the context of armed conflict where they contribute in conditioning the attitude of combatants. In this way, Harrison underlines the central role of political discourse and a rhetoric of propaganda not only in war as such but in the production of warrior behaviour.

The second objective of Professor Harrison is to demonstrate that the western practice of trophy taking in the context of war is intimately connected to its territorial conquest and led by the racial agenda that was devised and deployed in the process of the large-scale conquests in Africa, Asia, America and Oceania by western empires during the nineteenth century. In this regard, the anthropologist shows, with precise documentation, that the practice of trophy taking – and more particularly the collecting of skulls to establish osteological collections – saw a veritable rise from the second quarter of the nineteenth century with the colonial wars led by the British, German, French or US armies. The growth of these collections was thus closely associated with the birth of physical anthropology and the deployment of medicine and Victorian surgery, both supported by the racialised representations of mankind justifying the collection of skulls in order to measure and compare. Simon Harrison thus demonstrates, in an extremely convincing manner, that the force of a racial ideology, associated with the legitimisation of predator behaviour through hunting metaphors, has directly contributed to the extensive practice of human trophy taking by American and European soldiers.

Finally, this work, the concision and clarity of which reveal the pedagogical talent of its author, will not only appeal to anthropologists; in demonstrating the usefulness of a comparative approach in the analysis of the most complex social realities, it will also appeal to historians and political scientists with an interest in understanding contemporary war.

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Riva Kastoryano, *Que faire des corps des djihadistes? Territoire et identité* (Paris, Fayard, 2015, 336 pp., €23.00 paperback).

The French political scientist Riva Kastoryano has researched a fascinating and long neglected topic: the disposal of Islamist terrorists' corpses following their death in the attacks they have committed. If the treatment of corpses of victims remains very little studied, the disposal of corpses of perpetrators has never been the subject of research.

The subtitle 'Territory and identity' defines the book's angle. For contemporary jihadists, their body is their weapon, and this body is defined as 'deterritorialised', which means that it is not attached to any nation or country, besides the Ummah, the imagined community of believers. The Ummah of the global jihadist is itself also global, and their bodies are weapons that are constantly on the move, belonging to various and changing networks, diasporas and cells of terror. But this Ummah is ambiguous in its very definition and the relation of terrorists to

the territory conveys the same uncertainty. A strict delimitation is supposed to be created between the believers – the jihadists – and the rest of the world, but this border is in itself relative, changing as the activists themselves travel in a globalised world. Borders defined by geography sometimes overlap with symbolic borders; sometimes they contradict them.

This complex tension is described in detail in Kastoryano's book, and three case studies lie at the heart of her reflection: the 9/11 attacks in New York, the Madrid terror attacks in 2004 and the London bombings of 2005. In each case, the varied attitudes – in the absence of a set policy for such extraordinary events – of local politicians, administrations from various levels, families of victims, families of terrorists and public opinion are described. The treatment of the corpses of terrorists killed, whether during the attacks they have committed or by the police, reveals the many difficulties states face in their embrace of global Jihadist violence. While the treatment of the victims' corpses of terror attacks is the object of many innovative policies – with the transfer of knowledge and techniques, including DNA banks – and these policies, as described in the book, are a counterpoint to the treatment of jihadists' corpses, the latter are abandoned in most cases. Families do not dare ask for the corpses to be returned and municipalities tend to refuse inhumations on their territories, unless they are forced to do so by law. The author introduces the three cases studies by two excursus: the first is the treatment of the French terrorists who perpetrated the attacks in France (Toulouse, Charlie Hebdo and the Hypercashier). For example, the corpse of Saïd Kouachi was secretly buried in the Muslim section of the Reims cemetery. His last official residence was in Reims and the city's mayor was legally bound to accept the inhumation. In all cases, the funerals were held at night, and the graves were unmarked. This discretion is unusual in the case of Palestinian terrorists who have committed suicide bombing in Israel – the second excursus. The corpses (or the human remains) became a currency for the state of Israel: corpses were exchanged and, when returned to families, conditions could be made that funerals should not be a display of revenge, public mourning or nationalism.

The case study of 9/11 is very revealing and just as specific. In the ruins of the World Trade Centre, body parts of victims and of the Saudi terrorists were mixed. Victims' families, who proved extremely active in pressing the authorities for the body parts to be sorted and identified, refused that parts of their beloved ones could be mixed with those of their killers. The association 'WTC Families for Proper Burial' has been especially active in lobbying the American authorities to continue the sorting – an immense enterprise considering the amount of rubble. On the other hand, the corpses of the terrorists who crashed a plane into the Pentagon, and of the plane that crashed in Pennsylvania, could be identified by the FBI – even if we do not know how the identification was made. The corpses of these terrorists remained in the custody of the FBI and were probably secretly buried. Basing her reflections on the work by historian Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau, Kastoryano sees in these decisions a break from the sacralisation of soldiers' corpses that emerged from the Secession War in the United States and the Franco-Prussian war in Europe: this sacralisation – with the creation of military cemeteries – included the corpses of the enemy.

The case of the Madrid terror attacks is also interesting in the way it both

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contradicts and confirms Kastoryano's territorial approach. On 11 March 2004, ten bombs exploded on suburban trains and in the Atocha train station, killing 192 persons. Twenty-nine terrorists were identified, all first generation immigrants. Even if their national attaches seem clearer – they were Moroccan, Egyptian and Tunisian-born, living in Spain – they belonged to transnational networks of radicalism. They implemented the theory that any country fighting on Islamic territories is an enemy that should be punished, and Spain had sent troops to Iraq to fight alongside the Americans. Seven of the terrorists committed suicide in Leganes when they were surrounded by the police. Again, the corpses went unclaimed by the families, who proved incapable of stating their wills and duties in the face of public pressure, the official censorship and the diplomatic unease provoked by the terror. Some corpses were discretely sent to Morocco and the local administration buried them in full discretion. Silence was the only way to restore the country's dignity. It also permitted the state to avoid any discussion on the responsibility of local clerics in the radicalisation of some young people, when Morocco was and still is the target of Islamist attacks. As Kastoryano states in her conclusion, '[I]f space replaces territory in the construction of imagined geography and community, extraterritorial references are relocated and borders of identity are redefined, borders that determine their own inclusions and exclusions'.

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Francisco Ferrándiz and Antonius C. G. M. Robben, *Necropolitics: Mass Graves and Exhumations in the Age of Human Rights* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, 280 pp., £39.00 paperback).

*Necropolitics: Mass Graves and Exhumations in the Age of Human Rights* presents a detailed analysis of mass graves exhumation processes in different parts of the world, such as Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia and elaborates on the contextual, political, legal and moral struggles surrounding exhumations in these geographic areas. The book is based on the assumption that exhumations play an increasing role in the context of transnational human rights discourses and transitional justice mechanisms as well as in the trend to display, commemorate and memorialise atrocities as a form of reparation to victims and society as a whole. More than this, the book reflects on the fact that exhumations of mass graves cannot be solely limited to technical procedures, DNA testing and their potential legal implications in relation to accountability mechanisms for perpetrators of human rights violations. Instead, the book proposes that exhumations, conducted in a particular context, have symbolic, social and political consequences which are reflected in the relatives' right to truth and, more broadly, the right of the society to know its history. In this sense, the book shows that exhumations and the concerns over human remains and mass graves are embedded in the more general field of memory studies. An understanding of this practice must therefore take into account the different political, historical and social contexts that affect how people view remains and understand their past.

The scientific approach chosen by the various chapter authors is comparative, through the analysis of multi-geographical case studies (including the United States, Argentina, Chile, Peru, Spain, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Greece, Rwanda, Cambodia and Korea) and by using an interdisciplinary perspective; the study of exhumation processes in relation to mass graves, and the dealing with human remains, comes from disciplines such as history, forensic anthropology, criminal law, political science and religious perspectives. In this vein, the book allows the reader to understand the role of exhumations in post-conflict societies and how they interact in specific local and national contexts, in particular by expressing the tensions that may arise between different actors in society and putting into perspective how policy agendas, ethical dilemmas, funerary cultures, ritual implications and religious traditions affect the exhumation of mass graves and deal with human remains.

This innovative book also highlights the multiple purposes and challenges of exhumations and the reburial of human remains as an expression of the ongoing development of transnational human rights institutions. In addition to the identification of remains and the use of bodies and bones as criminal evidence in legal procedures, the book rightly asserts that mass grave exhumations fulfill other essential purposes in contemporary societies. These include contributions to the dissemination of public knowledge regarding past atrocities, the performance of mortuary rituals for family members, and the exercising of the victims' right to truth, thus fostering individual and collective remembrance.

Furthermore, the book successfully develops a comparative and interdisciplinary reflection on mass grave exhumations in different parts of the world and creates awareness of the relevance of the specific political, historical and social contexts in which they are conducted. The use of comparative case studies is a useful one, allowing the reader to explore the similarities, differences and common problems in the process of exhuming mass graves as well as the obstacles, challenges and limitations that relatives, authorities and forensic experts might face. The analysis shows how the context of past violence and the construction of a reconciled society affect the development of an open policy of exhumation, which is sometimes the result of a cost-benefit political analysis by public authorities. Finally, the book's comparative approach allows the reader to understand the heterogeneity and complexities of exhumations, the issues at stake in post-conflict societies and the different meanings of human remains across varying cultures and local traditions.

Against this background, I strongly recommend this book to activists, scientific scholars, policymakers and those interested in learning about and understanding the increasing role of mass grave exhumations in post-conflict societies, their effect on victims' relatives and, more generally, society as a whole.

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Adam Rosenblatt, *Digging for the Disappeared: Forensic Science after Atrocity* (Stanford, Stanford University Press, 2015, 278 pp., £16.99/€22.99 paperback)

After a mass atrocity, the bodies of the dead are left in the hands of forensic scientists to identify and repatriate. While identification of the dead remains an important aspect of this work, tribunals and courts also demand evidence to prosecute those responsible. Alongside this process stand the relatives of the victims: those who have lost a loved one. It is the interplay between the aforementioned that forms the basis of this book, addressing those parties involved in the process of ‘digging for the disappeared’.

Adam Rosenblatt’s experience working at Physicians for Human Rights and the Human Rights Centre at the University of Chile can be regarded as the golden thread running throughout the book. Additionally, his personal experience with the dead and traditions surrounding burial are brought to the reader in the Preface, which immediately encourage the consideration of one’s own conception of handling, mourning and burying human remains. As these themes reappear throughout the book, the reader is enriched with different perspectives that force comparison with his or her own experiences.

In his own words, ‘the book is focussed specifically on the exhumation of mass graves containing the victims of human rights violations, and accompanying efforts to document those violations, identify and reassemble dead bodies and repatriate them to their families or others who mourn them’ (Introduction). In order to address all the stakeholders following a mass atrocity, Rosenblatt splits the book into two parts. The first examines ‘The politics of mass graves’. Here, two chapters have been included: ‘The stakeholders in international forensic investigations’ and ‘The politics of grief’. The thorniest problems addressed in this part include, for example, the time pressure sometimes placed upon forensic investigators to provide tribunals with the evidence they need rather than identifying the victims for the relatives left behind, as well as the different interpretations on the role of exhumations with regards to Argentina’s disappeared. The second part focuses on ‘The philosophy of mass graves’, and includes the chapters ‘Forensics of the sacred’, ‘Dead to rights’ and ‘Caring for the dead’. These provide valuable insights into the status of the dead in relation to religion, as well as questioning whether the dead indeed have rights in relation to the law and, if so, whether such rights should be subjected to limitations.

Intertwined throughout the book are other important aspects that critically discuss the conceptions of forensic scientists themselves in relation to the depicted situations. Rosenblatt lets them explain the problems they encounter while working with the dead. He uses memoirs and biographies as well as interviews conducted with forensic scientists. In addition, Rosenblatt has not constrained himself to addressing a limited number of atrocities, but rather opens up the book to address all those atrocities that have occurred throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. This enriches the text, as the reader is supplemented with valuable insights into a variety of human rights violations, which have generated in mass fatalities, and have thus triggered the intervention of forensics.

Watching the news or reading the newspaper makes us aware of the mass atrocities and natural disasters that occur on a regular basis. All in all, Adam Rosenblatt takes the reader beyond those headlines and presents a wider view of the occurrence of a disaster: the disaster of losing a loved one in a spill of a mass atrocity. While the story usually ends once the newspapers have been read, those left behind in the wake of loss are subjected to an unimaginable amount of grief. In the midst of all this operate those people one hopes will be able to identify a loved one, the one who disappeared. These forensic scientists work with the dead amongst them while also assisting the needs of the living: the surviving next of kin and the tribunals responsible for prosecution. In his book, Rosenblatt brings to light the 'balance of interests' encountered by forensic scientists, hereby offering the reader an overall view of mass atrocities and their aftermath. For this reason, the book advances an understanding of the entire picture surrounding mass atrocities and the resulting dead.

*Digging for the Disappeared: Forensic Science after Atrocity* is recommended to all those interested in the forensic scientific aftermath of mass fatalities as a result of human rights violations, including to those who want to be challenged with questions that confront the core status of the living and the dead.

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