

**Never Again, Again: Remembering Genocide  
in Rwanda**

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## **Never Again, Again: Remembering Genocide in Rwanda**

We have been refugees for more than three decades. This is the first time I'm traveling through the country. I feel I'm part of the country. I've never felt that feeling before. Wherever I was, I was a refugee. It's certainly a very good experience to feel you have an identity.<sup>1</sup>

In 1990 Paul Kagame returned to Rwanda as the military leader of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) after decades in exile in Uganda. After leading the RPF in a successful civil war by 1994, he became the sixth president of the small, landlocked African country in 2000. The period since 1994 has been one of major personal success for Kagame, in which Rwanda has been transformed on the international stage to a country synonymous with progress, development and stability - a rarity in post-colonial Africa.<sup>2</sup> Kagame's attitude upon arriving in Rwanda, demonstrated in this interview while the civil war was taking place, shows the transition of negative memories of the past into a positive outlook for the future, and the motive behind my research is to explore such developments in the memories of ordinary Rwandans since the genocide of 1994.

1 Paul Kagame, in 'Rwanda Rebels: Army of Exiles Fights for a Home', *New York Times*, 9 June 1994.

2 'Rwanda, Past and Present', *New York Times*, 15 June 2007.

International opinion of Rwanda has changed markedly since 1994, a year which saw the worst case of mass violence since the Second World War. After decades under the dictatorship of Hutu president Juvenal Habyarimana, at the expense of the minority Tutsi ethnicity, Rwanda had descended into a state of violence and paranoia. Since 1990 the RPF had been fighting a civil war with government forces to gain control of Rwanda, and when the president's plane was shot down over Kigali on 6 April 1994, the country finally reached breaking point. Habyarimana's death was used to justify a campaign to exterminate all Tutsi, with the Hutu military, former government ministers, and state-controlled media immediately using the Tutsi as a scapegoat for the president's death. In 100 days, approximately 800,000 people were killed, not by the state directly, but by fellow Rwandan citizens. The genocide has brought natural comparisons to the Holocaust, with the journalist Linda Melvern describing it as 'the first attempted extermination since the Second World War to be genuinely comparable'.<sup>3</sup> Historians have also discussed the ideological similarities between the instigators of the two genocides: Nazis and Hutu Power extremists.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> L. Melvern, 'The Past is Prologue: Planning the 1994 Rwandan Genocide' in P. Clark, and Z. Kaufman, (eds) *After Genocide: Transitional Justice, Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Rwanda and Beyond* (London, 2008), p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> C. Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (Oxford, 1999), p. 102.

While the motives for senior Hutu politicians to incite genocidal violence – such as the fear of losing their power and the need for a scapegoat – cannot be doubted, the reasons why Hutu citizens followed the violent rhetoric are more ambiguous. Since the genocide, historians and political scientists have debated why so many ordinary Rwandan Hutu were so willing to participate in the mass murder of not only strangers, but neighbours, friends and relatives. One popular argument suggests that memories of pre-colonial and colonial Tutsi dominance, and the continuing threat of Tutsi exiles in the post-colonial era, were still prevalent in the minds of many of the Hutu who participated in the 1994 genocide. These memories were easily provoked and spread by the popular media.<sup>5</sup> The way in which those who held political power in 1994 could evoke the memories of the Hutu people, manipulate them and transform them into vessels of fear and hatred cannot be underestimated. A number of Rwandans have emphasised the importance of memory and the ability to control history in their country's culture. An exiled former government minister argued in 1999 that in Rwanda 'power is history and history is power. If you are in a position of telling your history you are in a position of power. The structure of power is constructed on the structure of history'.<sup>6</sup>

5 A. Des Forges, 'Call to Genocide: Radio in Rwanda, 1994', in A. Thompson, (ed.) *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide* (London, 2007), p. 45.

6 Former government minister in exile, in N. Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror: Post-Genocide Debates in Rwanda* (London, 2004), p. 148.

In this research the idea of memory will be of paramount importance, as it reflects on another issue within Rwanda's culture of memory - how Rwandans have remembered the genocide since 1994. Given the impact of memory culture in creating the conditions for genocide, it is surprising that there has been little research into how Rwandans remember the genocide itself. To date what little analysis there has been of Rwanda's memory culture has applied simplistic and static categories to those involved, as studies of the genocide itself have done.<sup>7</sup> As the history of the genocide requires the need to focus on the dynamism of actors, the history of genocide memory requires the need to focus on the dynamism of memory.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of my research is therefore to analyse the shifts in emphasis and direction within Rwandan accounts of the genocide since 1994, situating them within the conceptual frameworks of memory theory and also against the backdrop of the popular narratives of the time.

Since the RPF seized power July 1994, Rwandan society has built itself around the concept of remembering. The organisation *Ibuka*, established in 1995, takes its name from the *kinyarwanda* word for 'remember', and promotes itself as the nation's umbrella organisation for genocide survivors. Genocide commemorations take place annually, centred around the *Amahoro* (Peace) Stadium

<sup>7</sup> L. A. Fujii, *Killing Neighbours: Webs of Violence in Rwanda* (London, 2009), p.

8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

in Kigali. For the tenth anniversary of the genocide in 2004, Rwanda branded its commemorations with the phrase 'Never Again', a slogan used by the international community after the Holocaust.<sup>9</sup> All of these examples point to the fact that memory has taken on a primary and central role in post-genocide Rwanda, and that an analysis of Rwandans' ways of remembering is crucial in determining the shape of its contemporary, and future, society.

The main body of this dissertation will focus on different stages of memory and how they are reflected in Rwandan accounts, many of which tie in to the main themes of *Ibuka*. Within each stage I will assess the different narratives involved and, where relevant, how these narratives have evolved within Rwandan memories. This dissertation identifies three stages of memory that will be discussed in depth; suffering, justice, and forgiveness and reconciliation. The first stage is the idea of suffering through memory - how the subject equates their memories and their inability to forget what happened to subsequent problems they have experienced. The second stage is that of justice - where the subject has channelled their memories into appealing for perpetrators to be held accountable, or anger at the lack of such a process. The third stage is forgiveness and reconciliation - where the subject openly talks about whether or not they can forgive those who committed crimes against them and their families, and

<sup>9</sup> R. Lemarchand, 'The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 65.

whether wider-level reconciliation can be achieved in society. I will conclude by bringing these components of memory together and assessing where they are situated within Rwandan society today, predicting how forms of remembering could and should develop, and offering avenues for further research. In looking at these stages of memory my research owes a lot to those who have already taken the initiative in talking to Rwandans about their experiences and preserving their accounts, with particular reference to the journalists Jean Hatzfeld and Philip Gourevitch and the political scientist Phil Clark, who extensively covered Rwanda's *gacaca* courts between 2003 and 2010. This research also uses the archives of the Daily Express, Daily Mirror and New York Times newspapers.

One key area of Rwanda's history I have deliberately excluded from my research is how Rwandans have made reference to international actors in their accounts. While the failure of the international community in 1994 has been of prime importance in the historiography of the genocide, for Rwandans issues internal to their country are equally important. For this reason, the Rwandan sources used in this research will be focused on the elements of remembering particular to the country itself, both at the local and national level, to create a cohesive picture of memory culture specific to Rwanda. To include complete narratives of memory in



relation to both international and national issues would be too wide in scope for a piece of research of this size.

Prior to in-depth analysis of Rwandan accounts, this research will be situated within the existing literature surrounding memory studies. To do this I will follow the lead of Melvern and others, and compare the Rwandan Genocide to the Holocaust, briefly discussing historiographical debates surrounding Holocaust memory. The way in which the Holocaust has been remembered offers a valuable insight into what we can expect to learn from Rwandan accounts, and offers a crucial starting point to my research.

### **Remembering the Holocaust**

Searching for a memory indeed attests to one of the major finalities of the act of remembering, namely, struggling against forgetting, wresting a few scraps of memory from the 'rapacity' of time, from 'sinking' into 'oblivion'.<sup>10</sup>

10 P. Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting* (London, 2006), p. 30.

In contemporary Western society, it is hard to imagine a world that does not actively remember the Holocaust. Public memorials across Europe are complimented by International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which takes place on 27 January each year. The popularity of memorials, such as Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, amongst tourists, and the media coverage given to Holocaust and Second World War commemorations each year, suggests a timelessness of memory. According to Dan Diner, the Holocaust has assumed 'an evidently irrevocable salience for universal historical consciousness and moral yardsticks after 1989'.<sup>11</sup> While the first aspect of this argument is undoubtedly true - as evidenced by the many comparisons of the Rwandan Genocide to the Holocaust from Linda Melvern and others - the second aspect, that Holocaust memory has only become salient since 1989, suggests a previous, less common, stage of commemoration that seems incomprehensible today.

In Germany, the fall of the Berlin Wall signified a considerable change in Holocaust memory. The reunification of East and West in 1990 meant that citizens had to accept a common past, one of horror and atrocity. However when Germany was divided the Holocaust could be seen as something more distant. As Bill Niven

<sup>11</sup> D. Diner, 'The Irreconcilability of an Event: Integrating the Holocaust into the Narrative of the Century' in D. Michman, (ed.) *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000: German Strategies and Jewish Responses* (Oxford, 2002) p. 95.

has argued, 'as long as Germany was divided, many Germans could nurture a feeling of being victims. After unification, this is not possible to the same degree'.<sup>12</sup> In both East and West Germany, the suffering of Jews in the Nazi era was not the salient memory, instead it was the suffering of the majority of the German population at the hands of the Nazis that dominated narratives of the Second World War.

This sense of victimhood translated itself into forms of Holocaust memory in a multitude of ways. As the truth about the extermination camps came out, in West Germany the willingness to face up to what had happened was limited, owing in part to an early conflict between the need for justice and the need for democratisation.<sup>13</sup> German historians of the Holocaust largely ignored the part played by the general population. In an attempt to absolve the population of any blame, the perpetrators were considered an 'Other', a small number of leading Nazi figures, and German Holocaust historiography laid the blame firmly with this group.<sup>14</sup> It has only recently been acknowledged that the level of participation of ordinary people in the Holocaust was far greater than originally assumed.

12 B. Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past: United Germany and the Legacy of the Third Reich* (London, 2003), p. 3.

13 J. Herf, 'The Holocaust and the Competition of Memories in Germany, 1945-1999' in Michman, *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000*, p. 14.

14 C-C. Szejnmann, 'Perpetrators of the Holocaust: a History' in O. Jensen, and Szejnmann (eds.) *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers: Perpetrators in Comparative Perspectives* (London, 2008) p. 30.

In the 1950s and 1960s there was an attempt to equate the suffering of German citizens and soldiers during the war with the suffering of Jews and others persecuted by Nazism. Early ways of remembering commemorated not the victims of Nazism but the tragic heroism of German soldiers and civilians. By this logic, the crimes of Germany's enemies, particularly Soviet soldiers, were compared to Nazi atrocities. The actions of the Allies were also used to downplay German crimes. For example, on the tenth anniversary of the Dresden air raid, Mayor Walter Waidauer 'defined the Allied attack as a war crime and called the Western allies the "executioners of Dresden"', in so doing comparing the Allies to the Nazis and Dresden to Auschwitz.<sup>15</sup> Such narratives furthered a view amongst the general population that they were victims as much as those who were deliberately targeted by the Nazis. In their work on Holocaust denial, Michael Shermer and Alex Grobman contest that deniers 'argue that what the Nazis did to the Jews is really no different from what other nations do to their perceived enemies'.<sup>16</sup> Using this definition, Waidauer could be seen as a genocide denier, and his speech in 1955 as popularising a memory of denial.

Since 1990 there has been considerable growth in the public commemoration of the Holocaust in Germany, in terms of both time

15 G. Margalit, 'Divided Memory? Expressions of a United German Memory' in Michman, *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000*, p. 35.

16 M. Shermer, and A. Grobman, *Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened and Why Do They Say It?* (London, 2009), p. 103.

and space devoted to its memory. James Young has highlighted how unusual it is for a nation to openly remember crimes it committed, as Germany has done in the past two decades.<sup>17</sup> Memorials have become deliberate projections that attempt to make the observer connect Jewish suffering to German responsibility.<sup>18</sup> The reunification of Germany and the common need to commemorate Nazi atrocities has seen the nation's leaders take on responsibility for public memory of the Holocaust, as Niven argues, 'commemoration is delegated to the political establishment'.<sup>19</sup> By taking charge of national commemoration, the state centralises the act of public memory, and people's consciences become stimulated, rather than autonomous. In addition, memorials have become idealised and over-symbolic, reflecting more the 'need' to remember rather than what is actually being remembered.

While memorials and commemoration are more in the public eye than they were before 1989, Young interestingly points to the contradictory dilemmas over the impulse to memorialise and the desire to forget.<sup>20</sup> Public commemorations and memorials are limited to specific times and spaces, becoming contained and detached from people's day-to-day lives. The Holocaust is thus not something we feel the need to remember unless it is actively

17 J. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (London, 1993), p. 21.

18 Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, p. 207.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 176.

20 Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 5.

stimulated by a commemoration or memorial. While this may be true for those who lived through the event and thus have their own accounts and memories of it, the case may be different for those born after the Holocaust. For younger generations who did not experience the event directly, the memorial becomes a memory in itself.<sup>21</sup> The memorial can thus help shape the method and content of remembering even more for younger observers. In summary, historians have expressed negative views of post-1989 forms of remembering; in terms of political involvement, their symbolism, and detachment. Caroline Wiedmer highlights the dangers this has on an individual's capacity to remember independently, arguing that 'when mourning is actually replaced by the discourse surrounding it, memory becomes merely a political tool, and symbolic poses stand in for political action'.<sup>22</sup>

Despite the lack of public representation of Holocaust memory prior to 1989, there were a significant number of visual and written accounts of experiences beginning immediately post-war. The Holocaust marked the beginning of documenting horror, and photographs taken at the extermination camps by their liberators captured the public imagination.<sup>23</sup> Although the initial prominence of Holocaust images waned in the 1950s, they have, according to

21 C. Wiedmer, *The Claims of Memory: Representations of the Holocaust in Contemporary Germany and France* (London, 1999), p. 166.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 207.

23 B. Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye* (London, 1998), p. 12.

Barbie Zelizer, recaptured the public attention. There is a case to be put forward that the widespread use of Holocaust imagery, when compared to more modern atrocities such as those in Rwanda and Bosnia, has left the observer desensitised to atrocity and horror. Zelizer is wary of the familiarity too many atrocity images can bring, that the 'recycling of photos from the past not only dulls our response to them but potentially undermines the immediacy and depth of our response to contemporary instances of brutality, discounting them as somehow already known to us'.<sup>24</sup> The fact that journalists such as Melvern regularly compare the Rwandan Genocide to the Holocaust shows that not only has this become a convenient way for writers to express modern atrocity, it is also a means through which the reader can understand events by. It can also be said that this salience of memory, where the need to remember is provoked at every opportunity, means that the act of remembering is seen to be an adequate substitute for real action.<sup>25</sup>

The written Holocaust memoir has also assumed an important role. Initially, the memoir was an important vehicle for survivors to restore and promote their pre-war identities, and an opportunity to show that they were active resisters, and not merely survivors.<sup>26</sup> The importance of preserving your memories of the atrocity cannot be doubted, for the post-structuralist sociologist Jean Baudrillard

<sup>24</sup> Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 239.

<sup>26</sup> Z. Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust: Identity, Testimony, Representation* (Oxford, 2006), p. 31.

'forgetting the extermination is part of the extermination itself'.<sup>27</sup>

Bearing witness to atrocity becomes important for survivors because so many of the victims are unable to bear witness.<sup>28</sup>

Through these post-event accounts there is a clash between deep memory, the simple retelling of the events, and common memory, in which pre- and post-event memories are restored to offer a more detached view benefitting from hindsight.<sup>29</sup>

Indeed, memoirs and testimonies are subject to many external factors that shape the way they are written. Holocaust testimony has a history, and in turn Holocaust testimony is affected by this history.<sup>30</sup> Such an argument is applicable to the testimonies of survivors after any atrocity. When writing a testimony after the event, the survivor is expected to write an objective account that may be beyond their capacity and their subjective experiences. Testimonies are also dominated by the author's present and future concerns. Yet despite this, testimonies have come to be 'treated almost reverentially, unaffected by the social, economic, and political circumstances in which they were written'.<sup>31</sup> This is in no doubt part due to the integration of testimony into the collective memory. Collective memory demands that survivors' experiences

27 J. Baudrillard, in Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 1.

28 A. Wieviorka, 'From Survivor to Witness: Voices of the Shoah' in J. Winter, and E. Sivan (eds.) *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge 1999), p. 128.

29 L. Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (London, 1991), p. xiii.

30 Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, pp. 1-2.

31 *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.



are homogenised and universalised, to conform to the accepted concept of the Holocaust.<sup>32</sup> As a result the Holocaust testimony has generally become more confined in terms of content and scope, with unusual experiences marginalised or neglected.

In addition, those who commentate on the Holocaust cling to the notions of heroism and martyrdom, often salvaging these scraps of hope from an otherwise bleak outlook of atrocity. An example of this, as Lawrence Langer explains, is Martin Gilbert's 'The Holocaust', a chronicle of survivors' testimonies. Despite negative testimonies far outweighing positive ones, Gilbert concludes his work by reflecting on the survivors' defiance, courage, and spirit, thus 'building a monument of hope on a rubble of decay'.<sup>33</sup> Another example of such heroism is the story of Anne Frank. While her diary highlights her resistance against oppression, her later life in the extermination camps is neglected in popular memory. Langer argues that 'the pretense that from the wreckage of mass murder we can salvage a tribute to the victory of the human spirit is a version of Holocaust reality more necessary than true'.<sup>34</sup> The necessity in finding positive stories amidst narratives of horror and atrocity is not just down to the well being of the individual, it is also vital to collective memory. For a society that wants to build itself on a collective memory, the salience of positive experiences is vital;

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>33</sup> Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. 165.

<sup>34</sup> Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. 165.

they 'infuse the members of the society with pride and educate the younger generations toward... positive goals'.<sup>35</sup>

In the near-seven decades since the Holocaust, we can see how Holocaust memories have evolved, how memorials and commemorations have been shaped, how individual testimonies have been drawn into the collective memory, and why all of this has been important to memory as a whole. Although there has been considerably less time to reflect on the Rwandan Genocide, these interpretations of forms of remembering are still evident. As Rwanda prepares to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the genocide in 2014, the rest of this piece will assess how individuals have remembered the genocide, how these individual accounts tie in to theories of memory, and whether Rwandans are forming a more collective memory of the events that conforms to the official line of the Rwandan government, as has happened in post-reunification Germany.

### ***Kubarara ~ Suffering***

35 Michman, 'Introduction' in Michman, *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000*, p.1.

Our memory alters over time. We forget the details, confuse the dates, mix up the attacks, make mistakes over names, and as to how such a man or woman or other acquaintance died, we are not in agreement. Nevertheless, we still remember all the terrible moments we personally lived through, as though they happened only last year.<sup>36</sup>

Suffering is central to any account of atrocity. Borne out of the brief demand for Holocaust victims to retell their stories, survivors' testimonies have since emphasised their own tragic experiences in order to promote the author's identity and hold perpetrators to account. Accounts of the Rwandan Genocide are no exception. While the simple retelling of experiences suffered is a natural way of remembering, the link between memory and suffering takes on another form in Rwandan accounts. Such accounts fit into a form of memory that Lawrence Langer describes as 'anguished memory', in which survivors fashion 'a consecutive chronicle' and 'unavoidably introduce some kind of teleology', imprisoning their consciousness and causing continued suffering.<sup>37</sup> The trauma of war 'disrupts equilibria and requires an effort to restore them. That effort... contributes to processes of remembrance'.<sup>38</sup> Many Rwandans link their memories of the genocide to suffering they have experienced subsequently in this way, and it is this form of remembering that this chapter will explore.

36 Jeanette Ayinkamiye, in J. Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life: The Rwandan Genocide, the Survivors Speak* (London, 2008), p. 16.

37 Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. 40.

38 J. Winter and E. Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in Winter and Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, p. 30.

As the RPF won the civil war, many Rwandans were driven out of the country. After the genocide ended in July 1994, the new Rwandan government encouraged these refugees to return to their communities. Despite attempting to rebuild their lives, there were visible signs of past suffering. Piles of bodies and ransacked homes dominated early accounts of Rwandans returning to their ravaged communities.<sup>39</sup> While these scars could be healed through cleaning and rebuilding, others were more lasting. Later another tangible legacy of the genocide took on a particular significance for female survivors. Women who had been raped and impregnated during the genocide had to live with a visible reminder of their suffering - their children. Accounts from survivors such as Godence and Chantal show the effect these unwanted children had:

It's a big problem for me because everyone knows I had a child from the *interahamwe*.<sup>40</sup> They say I'm a wife of the *interahamwe*.<sup>41</sup>

This child for me is a problem. The family doesn't want the child because it's a child of a militiaman... My head doesn't work very well. I am depressed, and it is difficult to take care of the baby.<sup>42</sup>

For these mothers, the genocide created a lasting form of suffering, one which reminds them not only of their torment through being

39 Bonaventure Nyibizi, in P. Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families* (London, 1999), pp. 227-228.

40 The *Interahamwe* (*kinyarwanda*: 'those who work together') were the paramilitary wing of the ruling Hutu party.

41 Godence, in 'Legacy of Rwanda Violence: The Thousands Born of Rape', *New York Times*, 23 September 1996.

42 Chantal, in 'Legacy of Rwanda Violence', *New York Times*, 23 September 1996.

raped, but also of the continued anguish through being made outcasts by what happened. For Godence, 'they' refers to the community she had been a part of and still wants to live in. Chantal identifies her own family as being the cause of her current suffering. In these cases suffering becomes almost timeless, with the memories of the initial suffering connected to the suffering this has caused in the subjects' present lives. The willingness of Tutsi rape victims to discuss what happened to them is in stark contrast to the experience of other victims of rape after similar atrocities. For example, Hutu women who were raped at the hands of the RPF are not allowed to talk about their experiences.<sup>43</sup> This draws an interesting comparison to the suffering of East German women at the hands of Soviet forces at the end of the Second World War. In East Germany, the need to promote a positive image of liberation by communist forces meant Soviet crimes were downplayed. Here the collective memory of the nation did not fit with individual memories of the victims, and it would not be acceptable for female victims to reveal Soviet crimes until after reunification.<sup>44</sup> In the Rwandan case, a Tutsi woman retelling her suffering at the hands of *genocidaires* is seen as normal, but a Hutu woman doing so is strictly forbidden. Perhaps seeking to overcome the suffering this provokes, many women have abandoned children conceived through rape.<sup>45</sup>

43 Alphonse, in P. Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda: Justice Without Lawyers* (Cambridge, 2011), p. 123.

44 Niven, *Facing the Nazi Past*, pp. 114-115.

45 Taylor, *Sacrifice as Terror*, p. 141.

It is perhaps unsurprising that of all the Rwandan accounts relating to the concept of suffering through memory, it is the fear these memories provoke that occupies a significant proportion of these accounts. For example, Godence and Chantal fear that the presence of their children, conceived through rape, will lead to further suffering. Since independence, successive Rwandan governments and dictators have used oppression and scapegoating to keep a hold on power. As a result, fear has become entrenched in the nation's culture and society throughout history.<sup>46</sup> Despite the RPF government's inclusive rhetoric under Paul Kagame, some survivors are clearly still fearful of a repeat of the 1994 violence. An early example of this comes from 1998, in which Francine highlights her continued fear of repercussions for being a Tutsi, stemming from the genocide:

I do not think this will ever be over for me, to be so despised for having Tutsi blood. I think of my parents who had always felt hunted in Ruhengeri.<sup>47</sup> I feel a sort of shame to have to spend a lifetime feeling hunted, simply for being what I am. The very moment my eyelids close shut on all this, I weep inside, out of grief and humiliation.<sup>48</sup>

Francine's account shows what Langer describes as humiliated memory. In it the subject 'recalls an utter distress that shatters all molds (*sic*) designed to contain a unified and irreproachable image

46 Laurent Nkongoli, in Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You...*, p. 22.

47 Ruhengeri is a city in the Rwanda's Northern Province.

48 Francine Niyitegeka, in Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, p. 28.

of the self'.<sup>49</sup> The suffering provoked by such memories is difficult to overcome over time. While attempts are made to ignore humiliated memory in public posterity through the homogenisation of a collective memory, its discourse runs contrary to the hope of a heroic grander narrative.<sup>50</sup> Suffering through memory becomes eternal and can take over the survivors' life, such as in this 2001 account from Jeanette, a survivor who was raped and contracted Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV).

I wanted to die. After the war I had hate - I felt like killing myself whenever I saw a Hutu. I tried to jump into the river but I saw my child holding my hand and I couldn't.<sup>51</sup>

Examples such as Jeanette's show that even after seven years, memories of suffering have not healed. Studies conducted in 1996 and 2000 showed high levels of trauma and suffering were still present in Rwanda's post-genocide society.<sup>52</sup> Some survivors, such as Cecille and Angelique, have offered ambiguous views on their ability to deal with their memories, and whether they truly want to get over them:

49 Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. 77.

50 *Ibid.*, p. 110.

51 Jeannette, in 'How Your Money Really Can Buy Hope', *Daily Express*, 21 February 2001.

52 J. Steward, 'Only Healing Heals: Concepts and Methods of Psycho-Social Healing in Post-Genocide Rwanda', in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 172.

I try to forget what happened in 1994... I would go mad if I didn't try to forget. But I can't ever forget. It's not over yet for me. I'm still suffering.<sup>53</sup>

I saw many people cut down beside me, and all this time I have battled a tenacious fear, truly overwhelming terror. I have overcome it, but I cannot say it has let go of me for good.<sup>54</sup>

Angelique's account suggests the possibility of overcoming the turmoil of memories, and other Rwandans have also pointed to the lightening of the burden of memory over time, particularly among those who were only young children in 1994 and who may not remember the events in such vivid detail.<sup>55</sup> As with Holocaust memory, survivors often say that the ability to retell their stories allows them a certain level of closure to move on from their suffering. When survivors do not get the opportunity to tell their stories, it becomes more difficult to see survival as a victory, and suffering continues.<sup>56</sup> Silence becomes the 'perpetuation of their trauma'.<sup>57</sup> As such it is seen as a vital step for Rwandan survivors to move beyond their suffering, even if this means the unappealing ideas of forgetting events or forgiving perpetrators. Motivations for the survivor to overcome suffering through memory can include an individualistic desire to forget what happened or, conversely, a

53 Cécille Mukampabuka, in 'Women's Voices Rise as Rwanda Reinvents Itself', *New York Times*, 26 February 2005.

54 Angelique Mukamanzi, in J. Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes: The Rwandan Genocide, The Killers Speak* (London, 2005), p. 177.

55 Sylvie Umubyeyi, in Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, p. 161.

56 Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, p. 120.

57 Alexandre Dauge-Roth, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 202.



collective aim to reconcile and improve society for future generations.

In contrast to the positive collective hopes of reconciliation to overcome suffering, there is also a negative collectivisation of memory within Rwandan narratives of genocide and suffering. Barbie Zelizer has identified how the authority of collective memory, unlike its individual counterpart, strengthens over time as memories become homogenous and universal.<sup>58</sup> This strengthens a survivor's bond or connection to a wider group. As a result, a collective memory allows the individual the opportunity to suffer as part of a group. Despite the continued suffering this entails, it can offer a reprieve for the survivor. Sylvie's account from 2003 shows how the fear provoked by genocide memories has become a collective activity:

There are those who fear the very hills where they should be working their lands. There are those who fear encountering Hutus on the road. There are Hutus who saved Tutsis but who no longer dare go home to their villages, for fear that no one will believe them. There are people who fear visitors, or the night. There are innocent faces that frighten others, as if they were criminals. There is the fear of threats, the panic of memories.<sup>59</sup>

Collective memory does not simply evolve through an individual's desire to be attached to a group. An external and centralised force can also actively promote it in the minds of the people. In this

<sup>58</sup> Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Sylvie, in Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, p. 116.

case, the Rwandan government plays a key role in evoking group memory amongst survivors of the genocide. Commemorations have taken place annually since 1995, and there are now numerous landmarks acknowledging genocide victims spread across the country. While the memorials were created with good intentions, they offer problems for elements of Rwandan society. One such group is those survivors still suffering through memory, for whom the memorials have had a significant adverse effect. In Rwanda, centralised collective memory has taken the form of memorials that remind people of the suffering of 1994, including mass graves, collections of skulls and photographs of victims. In 1998, Claudine, a survivor, described her feelings when she visits the church in Ntarama, described at the time of the genocide as Rwanda's Auschwitz:<sup>60</sup>

When I walk past the Memorial church, I do not like to look at these nameless bones. But I do sometimes accompany foreign visitors who have erred on the road, and then I cannot help but stare at the skulls. I am made uncomfortable by the feeling these hollowed-out eye sockets convey, of people who are perhaps not at rest, after what they suffered, and who cannot bury their humiliation beneath the earth.<sup>61</sup>

Claudine's account suggests that Rwanda's genocide memorials, unlike those commemorating the Holocaust across Europe, actively invoke remembering rather than allowing it to become contained and detached from a person's day-to-day life. In Jay Winter's

<sup>60</sup> Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget*, p. 205.

<sup>61</sup> Claudine Kayitesi, in Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, p. 148.

analysis of war memorials in Europe, he suggests that memorials are merely aids to remembering, and that it is only through people's use that these memorials can evoke remembrance.<sup>62</sup> It is clear that in Rwanda there is regular use of memory aids. The difference may be in the immediacy of the establishing of memorials in the Rwandan case, in comparison to the period of half a century in which Holocaust memorials were largely absent in Germany. With over 200 memorials across the country, it has become almost impossible to escape Rwanda's network of memory.<sup>63</sup> It remains to be seen whether over time, as the genocide gets more distant and its generation of survivors pass away, the way Rwandans contextualise the memorials within their own memories will change. Children born after the genocide may grow to have a more positive view, treating the memorials as the memory itself as recent European generations have treated Holocaust tributes. However to date, many Rwandans still situate their opinions of the memorials within grander narratives of suffering through memory, as epitomised by the journalist Thomas Kamilindi, who said a decade after the genocide that:

It is very difficult to put my life experiences behind me and to forget. My wife and I live with it all the time. It is part of me. Sometimes I shut myself in a room and cry when I think about my little girl. It's difficult when you know you could have been killed and you survived, but your child

62 Winter and Sivan, 'Setting the Framework', in Winter and Sivan, *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, p. 16.

63 N. Mirzoeff, 'Invisible Again: Rwanda and Representation after the Genocide', *African Arts* 38 (2005), p. 89.

was killed. Every time I go to the memorial sites and see the skulls, I can't help myself. When I look at them, I cry because I remember my daughter. Maybe her skull is somewhere, but I don't know where.<sup>64</sup>

Kamilindi's account shows the prominence of Rwanda's memorials for those who suffer through their memories. Through displaying such obvious signs of the suffering that took place, the Rwandan government has established a means by which Rwandans will perhaps never be able to overcome their suffering. The memorial is not distant and detached, but an ever-present reminder. However the public displays of skulls and bones are not only a visible demonstration of atrocity and suffering, but also a visible absence of closure. For survivors, the mass of anonymous bones can highlight an absence of closure on what happened to their families, which can often be difficult to overcome.<sup>65</sup>

Suffering does not only take form within memory due to the presence of memorials or the absence of closure. For some, their mere survival is enough to provoke continued suffering through memory, and makes the survivor question why so many others died when they survived. This idea is known as the concept of 'survivor guilt'. Survivor guilt has featured prominently in survivor accounts in past incidents of atrocity, for example, Holocaust survivors who

<sup>64</sup> Thomas Kamilindi, 'Journalism in a Time of Hate Media' in Thompson, *The Media and the Rwandan Genocide*, p. 141.

<sup>65</sup> Patience, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 265.

witnessed their relatives being taken to concentration camps.<sup>66</sup> Although there has recently been a dismissal of the notion of survivor guilt, it has been replaced by the idea of shame.<sup>67</sup> The shame of survival can be seen in many Rwandan accounts. Suffering does not come explicitly from a specific memory of the survivor, but the simple fact that they survived and others perished. The main source of anguish after the event is through shame. The subject does not suffer through any form of turmoil they have experienced, but instead through the 'fortune' that they survived the genocide:

There are... people who constantly change the details of a fateful day because they believe that, on that day, their life snatched away the luck from another life that was just as worthy. Still, in spite of these zigzags, a person's memories don't go away... People choose certain memories, depending on their character, and they relive them as if they had happened just last year and will go on for another hundred years.<sup>68</sup>

Angelique also suggests that such shame is a reason for survivors to adapt their stories, and prioritise certain memories over others, to emphasise the fortune in their survival and the misfortune of those who died. Such adapting and prioritising of memories in the survivor's mind can fall into what Paul Ricoeur describes as the 'fragility of identity' within manipulated memory. The three causes of this fragility are the difficult relationship between identity and time, the confrontation of one identity with others, and identity's

66 Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. 32.

67 R. Leys, *From Guilt to Shame: Auschwitz and After* (Princeton, 2009), p. 7.

68 Angelique, in Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, pp. 142-3.

heritage in founding violence.<sup>69</sup> Evidence of all of these aspects is present in Rwandan culture, and particularly methods of remembering. The first cause Ricoeur uses, the difficult relationship between identity and time, is the most pertinent here. Ricoeur describes memory in this case as the 'temporal component of identity'.<sup>70</sup> Angelique's argument shows how Rwandans have situated their memories of the genocide within the context of later suffering at different periods, forming an identity dependent on memory. The need to form an identity is thus inherent to the emphasis on suffering through memory, and can allow the opportunity for memories to be manipulated, intentionally or otherwise.

Public memorials and national days of commemoration are not the only methods with which the Rwandan government participates in state-sponsored remembrance. Another key component in the development of collective memory has been the restoration of the *gacaca* courts, a form of local community justice. *Gacaca* was implemented to help the devastated Rwandan legal system process the vast numbers of criminal cases that stemmed out of the genocide, while also attempting to promote forgiveness and reconciliation. The system's seemingly conflicting goals and inherent flaws have been assessed and critiqued by organisations

69 Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, pp. 81-82.

70 *Ibid.*, p. 81.

such as Amnesty International and experts such as Phil Clark.<sup>71</sup> The impact the grass courts have had on the forms of remembering within Rwanda, while mixed, are of great significance.

Within the Rwandan government, the focus is on *gacaca* as a provider of justice and a level of closure and reconciliation. However the courts, like the memorials and commemorations, can provide an untimely reminder for survivors who are called to bear witness. They could perhaps hear *genocidaires* deny their crimes, or finally discover what happened to their relatives.<sup>72</sup> As such, a common outcome of *gacaca* for the survivors of the genocide is the strengthening or re-emergence of suffering. In this example Clark recounts the story of a trial he attended in 2003.

The two tarpaulins were opened at the *gacaca* hearing of 6 April to display a pile of rotten clothes in one and a heap of cracked and decayed bones, evidently those of children, in the other. On seeing the remains, the general assembly showed signs of distress. Women and children began crying. Several men shouted angrily at the president for allowing such traumatising evidence to be displayed at an already-fraught *gacaca* hearing, where the general assembly was constructing a list of people who had died in the cell during the genocide.<sup>73</sup>

This example of a *gacaca* trial highlights how the desire to retell, the need for justice, and the unwillingness to forget can lead to the

<sup>71</sup> Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 93.

<sup>72</sup> Augustin, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 318.

<sup>73</sup> Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 85.

failure to move on, and the persistence of suffering through memory. Clark has highlighted how most justice systems in post-conflict societies exclude the people, owing to the suffering and trauma that might be resurrected.<sup>74</sup> In demanding 'Never Again', Rwanda promotes remembering at the centre of its culture. For some survivors, this collectivisation of memory, particularly in the form of compulsory attendance of *gacaca*, has enshrined the link between remembering and suffering and made it harder to overcome the burden of 1994. In the next chapter the presence of *gacaca* takes on a truly salient role, as survivors look beyond their suffering into demands for justice for the crimes committed against them.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.



### ***Ubutabera ~ Justice***

In Arusha the big fish are there.<sup>75</sup> The victims travel there but in *gacaca* everyone is already here: survivors, perpetrators, judges. They are all here in the community. That is the difference. If we want prisoners to come, they come, they tell the truth, they apologise and ask for forgiveness. We can see if they are touched, if they are sincere. But in Arusha it isn't possible for survivors to experience this. They can't tell whether the accused are sincere. Those in Arusha haven't asked for forgiveness. Those in Arusha have committed many crimes here, they should face us, the Rwandan family, but they avoid us by being taken there.<sup>76</sup>

Justice is a key aspect of survivor statements after any instance of atrocity. Unlike the notions of suffering, which looks to the past, and

<sup>75</sup> Arusha, Tanzania, is where the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda has been seated since 1995.

<sup>76</sup> Fidele, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, pp. 166-167.

forgiveness and reconciliation, which look to the future, demands for justice blend across both time frames. Justice is both a form of dealing with suffering, and a way to forge a path to reconciliation. It is in this uncomfortable position that post-conflict legal institutions across the world, and especially in Rwanda, reside.<sup>77</sup> When recollecting the Rwandan Genocide, survivors unsurprisingly place significant emphasis on justice. Simple accounts of events are often couched within grander narratives of punishment for perpetrators or compensation for the victim. In this case, memory becomes the memory of otherness; its duty is 'to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self'.<sup>78</sup> The prevalence of justice within remembering has fluctuated over time, depending on both individual and collective factors, and it is this form of remembering that will be discussed in this chapter.

Bringing perpetrators to account has had an impact on ways of remembering ever since the Holocaust. Olaf Jensen and Claus-Christian Szejnmann have argued that the Nuremberg Trials 'shaped... the discourses on perpetrators and memory in West Germany in the post-war period'.<sup>79</sup> In Rwanda, one of the most important distinctions to be drawn when it comes to justice is between the country's own internal justice system, *gacaca*, and the

<sup>77</sup> Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 37.

<sup>78</sup> Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 89.

<sup>79</sup> Szejnmann, 'Perpetrators of the Holocaust' in Jensen and Szejnmann, *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*, p. 28.

external court of jurisdiction, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), seated in Arusha, Tanzania. As Fidele's account above demonstrates, the two forms of trial have offered different opportunities for perpetrators and different forms of justice for survivors. The ICTR has been met with mixed reviews. It has successfully punished many of the genocide's political, military and media leaders, and 'clarified the historical truth' of the genocide.<sup>80</sup> For example, when leading *genocidaire* Theoneste Bagosora received the heaviest sentence possible in 2008, genocide survivors expressed their relief.<sup>81</sup> Despite this support, the ICTR has also been criticised by Rwanda's current government, with Paul Kagame suggesting that the ICTR money would be better spent on rebuilding Rwanda.<sup>82</sup> For ordinary Rwandans however, perhaps due to its immediacy and close proximity, it is *gacaca* that dominates talk of justice, and will form the basis for this chapter.

Rwanda's elites are keen to emphasise the strength of the *gacaca* system. Fidele, a *gacaca* judge, sees the court's insistence on putting perpetrators and survivors face-to-face as a key strength it has over the ICTR. However *gacaca's* strengths are also its key weaknesses. This research has already highlighted how attending a trial can result in the re-emergence of memory and suffering for victims. But there are other flaws in the system that mean

80 W. Schabas, 'Post-Genocide Justice in Rwanda: A Spectrum of Options' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 211.

81 'Jailed for Life... The Butcher of Rwanda', *Daily Mirror*, 19 December 2008.

82 P. Kagame, 'Preface' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. xxv.

remembering can often be superseded by criticism of the apparent lack of justice - from both sides. Interestingly, a significant proportion of these stories come from *genocidaires* or people associated with them. Accounts of *genocidaires* are something this dissertation has yet to touch on. They play a largely insignificant role when it comes to suffering through memory, as it is very difficult for a *genocidaire* to equate any form of suffering to the memory of the genocide. However when it comes to associating memory with justice, perpetrators' views are as influential as victims'. For example, Fulgence describes the situation for women charged with genocide crimes:

The Hutu women imprisoned at Rilima are more fragile than the men, because they are never visited by their husbands or their brothers.<sup>83</sup> Many of them were denounced by envious people, to get the possessions of their dead husbands. They know themselves to be rejected by the past and the present. Which is why they are more reluctant to admit their crimes. When they have done what they have done, they keep silent.<sup>84</sup>

Perpetrators' grievances reflect what they perceive as injustice towards them, as the Rwandan government tries to get through a significant number of cases in a short period of time. The lack of officials and experts in *gacaca*, along with evidence that often amounts to little more than hearsay, has meant *gacaca* has failed to

83 Rilima is the location of a prison for *genocidaires* in Rwanda's Eastern Province.

84 Fulgence Bunani, in Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, p. 104.

meet the international minimum standards of a fair trial.<sup>85</sup> Fulgence's account suggests that one of the groups persecuted against by *gacaca* are female relatives of *genocidaires*, who are excessively punished due to their inability to defend themselves. This narrative is also notable for the way Fulgence relates the injustice women suffer to the role of their male relatives. By reducing women's involvement in the genocide in this way, it reflects the arguments put forward by German women after the Second World War. In this era, 'accused women exploited their gender status' and argued that they were 'helpless assistants in a regime that was led by men'.<sup>86</sup> In the 1970s, as women's involvement in the Holocaust was analysed for the first time, they were still given a role on the sidelines, their support being put down to their need to conform to men's racism.<sup>87</sup>

On a deeper level, Fulgence's account highlights the many conflicts of memory of a female prisoner of genocide. A connection is again made between past and present, in the form of the justice of their imprisonment and subsequent rejection from their families. This leads in turn to them keeping silent about their crimes, stifling their memories in an attempt to avoid retribution. For criminals of the genocide, *gacaca* offers some justification for remembering and

<sup>85</sup> Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 93.

<sup>86</sup> Szejnmann, 'Perpetrators of the Holocaust' in Jensen and Szejnmann, *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*, p. 29.

<sup>87</sup> C. Herkommer, 'Women Under National Socialism: Women's Scope for Action and the Issue of Gender' in Jensen and Szejnmann, *Ordinary People as Mass Murderers*, p. 103.

recollecting. Its plea bargaining system means that a confession results in a sentence being roughly halved, with life imprisonment cut to between twenty and thirty years.<sup>88</sup>

Perpetrators also show anger towards the government for what they believe is unfair bias towards survivor groups. According to Alphonse, a *genocidaire*, survivors are given benefits from the government, and are admonished of any crimes they may have committed regardless of whether they have conformed to Rwanda's reconciliation program. The belief amongst some *genocidaires* that they are being treated differently to war criminals on the side of the RPF is damaging to government hopes of reconciliation, as this dissertation will analyse later. It also creates a form of collective memory based around the theme of justice that categorises Rwandans into two groups: survivors of the genocide and perpetrators of the genocide, ignoring the blurring of these boundaries. This collectivisation has been actively promoted by Paul Kagame.<sup>89</sup>

Many of them (survivors) live together now in new houses because the government has built these houses for survivors... Some survivors have been seeking revenge. Some of them have killed our families and we don't know why those perpetrators haven't been sent to jail... I know some of these survivors don't want Hutu on the hills... The

<sup>88</sup> Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 78.

<sup>89</sup> Kagame, 'Preface' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. xxi.

government helps the survivors but not other ethnic groups.<sup>90</sup>

By discussing the government's treatment of members of Rwandan society in this way, Alphonse too falls inadvertently into making the same distinctions between the groups involved. Having banned talk of ethnicity, the RPF government has instead created new categories based around their apparent role in the genocide.<sup>91</sup> By 'survivors', Alphonse is referring to Tutsi survivors of the 1994 genocide, whereas Hutu who have been the subject of violence themselves are not treated to this term. Hutu who risked their lives to protect Tutsi friends are ignored in Rwanda's official memory. As Nigel Eltringham has argued, the term 'Hutu moderate' has been consigned to the past, suggesting that all Hutu present in Rwanda today were supporters of the genocide.<sup>92</sup> Another interesting development in the language of remembering genocide is the word used to describe the events. When Lee Ann Fujii interviewed Rwandans, the most common word used to describe the genocide was *intambara*, the *kinyarwanda* word for 'war'.<sup>93</sup> Not only does this suggest the apparent interconnectedness between war and genocide, but also that Rwandans who use the term saw themselves as victims of war, and saw themselves in a group against an identifiable opposition group. Yet officially, only one group is

90 Alphonse, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 119.

91 Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, pp. 266-267.

92 Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 98.

93 Fujii, *Killing Neighbours*, pp. 14-15.

acknowledged as having committed violence, and only one is acknowledged as having been the victim. Rwanda's official week of mourning therefore excludes Hutu mourning.<sup>94</sup> As Rene Lemarchand has argued, Rwanda needs to give proper recognition to the fact that 'Hutu and Tutsi were victims of calamity, for which responsibility is shared by elements of both communities', and not allow the growth of a victim-centred collective memory.<sup>95</sup> Yet many Rwandans, perpetrators and survivors alike, focus on their own victimhood. For example, *genocidaires* such as Alphonse talk of how survivors are overcompensated for their losses:

The judges have been asking many people to pay compensation for the property they stole in 1994. But then many survivors start asking for ten times as much property as they had then... Some people lost their house during the genocide and now they ask for 2 million francs. Two million! Or they claim they should receive five goats when everyone knows they only had one... But people here are very poor. The prisoners come home and their families have nothing, so how can they give compensation?<sup>96</sup>

Here Alphonse restores pre-genocide and post-genocide memories, without talking about the actual events of the genocide. This suggests the triumph of 'common memory', a detached view in hindsight of subsequent events, over 'deep memory'.<sup>97</sup> The crimes committed against a victim are given insignificant attention in

94 Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 71.

95 Lemarchand, 'The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 70.

96 Alphonse, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 126.

97 Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. xiii.



comparison to what they had before and what they have demanded since. As with many of those who were not subject to genocidal violence, Alphonse talks about the genocide as merely a part of the wider picture.<sup>98</sup> By accusing survivors of lying about the severity of their losses, such analysis could be said to verge dangerously close to genocide denial, a popular talking point in contemporary Rwanda. Tom Ndahiro, a Rwandan journalist and human rights activist, has argued that survivors remain victims even in the post-genocide era, accusing perpetrators of an 'ongoing preoccupation... to alter or erase the world's memory of the genocide'.<sup>99</sup> He believes that there should be justice and accountability not just for *genocidaires*, but also for genocide deniers.<sup>100</sup>

It is not only perpetrators who talk of injustice in post-genocide Rwandan society. Survivors of the genocide have often shown anger or bewilderment at *gacaca's* methods for achieving justice. Instances such as the sudden announcement that some prisoners would be released early, due to prison overcrowding, and the banning of the main opposition party, the *Mouvement Démocratique Républicain* (MDR), have both triggered fears of renewed violence amongst survivors.<sup>101</sup> Survivors also have concerns about the ease

98 Fujii, *Killing Neighbours*, p. 81.

99 Tom Ndahiro, 'Genocide-Laundering: Historical Revisionism, Genocide Denial and the *Rassemblement Republicain pour la Democratie au Rwanda*' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 101.

100 *Ibid.*, p. 102.

101 P. Clark, 'The Rules (and Politics) of Engagement: The *Gacaca* Courts and Post-Genocide Justice, Healing and Reconciliation in Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 318.

with which *genocidaires* can lie about what they did. For example in May 2003, Solomon, who lost his family during the genocide, explained how suspects at *gacaca* often denied their crimes:

It is very hard to talk to the killers because they usually lie about what they have done... They tell me all kinds of lies to try and make us believe they are innocent - 'I was sick at the time (of the genocide)', 'I was in a different community', 'I didn't kill'. The truth may come one day but we will have to wait.<sup>102</sup>

Solomon's account paints an interesting picture of the thorny relationship between justice, individual memory and collective memory in post-genocide Rwanda. By arguing that the killers 'usually' lie, Solomon falls into a form of remembering that has remained consistent and persisted throughout post-genocide Rwandan society, and which is integral to the idea of justice. By invoking collective memory, the Rwandan government has promoted the collectivisation of people into categories of criminals and victims. The previous accounts show evidence of this coming from both perpetrators and survivors. Political scientists have accused the government of promoting division between Rwanda's groups through invoking collective memory; for example, the RPF's account of the genocide suggests that all Hutu benefited or stood to benefit from the violence.<sup>103</sup> Such criticisms are starting to be raised by

102 Solomon, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 314.

103 H. Hintjens, 'Reconstructing Political Identities in Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 87.

Rwandans, as this account from an exiled Rwandan academic indicates:

There is a globalisation of guilt for Hutu, when not all of them are guilty. The international community has never globalised guilt, but emphasised the principle of personal guilt and that each person should go before the ICTR depending on their individual responsibility.<sup>104</sup>

By deliberately promoting collective memory, the Rwandan government has participated in this globalisation of guilt of Rwanda's majority ethnic group, the Hutu. And through this, ordinary Rwandan Tutsi have also applied such categories to the population. Such identities have been promoted since the early stages of the RPF government. For example, on the first anniversary of the genocide in July 1995, a political commissar with the army identified Rwanda's 'criminal population' of *genocidaires*.<sup>105</sup> The commissar's view shows the ability to manipulate facts in the formation of collective memory. The view of the RPF, who entered Rwanda from exile in Uganda in 1990 to reclaim the country, would suggest that every Rwandan citizen they encountered was either a survivor of genocide or a perpetrator of genocide.

Statistics and common sense have disproved this argument. Taking the established estimate of 800,000 deaths in the genocide, this would equate to at most 800,000 killers. But given the number of

104 Rwandan academic in exile, in Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 72.

105 Political commissar, in M. Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers* (Princeton, 2002), p. 7.

*genocidaires* who have confessed to multiple killings, this figure will be significantly smaller. Even if for every death there were a different killer, the number of killers would only come to 12% of the Hutu population.<sup>106</sup> Both *genocidaires* and Tutsi survivors are therefore in a minority compared to the significant majority of those Rwandans who did not participate in the genocide. However collective memory ignores this group, focusing on and exaggerating the perpetrator and survivor groups. The example of contemporary Rwanda draws interesting comparisons to post-Holocaust Europe, in which Poles and Jews saw themselves as the primary survivor group, constructing a national memory of victimhood and destruction.<sup>107</sup> The establishment of a survivor group, contrasted directly to a perpetrator group - denied by Germany at the time - can be seen to equate to the growth within Rwanda of a collective identity of victims built around the subject of justice for genocide crimes.

Collective memory has proliferated the individual memories of ordinary Rwandan citizens to manipulate the facts and exaggerate the figures. Despite having no way of knowing just how many Rwandan Hutu were involved in the genocide, in December 1995 a survivor named Mectilde said that just 10% of Hutu had helped Tutsi in the genocide, in contrast to the other 90% who had killed either under duress, reluctantly or

106 Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 69.

107 Young, *The Texture of Memory*, p. 115.

enthusiastically.<sup>108</sup> Accounts such as this show how a survivor can move beyond their own individual memory of single events to conform to a grander narrative, popularised by an exterior force such as the government. While it could be argued that accounts from 1995 are too proximate to the event to allow the survivor a greater degree of perspective, views such as Mectilde's have continued to be popular, even becoming more concrete. For example, by 1998 survivors such as Marie Louise were treating all Hutu with suspicion:

Sometimes, Hutu women come back to me asking for work on the plots. I talk to them, try to ask them why they wanted to kill us without ever having complained of anything before. But they do not want to know about it. They keep saying that they did nothing... They say it was the *interahamwe* who forced neighbours to cut, otherwise they would have been themselves killed, and they seem happy enough with this as an answer.<sup>109</sup>

Here Marie Louise shows how far the collective memory interpreting all Hutu as killers had developed after the genocide. Individual Hutu women are asked why they themselves participated in the genocide, and when they respond, Marie Louise is sceptical about their answer. The implication is that the women should assume a collective responsibility for the actions of other members of their ethnicity. Even those Rwandan Tutsi who seek to look beyond ethnic difference, as the state has advocated since the turn of the century, equate Tutsi to survivors and victims and Hutu as

108 Mectilde, in Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, p. 224.

109 Marie Louise Kagoyire, in Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, pp. 93-94.

perpetrators and killers. The popularity of the Rwandan 'liberation', when the RPF successfully forced the *genocidaires* into exile and seized power, can be compared to the East German emphasis on the triumph of the Red Army in May 1945. While this led to the marginalisation of Holocaust memory, it created a common bond between survivors, German communists, that excluded others, German Jews, in much the same way as Rwandan Genocide memory defines Tutsi as survivors and Hutu as not.<sup>110</sup> The result, in both cases, is a form of collective memory in which one group of survivors is not integrated into the grander narrative.

This chapter has shown how when it comes to remembering through forms of justice, perpetrators have been critical of what they perceive as government biases in favour of the survivor group. It has also shown how the government has promoted group identity, popularising a collective memory that espouses the Hutu ethnicity as the cause of genocide. These two forms of remembering have aligned when it comes to criticism of the RPF's role in the genocide. The RPF's refusal to acknowledge its own crimes in the civil war between 1990 and 1994, which are not punishable through *gacaca*, has led to criticism, as these accounts demonstrate:

110 Herf, 'The Holocaust and the Competition of Memories in Germany, 1945-1999' in Michman, *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000*, pp. 23-24.

Why was there no condemnation of the Byumba massacres of 1990?<sup>111 112</sup>

Why when Tutsis are killed that is recognised as genocide, but if 200,000 Hutu refugees are killed in Zaire that is not genocide?<sup>113</sup>

What about Hutu being killed? Why were Hutu being killed?<sup>114</sup>

These accounts show that, despite the government's emphasis on the atrocities committed by Hutu against Tutsi, the memory of RPF atrocity against Hutu has remained strong. Memories of the violence have persisted despite RPF oppression and international neglect, and are now beginning to grow as the international community begins to put pressure on the Rwandan government.<sup>115</sup> Failure to acknowledge RPF crimes has played a significant role in connecting memory and justice in the minds of Rwanda's Hutu population. In the next chapter such government biases in the way it constructs collective memory will again take on an important role, as Rwandans attempt to look beyond their own suffering and demands for justice to broader hopes of reconciliation between perpetrators and survivors.

111 Byumba is the capital of Rwanda's Northern District, and one of the first major cities encountered by the RPF as it invaded in 1990.

112 Former Rwandan minister in exile, in Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 101.

113 Rwandan NGO worker in exile, in Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 118.

114 Theogene Munyanshogoza, in 'Hutu and Tutsi Ask: Is a Unified Rwanda Possible?', *New York Times*, 6 April 1999.

115 F. Reyntjens, 'Rwanda Ten Years On: From Genocide to Dictatorship', *African Affairs* 103 (2004), p. 210.

### ***Kubabarira ~ Forgiveness***

The former government is making incursions. The prisons are overcrowded. We must make the country secure. We must have reconciliation. We must not think of Hutus and Tutsis. We must think as one nation.<sup>116</sup>

At the end of all incidents of atrocity, the need for reconciliation is often a key talking point. After an event such as civil war or genocide, the way in which a nation and its victims can move beyond their memories of suffering to attempt to forge an attitude of forgiveness and reconciliation is vital. Many outside observers tend to prioritise the need for reconciliation after such an event, however for those who experienced it, memories of suffering and demands for justice can often be barriers in the way of its achievement. In contrast to suffering, which has its roots in the past, and justice, which connects both past and future, the link between memory and forgiveness is firmly based in hopes for the future. In the Rwandan case, reconciliation and forgiveness have been seen as a key part of society since the immediate aftermath of the genocide, as emphasised by the former Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu's statement above, made in March 1995. It is the extent to which ordinary Rwandan citizens have conformed to this demand to forgive that will form the basis of this chapter.

116 Faustin Twagiramungu, in 'A Prayer Before Dying', *Daily Mirror*, 31 March 1995.



As with suffering and justice, reconciliation and forgiveness can be promoted through collective memory. Significantly, the presence of reconciliation as a prominent part of Rwanda's memory of genocide has grown continuously throughout the post-genocide period. Largely absent from original accounts, talk of reconciliation and forgiveness made within a collective framework appears in greater quantity around the turn of the century. They often talk of a 'need' or 'must' to forgive and reconcile, as if this form of remembering was being promoted from above. An example of this comes from a survivor, Nsabiyera, in 2003:

Holding grudges blocks better thinking... We (as survivors) must separate out and clarify our emotions so that we realise that forgiveness at *gacaca* can be a process of healing. First we must forgive ourselves for not forgiving others in the past. Then we will be ready to forgive others and to experience healing.<sup>117</sup>

Nsabiyera here highlights one of the government-led agencies that actively invokes collective memory with an intention to reconcile. The introduction of *gacaca* was aimed not just to alleviate suffering and instigate justice, as has already been discussed, but also to promote reconciliation.<sup>118</sup> The RPF government's rhetoric of reconciliation draws comparisons to the circumstances in both West and East Germany after the Second World War. The new leaders had

117 Nsabiyera, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 295.

118 Clark, 'The Rules (and Politics) of Engagement' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 300.

come from unpopular minority groups, and therefore needed to form an inclusive memory that united their populations.<sup>119</sup> In the case of Rwanda, the RPF were originally formed from an exiled group, absent for over three decades, and therefore needed to identify themselves with the Rwandan population. In his account, Nsabiyeera repeats many of the official arguments used by the RPF. Reconciliation is also all-encompassing. Forgiveness is not just directed at the perpetrators, but at the self. For Nsabiyeera it is not only the *genocidaire* who has to be held accountable and then forgiven, but also the victim. Having failed to forgive in the past, the victim has also wronged, and they must learn to forgive themselves before forgiving others. This narrative demonstrates a rare willingness to accept a common, universal blame, virtually unparalleled in other accounts of atrocity.

By revealing the need to forgive the self before forgiving others, Nsabiyeera alludes to a wider narrative in Rwandan society crucial to the issue of reconciliation and forgiveness. This is the 'culture of impunity', a culture fostered in the late colonial era that meant criminals were not held accountable for violence.<sup>120</sup> Here the memories of justice and reconciliation are inter-linked. As the Rwandan journalist Jean Baptiste Kayigamba argues, 'survivors are encouraged to forgive and forget the crimes committed against

119 Margalit, 'Divided Memory?' in Michman, *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000*, p. 31.

120 Schabas, 'Post-Genocide Justice in Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 207.

them’, while the government is ‘not administering full justice to those found guilty of genocide crimes’.<sup>121</sup> Ending impunity cannot just come through finding people guilty, as Nigel Eltringham argues, but through a coherent effort to deal with all allegations in a transparent way.<sup>122</sup> With the ICTR’s jurisdiction not extending to cover the 1990 to 1994 civil war period, and the RPF government clearly unwilling to discuss such issues, impunity is still a major issue in post-genocide Rwanda, and it is unsurprising that many Rwandans demand justice before forgiveness.

With justice encountering practical and political issues, forgiveness has become the main path Rwanda’s authorities seek to forge in building reconciliation. While government-invoked references to justice have been based around groups, Eltringham has highlighted how forgiveness is only possible if individuals are held to account, otherwise the perpetrator would seem elusive.<sup>123</sup> One core method for this comes from *gacaca*. Since 2008 the subject of forgiveness has been officially adopted in Rwanda’s *Gacaca Law*.<sup>124</sup> *Gacaca*’s own judges have expressed its purpose of promoting reconciliation, even going as far as encouraging perpetrators to retell memories of their crimes in order to begin the path to forgiveness, as this judge explains:

121 Jean Baptiste Kayigamba, ‘Without Justice, No Reconciliation: A Survivor’s Experience of Genocide’ in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 40.

122 Eltringham, *Accounting for Horror*, p. 146.

123 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

124 Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 279.

Truth is the liberator and we must help detainees to confess their crimes... We won't hurt them with lies and we will welcome them home, ready to forgive them, so they will tell the truth about what they have done.<sup>125</sup>

Here the main emphasis is not to get perpetrators to confess in order to punish them, but in order to forgive them. This ties in with what Susanne Buckley-Zistel describes as a 'chosen amnesia' present in the minds of Rwandans since the genocide.<sup>126</sup> While Buckley-Zistel applies chosen amnesia, the deliberate blocking of memories, to pre-genocide instances of violence, it can also be applied to the system of *gacaca*. By prioritising forgiveness and reconciliation, this judge downplays the crimes that were actually committed and the effects they had, bringing to mind a chosen amnesia that 'constitutes a deliberate social coping mechanism to deal with the disruptive experiences of the past'.<sup>127</sup> The subject makes a conscious effort to not draw on a specific memory, although it is still stored in the mind, in order to reconcile.

In some cases, Rwandan survivors talk of a higher power even than the government as a reason for putting their memories of suffering and justice behind them and moving towards

125 A local pastor, in Clark, 'The Rules (and Politics) of Engagement' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 306.

126 S. Buckley-Zistel, 'We are Pretending Peace: Local Memory and the Absence of Social Transformation and Reconciliation in Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 128.

127 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

reconciliation. Rwanda's churches have joined the government in promoting a philosophy of reconciliation.<sup>128</sup> Having declined in significance in the late colonial and immediate post-colonial era, religion has become increasingly important since the genocide.<sup>129</sup> Many Rwandans now highlight the importance of Christian values in forging the country's post-genocide future, and forgiveness is a key part of this. For example, Marie-Claire says that it is only the word of God that tells her to forgive, while Jean Baptiste emphasises the 'duty' to forgive:

I have already forgiven the killers. God forgives, therefore we must forgive... There is no one pressuring me to forgive the people who killed my family. It is only the word of God that tells me to forgive.<sup>130</sup>

We must forgive because God forgives... It is our Christian duty and if we do not forgive then we ourselves become the sinners.<sup>131</sup>

Jean Baptiste's account is another example of how Rwandans have evoked a collective and external influence in their memories. It also highlights one crucial aspect of forgiveness - that the failure to forgive and move on from the past is as bad as what the killers had done. His argument is similar to Nsabiyera's, which implied that failing to forgive in the past had had a negative effect and needed to

128 Clark, 'The Rules (and Politics) of Engagement' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 337.

129 Marie-Chantal, in Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, p. 138.

130 Marie-Claire, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 320.

131 Jean Baptiste, in Clark, 'The Rules (and Politics) of Engagement' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 306.

be forgiven itself. Here, while it is the *genocidaires* who committed atrocities in the past, the onus is now on survivors to forgive in order to help society progress. Truth-telling amongst perpetrators and punishment from the government are not salient in terms of reconciliation, instead, it is the role of individual victims to lead the way to reconciliation. By putting reconciliation in the hands of survivors, Jean Baptiste gives an individual agency to the act of remembering and forgiving, albeit using a collective framework, Christianity, to do so.

In spite of the Rwandan government's inclusive and conciliatory rhetoric, a line of memory present throughout the nation's post-genocide era has criticised the attempt to collectivise forgiveness and deny the individual memories that block reconciliation. Since 1994, Rwandan accounts emphasising the failure of reconciliation have diverged to critique a multitude of problems that have impacted upon individuals' agencies in forgiving and reconciling. Recently, such narratives have become increasingly popular as opponents of the RPF government raise issues with the regime. For example in May 2010, Victoire Ingabire, the leader of the main opposition Unified Democratic Forces (UDF) coalition, argued that the RPF government has prevented the people from talking openly about the genocide.<sup>132</sup> In forcing reconciliation from above, the government has stifled individual agency of remembering and

<sup>132</sup> Victoire Ingabire, in 'Rwanda's Mix: Order, Tension, Repressiveness', *New York Times*, 1 May 2010.

forgiving. Indeed, RPF foreign minister Louise Mushikiwabo has openly stated that not a single individual would be allowed to 'tamper' with the nation's program of reconciliation.<sup>133</sup> In October 2010, Ingabire was arrested on six counts of terrorism and genocide denial, and has been criticised by the state-sponsored national press as a 'divisionist'.

As a result, Rwandan accounts often show signs of a refusal to talk about memories of atrocity, not because of an individual desire to forget, but because of the RPF government's collective pressure to reconcile. This could be best equated to the 'obligation' of some Holocaust survivors 'to stay silent about certain aspects of their experiences for fear that they do not belong to the history of the Holocaust'.<sup>134</sup> Evidence of Rwandans keeping silent about memories in order to strengthen reconciliation is evident as early as 1998, in this account from Innocent, a survivor:

I see today that there is still embarrassment in talking of the survivors, even amongst Rwandans, even amongst Tutsis. I think that everyone wishes, in certain ways, that the survivors would move aside from genocide. As if they wished to leave to other people, who had not directly run the risk of being cut by machete chops, the task of taking care of it. As if we were now in the way.<sup>135</sup>

This account demonstrates one of the key factors in looking at memory and reconciliation in Rwanda - the incompatibility of the

133 Louise Mushikiwabo, in 'Rwanda's Mix', *New York Times*, 1 May 2010.

134 Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, p. 138.

135 Innocent Rwililiza in Hatzfeld, *Into the Quick of Life*, p. 79.

two. At its heart, the decision to make reconciliation the primary focus of Rwandan society since the genocide has been detrimental to Rwandan memory. The individual's need to remember, and the desire to take grief and forgiveness at their own pace, has been obscured by a collective demand to reconcile. Critics have argued that forgiveness following mass atrocity actually means enforced forgetting.<sup>136</sup> The collective good overtakes an individual's agency in remembering. Yet in another sense, forgiveness may promote remembering, as it involves the need for both the perpetrator and the victim to acknowledge what took place.<sup>137</sup>

The *gacaca* process and its limitations provide a natural hinge around which Rwandans have discussed reconciliation in the early twenty-first century. As this chapter has already demonstrated, officials have seen *gacaca* as providing an opportunity for reconciliation from above, as survivors and perpetrators face each other and the latter confess to their crimes. However the courts also provide negative experiences that can hold the act of forgiving back - for example, reminders of suffering or the accused lying about their crimes. When Rwandans talk of *gacaca's* effect on reconciliation, it generally refers to how little effect it has actually had:

136 Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 42.

137 *Ibid.*, p. 298.



Reconciliation will never happen in Rwanda because we can't forget what happened in the past. *Gacaca* won't change any of this. People are still too hurt and people are still too angry.<sup>138</sup>

There is no reconciliation here. There is no more violence but there isn't reconciliation. Even in church, Hutu sit on one side and Tutsi on the other... When we go to *gacaca*, the Hutu families sit there and the Tutsi families sit here.<sup>139</sup>

The failure of *gacaca* in forging a path to reconciliation could be down to a strong individual agency present in the decision over whether to forgive. Here 'I' replaces 'we', and Rwandans neglect the collective, government-provoked need to reconcile in favour of their own personal memories and desires. As a result, such accounts often discuss the impossibility or unwillingness to forgive. Before the creation of *gacaca* and the government-led downplaying of ethnicity, forgiveness was less popular. Instead, accounts such as Edmond's, whose brother was killed in the genocide, talked of the need for permanent punishment. The Rwandan example shows links to Holocaust testimony in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War, where survivor accounts gave prominence to revenge far more than reconciliation than they did later.<sup>140</sup> In this account from the mid-1990s, Edmond says that if he had the opportunity to talk to his brother's killer, he would use it to remind the perpetrator of the atrocities he had committed:

138 Augustin, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 312.

139 Chantal, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 124.

140 Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, p. 108.

I'd like to talk to him. I want him to explain to me what this thing was, how he could do this thing. My surviving sister said, 'Let's denounce him.' I saw what was happening - a wave of arrests all at once - and I said, 'What good is prison, if he doesn't feel what I feel? Let him live in fear.' When the time is right, I want to make him understand that I'm not asking for his arrest, but for him to live forever with what he has done. I'm asking for him to think about it for the rest of his life. It's a kind of psychological torture.<sup>141</sup>

For some, the inability or unwillingness to forgive has not changed even as the genocide becomes more distant, and the government increasingly promotes reconciliation. Individual agency in Rwandan memory has persisted in spite of collectivist goals. In the post-Holocaust era, the Jewish world questioned why German Jews 'who barely escaped death remain in the midst of their potential murderers', arguing they had refused to 'recognize the lessons of history'.<sup>142</sup> While for Rwandan survivors the option of not living with perpetrators may not be possible, some individuals do at least refuse to forgive. By the early twenty-first century some, such as Agnes, said they could never forgive. Others such as Romain offered the possibility of forgiveness in the future, but they were unsure when:

I can never forgive that man... When I go to *gacaca*, I will tell the judges who this man is because I know him and I

141 Edmond Mrugamba in Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You...*, p. 240.

142 M. Brenner, 'The Changing Role of the Holocaust in the German-Jewish Public Voice' in Michman, *Remembering the Holocaust in Germany, 1945-2000*, p. 112.

saw with my own eyes what he did. I will never be able to forgive him.<sup>143</sup>

I am able to forgive those who killed my brother and best friend but not now. I am too angry... When I forget what happened, I will be able to forgive. Forgetting though will take a very long time.<sup>144</sup>

Agnes and Romain offer different interpretations of the finality of forgiveness. In contrast to the anonymous judge quoted earlier in this chapter, for Agnes *gacaca* will be used to punish. There is no hope of reconciliation. In contrast, Romain unusually places forgiving with forgetting, and argues that for him, forgetting must come first. In a sense Romain's account shows the intrusiveness of collective memory, whereby he will not be able to forgive until he forgets, and the act of forgetting is blocked by Rwanda's centralised culture of memory. However in another sense Romain demonstrates the strength of individual agency – that until he can forget, it will be impossible for him to participate in the process of forgiveness. As Phil Clark argues, for individuals who witnessed the genocide first hand, forgetting is neither possible nor desirable.<sup>145</sup>

Despite individual moves against forgiveness, Rwanda's unique circumstances make it difficult for its citizens to block such progress. As this dissertation has already shown, post-genocide

143 Agnes, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, pp. 281-282.

144 Romain, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 283.

145 Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 291.

Rwanda has seen killers and survivors re-united within their communities, and this has had a significant impact on the way Rwandans remember in terms of both suffering and justice. It has also effected how Rwandans talk of the possibility of forgiveness. As Yvette's account suggests, the presence of *genocidaires* in communities can also encourage victims to forgive:

I met the man who killed members of my family. He accepted that he had killed them and said how he done it... In our country you may be in a conversation with someone who has killed your loved ones. You may not be their friend but you can be in the same society and live peacefully.<sup>146</sup>

Yvette shows the possibility for individual and collective desires to conform, and the possibility that a survivor can live peacefully alongside a *genocidaire* who harmed them or their family. For others such as Francine, the collective requirement to forget has clashed with individual desires. Her account suggests an 'incognito of forgiveness', hidden behind 'the figure of a public exercise of political reconciliation'.<sup>147</sup> She offers the possibility of something new - reconciliation without forgiveness.

We must simply go back to living, since life has so decided... We shall return to drawing water together, to exchanging neighbourly words, to selling grain to one another. In twenty years, fifty years, there will perhaps be boys and girls who will learn about the genocide in books. For us, though, it is impossible to forgive.<sup>148</sup>

146 Yvette Mujwaneza, in 'My Country Has Made Astonishing Progress', *Sunday Express*, 4 April 2004.

147 Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, p. 485.

148 Francine, in Hatzfeld, *A Time for Machetes*, p. 185.

Francine expresses the overarching themes of memory through forgiveness present in Rwandan society in the post-genocide era. In a sense, she has moved on from her memories of the genocide and allowed the community to build again. However there are limits to the process of reconciliation. Again, it is impossible to forgive on an individual level. For those who lived through the genocide, their individual agency actively provokes memory, blocking the government's desire to forgive. The job of learning about the genocide, and therefore allowing the true opportunity for reconciliation and forgiveness, falls not to the current generation but to future ones. And finally, Francine again refers to the 'must' of reconciliation, and not the 'want'. By referring to this demand in the collective sense, she again attests to the submission of individual desires to the collective.

The past three chapters have shown how Rwandans remember the genocide in relation to three key themes - suffering, justice and forgiveness. They have analysed the various tangents these themes have taken in relation to individual and collective memories, post-genocide events and popular central narratives. They have explored the development of each of these tangents and compared them to Rwanda's political science and Holocaust memory studies. This dissertation will conclude by bringing these themes together, determining the place genocide memory holds in Rwanda today and

where it might go in the future, and offering avenues for further research.

## **Conclusion**

By refusing to remain silent or silenced, survivors aim not only to keep the memory of those who died alive, but also to gain social recognition and legitimacy within the ongoing dialogues through which social memory and belonging are shaped. Their testimony, then, aims not only to represent the past as it has been witnessed, but at the same time symbolises a social performance of the survivors' agency within their community... The testimonial impulse... signals a desire for connectedness that requires survivors to forge the social recognition of

their disconnection so that their alterity does not amount to their exclusion.<sup>149</sup>

In July 1994, Paul Kagame and the Rwandan Patriotic Front swept aside the genocidal forces of the Rwandan government, pushing them into exile and achieving political power for themselves. Ever since, 4 July has been celebrated as Rwanda's Liberation Day, a day in which the nation remembers the victims of the genocide. Liberation Day is the focal point of Rwanda's culture of memory, around which its memorials of skulls and the 'remembering' society *Ibuka* form lasting, 365-days-a-year reminders. And, since 2004, the commemorations have adopted the post-Holocaust slogan 'Never Again', suggesting that through remembering Rwanda will never again descend into ethnic violence.

My research has explored contemporary Rwanda's 'culture of memory' from three avenues - suffering, justice and forgiveness. In so doing, I have demonstrated the complexities the centralisation and collectivisation of memory have brought to Rwandan citizens. In a sense, the inherent problem is that each contradicts the others. On an individual level, by suffering through their memories a survivor is less likely to forgive those who committed crimes against him. Collectively, by suffering and remembering as a group, Rwanda's survivors separate themselves from the rest of society, lessening prospects of forgiveness. By connecting memory to

149 Dauge-Roth, in Clark, *The Gacaca Courts, Post-Genocide Justice and Reconciliation in Rwanda*, p. 273.

justice, Rwandan individuals again demand punishment over forgiveness. And through *gacaca*, the group identities of survivors and perpetrators are again strengthened, with each accusing the other of lying, thus making reconciliation difficult.

Like in West Germany after the Second World War, in Rwanda the key dilemma is now to build 'a democracy that can incorporate a guilty majority alongside an aggrieved and fearful minority'.<sup>150</sup> By maintaining memories of suffering alongside demands for justice and reconciliation, as we have seen, the Rwandan government has seemingly created an infeasible situation in democracy-building. While some Rwandans are willing to talk about forgiveness, we have seen that they mainly refer to a 'must' or 'need' to, rather than a want or desire. The top-down approach of Rwanda's forgiveness and reconciliation program is clearly evident throughout the post-genocide period. In contrast, suffering through memory and justice through memory, while also invoked collectively, have persisted through individual agency across survivor society. The result is a collective and centralised focus on reconciliation opposing individual suffering, which may never go away, and individual justice, which can only be resolved through collective action.

As well as demonstrating the immense complexities between the three themes identified, my research has also shown that within

150 Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, p. 266.



each there is a clash between individual and collective memory. Collective memory has grown ever since the genocide, as it does after any account of atrocity. There are two lines of collective memory in Rwanda; the first seeks to forge a national unity above ethnic divisions, the second does the opposite, formulating groups into two, survivors and perpetrators. Both go against the memories of the individual, which seek to maintain their own agency. Individual memories may not be attached to a 'national' group, nor a wider survivor group that distinguishes itself from perpetrators. Individual memory seeks to promote the many different agents present in Rwandan society, while collective memory groups Rwandans into one or two categories.

This piece of research has its limitations. It has sought to use a broad range of sources, from Rwandan government officials, *gacaca* officials, survivors and perpetrators to explain Rwandan memories of the genocide. Through this wealth of sources, it has demonstrated the vast, deep-rooted complexities in Rwanda's culture of memory. However further research is needed to pinpoint with more precision just how Rwanda's genocide memory is developing as it nears its twentieth anniversary. This research has used all available Rwandan accounts connected to memory, yet in most cases these quotes were provided to interviewers with different purposes than the intentions of this research. While this provides a useful array of detached sources, it would be

complimented by a more concerted collection of sources, one this piece of research lacked the time and scope to provide.

Yet there can be little doubt that analysis of contemporary Rwandan politics and its link to genocide memory is crucial to historians and political scientists who seek to determine the future of one of Africa's most outwardly promising countries. Rwanda's apparent unity, built on successive election victories for Paul Kagame and the RPF, has meant the nation's memory project has been deemed a success. However in recent years international criticism has increased. Political scientists have argued that Rwanda's political elite, like Israel's since the Holocaust, have received 'genocide credit', ensuring that they are seen in a positive light and allowing the government a free rein.<sup>151</sup> As a result, many follow the RPF's history of Rwanda and the genocide, including the important distinction they draw between the crimes committed against Tutsi and 'Hutu moderates'. They are accused of labelling the former as genocide and the latter as simply political violence, creating a form of moral hierarchy that implies the murders of Tutsi were worse than those of Hutu.<sup>152</sup> By doing this they suppress the voices of Hutu who have themselves been the subject of violence, thwarting the memory of a key part of Rwandan society.<sup>153</sup>

151 Reyntjens, 'Rwanda Ten Years On', p. 199.

152 J. Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 126.

153 Lemarchand, 'The Politics of Memory in Post-Genocide Rwanda' in Clark and Kaufman, *After Genocide*, p. 69.

While these arguments have serious merit, they would gain credence in the international political arena with further research of Rwandan views at the communal level. Too many international actors assume the RPF government's position on the subject of the genocide. The simultaneous presence of a powerful elite willing to shape history and an uncritical audience willing to accept it has already been demonstrably damaging in Rwanda's history. In so doing, they neglect the ordinary Rwandan citizens, who express a far wider range of different positions than offered by the government. A more critical analysis would cover a broad spectrum of Rwandans and offer a greater insight into their memories of the genocide, leading to the establishment of a more coherent narrative.

Has Rwanda's memory culture, the championing of *Ibuka* and the commemoration of fallen (Tutsi) Rwandans led 'Never Again' closer to reality, or has it simply masked the nation's problems behind empty rhetoric? Through promoting justice and reconciliation, the RPF government appears to be taking the right steps, however, reconciliation has often come at the expense of justice, and this in turn has made reconciliation superfluous. The true outcome may not be known until some time after both *gacaca* and the ICTR have finished their work, and their legacy has been established. However to date, the centralised memory propagated by the RPF has yet to

overawe individual survivors who still speak of their experiences independently of any collective narratives. Alexandre Dauge-Roth has demonstrated the position of the Rwandan Genocide survivor in the history of survivor memoirs. While for the observer it might be most comforting for the victim to remain silent, for the victim themselves, their memory persists regardless.<sup>154</sup> Through their testimonial impulse and refusal to be silenced, they create a common bond between all those who have survived atrocity since the Holocaust.<sup>155</sup> Rwandan accounts of the genocide go far beyond suggesting a universal story of the genocide, and to adopt such an approach would be to deny many survivors their voices and memories.

154 Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies*, p. 50.

155 Waxman, *Writing the Holocaust*, p. 49.

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