

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

THE ROLE OF NARRATIVE IN HEALING IN RWANDA

by

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DECLARATION

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Abstract

In 1994, almost a million Tutsi and some Hutu were massacred in Rwanda during the 100 day genocide. Between 1995 and 1998, nearly the same number of Hutu and some Tutsi died, while in flight, primarily in the former Zaire. In the years following genocide, hundreds of thousands of Rwandans have been accused of genocide related crimes. There is not a person in Rwanda who is not directly affected by past violence and the country is in a process of healing and reconciliation.

Much of the violence in Rwanda can be traced to perceptions of history and identity. This thesis seeks to unearth narratives of history and identity as a way of exploring possibilities for healing and reconciliation. Through an in-depth examination of four life stories, interviews with leaders in the field of reconciliation in Rwanda and informal interviews with a broad spectrum of Rwandans, this research sheds light on the challenges and opportunities in terms of healing. It finds that through critical engagement with our own and broader socio-political narratives we can expand the possibilities of our own narratives, allowing scope for personal healing as well as leading to a deeper understanding of the other. This can form the basis for sustainable reconciliation.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is primarily about hope. The question predominant on my mind from the moment I started was, is there hope for Rwanda? And perhaps the question behind that was, is there hope for the world? Perhaps this is the central theme of Conflict Resolution and Peace Studies. It is the unwavering hope that the world can be a better place, a different place, if we but make it so.

In the beginning I was shocked to the core of my being as I immersed myself in the horror of the violence in Rwanda, described by many as the worst since the holocaust. I knew I would be shocked, yet there is no way to prepare oneself for the experience. At this stage I grappled deeply with what one might call the horror of the human condition. But amidst this I felt very confident of a different Rwanda, because I was interacting with Rwandans who seemed to represent to me the possibility of a different Rwanda. These Rwandans were, after all, good, kind, people who valued human life and were kind to their neighbours.

But as I explored the Rwandan situation more deeply, and unearthed not only complex political intrigue and manipulation within Rwandan but within much higher levels of governance, including powerful first world states, I began to feel increasingly more overwhelmed and hopeless. If something like the Rwandan violence found its roots in such complex things as thousands of years of human history, colonialism, political manipulation, the involvement of greedy, self-interested super powers and the continued hidden agendas of so many players, what hope was there for the ordinary Rwandan, or planet dweller, to ever begin to create that better world? And yet. And yet amidst all the chaos over our heads there are so many individuals and small groups of people saying, “we don't care what happens over our heads, we are going to carry on the good work here on the ground”. It is those individuals that restored my hope; NGO leaders who worked day and night to bring reconciliation between one peasant widow and another, young Rwandans prepared to put their lives at risk for the truth, families deciding to make a life for themselves in a country that seemed hardly to welcome them, and a wide diversity of Rwandan friends who spoke with passion about a Rwanda beyond ethnic division.

Through the process of this thesis my hope was shattered and then restored. The hope I hold within me now is deep and cannot be shaken. It keeps believing even when everything around us is screaming something different. It says, quietly and unendingly, the world would be a better place were we only to make it so.

My thanks go to all those many friends – Burundian, Rwandan and South African – who have participated in this project and have helped me to see hope in so many ways. My thanks also to my supervisor, Geoff Harris, not only for all his input to this thesis but also for believing so absolutely in a better world and reminding us of the role we have to play in making that a reality. To my good friends, Kevin Parry and Jacomien van Niekerk, endless gratitude for your constant, steady support and presence over the five years it has taken me to complete this.

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GLOSSARY

ASF	Avocaats Sans Frontières
AU	African Union
CPJ	Committee for the Protection of Journalists
FAR	Forces Armées Rwandaise
FDLR	Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICTR	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LIPRODHOR	Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights
MDR	Mouvement Démocratique Républicain
MOUCECORE	Mouvement Chrétien pour l'Évangélisation, le Counselling et la Réconciliation
MRND(D)	Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (et la Démocratie)
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRA	National Resistance Army
NURC	National Unity and Reconciliation Commission
PHARP	Peacebuilding, Healing and Reconciliation Program
PRI	Penal Reform International
RANU	Rwandan Alliance for National Unity
RPA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
RTL	Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNAMIR	United Nations Assistance Mission to Rwanda
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In 1994, almost a million Tutsi and some Hutu were massacred in Rwanda during the 100 day genocide. Between 1995 and 1998, nearly the same number of Hutu and some Tutsi died, while in flight, primarily in the former Zaire¹. For the fifteen years following genocide hundreds of thousands of Rwandans have been accused of genocide related crimes. There is not a person in Rwanda who is not directly affected by past violence. How is it possible for this country to reconcile after such unimaginable horror?

Although the Western press in 1994 described the Rwandan conflict as one of 'ancient tribal warfare', the truth of the matter is somewhat more complex. In fact, a cursory glance at the context reveals that there are no distinct tribes in Rwanda but rather nine million people who speak the same language and seem to share the same culture. The situation has been more accurately described as one of ethnic conflict between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi. A less cursory glance further reveals a struggle not only around ethnicity and identity but of history, how it is represented and how it is perceived.

It is for this reason that this thesis addresses perceptions of history and identity. It is matters of history and identity that lie at the heart of the Rwandan conflict and are also central to its solution. History and identity are accessible to us through the narratives people tell or those they have recorded. Thus this thesis plans to unearth narratives of history and identity as a way of exploring possibilities for healing and reconciliation.

1.1. Understanding narrative

Why do we use narratives as a way of explaining our history and identity? George Rosenwald and Richard Ochberg argue that it is because narratives help us bring coherence to our lives (1992, 2). Through narratives we can make sense of and organize the events and people that affect our lives. How are narratives formed?

¹ The Democratic Republic of Congo, at that time named Zaire, will be referred to in this thesis as The Democratic Republic of Congo or the DRC.

They are formed in constant dialogue with those events and people (Cobely, 2001, 2). What do these narratives tell us? They tell us how we perceive the events and people around us and ourselves in relationship to these.

Together with Rosenwald and Ochberg, this thesis holds that the way we perceive our history and identity, as is revealed in our narratives, can be either emancipatory or stunting (1992, 8). Our narratives can either prevent us from growing or assist us in our growth. Likewise, in a country, the presiding narratives can either assist reconciliation or constrain it.

In order to make sense of the layers of events that occur in our lives and our interactions with multiple groups of people, we draw everything that happens to us together in a coherent narrative. These events may include things that happened to us or things that happened to people that we know about. They may have happened within our family, generations before, but have become part of our own narrative through their retelling. They may include events that have happened on a national or even international level that become integrated into our personal stories. Similarly, the people that become part of our narrative may include figures of authority, national heroes or villains, people we interact with daily and even imagined people. We draw all of this together in a coherent narrative that helps us make sense of it all. Rosenwald and Ochberg write that “life histories have coherence that realists assumed was ‘out there’ but is now seen as something imposed by the story teller ... coherence derives from the tacit assumptions of plausibility that shape the way each story maker weaves the fragmentary episodes of experience into a history” (1992, 5).

This coherence or structure is brought about by the use of certain narrative techniques including the use of key recurring themes. Within these themes, we place ourselves as playing a specific role: a role that is either active or passive, depicts ourselves as victim or perpetrator, hero or villain, as self determining or as one swept along by external events and people. Further, structure and coherence are created through the use of stereotyping and the use of binary oppositions. Certain symbols, metaphors and myths emerge in our narrative. As Rosenwald and Ochberg say: “The stories people tell about themselves are not only interesting for the events and characters they describe but also for something in

the construction of the stories themselves. How individuals recount their histories – what they emphasize or omit, their stance as protagonist or victims, the relationship the story establishes between teller and audience – all shape what individuals can claim of their own lives” (1992, 7). This process of bringing coherence is largely unconscious but is highly influential in determining the way we respond to events and people around us, and is also influential in determining who we are and are becoming.

1.2. Narrative and dialogue

No narrative exists independently of other narratives. Paul Cobley writes that “even the most ‘simplest’ of narratives is embedded in a network of relations that are sometimes astounding in their complexity” (2001, 2). The narratives of those around us, of our family and extended family, of our community, our country and our world all interact with our own narrative. “Subjectivity is not the romantic fiction of a self prior to and safe from socialisation. On the contrary, it is what bears the marks of the person’s interaction with the world and seeks yet to erase them,” write Rosenwald and Ochberg (1992, 8).

Personal life stories are not only embedded into the narratives of other people, but also in the contending narratives of the past, and current social, cultural and political narratives. As Rosenwald and Ochberg say: “Explanations individuals offer of their lives are inevitably shaped by the prevailing norms of discourse within which they operate ... Social influence shapes not only public action but also private self-understanding” (1992, 5).

Rosenwald and Ochberg argue that the narratives we have created form a social framework that limits the choices that we see as being possible or moral (1992, 5). There is a trend in narrative research to engage with narratives uncritically so as not to impose an ‘ideal’ onto these narratives. A hermeneutical, non-canonical perspective might insist that no one has the right to judge one narrative as better or worse than another (Rosenwald and Ochberg, 1992, 3). However, Rosenwald

and Ochberg argue that critically engaging our narratives is imperative for emancipation (1992, 6).

Narrators impose coherence on their life events in order to make sense of them. But these narratives are often developed in struggle with or against other narratives. Rosenwald and Ochberg write that every narrative is an area of contention or struggle 'between the individual and the society in which they are immersed, between consciousness and repression, between desire and adaptation' (1992, 6). They further state that they are interested in critically interpreting 'the reasons and costs of stories' disfigurement' (1992, 6). With this critical interpretation comes the belief that one story can be said to be better than another in terms of its potential for growth, and a story can be said to improve on its predecessor (1992, 6).

As people are able to enlarge the 'range' of personal narratives, "individuals and communities may become aware of the political-cultural conditions that have led to the circumscription of discourse. If a critique of these conditions occurs widely, it may alter not only how individuals construe their own identity but also how they talk to one another, and indirectly the social order itself" (1992, 8). Thus critically engaging narratives has the potential of actually changing the way people perceive the world around them. Being able to perceive reality in new and more varied ways, and understanding better the complex dynamic between self and others, and one's own reality and the effect of political and cultural conditions is critical to any process of personal healing and reconciliation with the other. In critically engaging our narratives we are moving from the limitations of violent conflict towards the possibilities of hope.

1.3. Narrative and history

Following along the theme of narratives being the way people bring coherence to their lives, and that this coherence is thrashed out in dialogue with others, it will be argued that there is no one version of history, but rather multiple narratives that have been developed to bring coherence to history. Each version or narrative is in

contention with other narratives. Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern call history the 'narrative of the interaction of narratives' (2002, 16). They say that when researching the past, there are generally two ways to go about this. One is the 'internalist perspective' which attempts to 'represent the histories that the people we study make for themselves' (2002, 15). The other is the 'externalist perspective', which describes and explains the past from the perspective of the outside observer. Stewart and Strathern see pitfalls in both of these when there are competing narratives about the past. Thus they suggest a third perspective, that of seeing history as existing in 'the interplay between people based on [the interaction of narratives] and in the changes of narrative over time' (2002, 17). They thus argue for a 'dialectical history' and further, they argue that "since such narratives [the stories people tell about the past] are also often statements about identity, history becomes a story of how such identities emerge dialectically and are subject to change" (2002, 17).

Donald Breneiss, in a chapter titled 'Telling troubles: narrative, conflict and experience', suggests that "over the course of a dispute, one narrative often assumes an authoritative role" and that "other contending stories are subsequently shaped and evaluated in terms of these valorised versions" (1996, 43). This has certainly been the case throughout Rwandan history, where one narrative has taken an authoritative role over others often resulting in skewed and false histories that have been used to support political agendas.

1.4. Narrative and identity

Rosenwald and Ochberg write that the very way we express our narrative speaks of our identity (1992, 7). Hungarian researcher Erzsébet Barát, for example, in an analysis on the oral life-narratives of Hungarian women, found that the narrators used the "auto/biographical interview situation strategically, in order to resolve a dilemma of identity" (2000, 166). Rosenwald and Ochberg elaborate on this, saying, "Personal stories are not merely ways of telling someone (or oneself) about one's life; they are the means by which identities may be fashioned" (1992, 7).

In *The Politics of Recognition*, Charles Taylor argues that identity formation (like our narratives) is always dialogical: “We become full human agents, capable of understanding ourselves, and hence defining our identity, through our acquisition of rich human languages of expression” (1995, 253). And further, he states, “We define our identity always in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against, the things our significant others want to see in us. Thus my discovering my own identity doesn’t mean that I work it out in isolation, but that I negotiate it through dialogue, partly overt, partly internal, with others ... my own identity crucially depends on my dialogical relation with others” (1995, 254).

Social anthropologist Richard Jenkins has developed a model specifically concerning ethnic identity. His model emphasises the fact that identity is not static or inherent but rather dynamic and changing (2003, 13). He argues that it changes in the process of interacting with others and events around us. Identity is thus “collective and individual, externalized in social interaction and internalized in personal self-identification” (2003, 13, 14). The premise of his model is that differences between groups become significant “only if they are significant to the actors themselves”. In other words, differences between groups are not inherently problematic. They become problematic when those involved begin to experience them as problematic. These differences can thus be described as ‘imagined’. But just because they are imagined, Jenkins stresses, this doesn’t mean that they are not significant to the actors themselves; significant enough to die for or to kill over (Jenkins, 2003, 19). Jenkins makes clear that ethnic identity, although not primordial, is nevertheless a primary aspect of self identity through the process of socialization.

“An individual’s sense of ethnic membership may – depending upon context – be internalized during early childhood socialization, along with many of the markers of ethnicity such as language, religion, non-verbal behaviour etc. During this period, the primary, deep-rooted social identities of selfhood, gender and humanness are entered into. In these senses, identity is an aspect of the emotional and psychological constitution of individuals; it is, correspondingly, bound up with the maintenance of personal integrity and security, and may be extremely resistant to change... Ethnicity may, *under local circumstances*, be characteristic as a

primary, although not a primordial, dimension of individual identity” (2003, 47).

Thus ethnic identity cannot easily be ‘shaken off’. Our very understanding of self and other is based not only on our own but also our groups’ immediate and deep history.

Another premise of this model is that ethnic identification happens at the boundaries between groups. It is in the interactions on the boundary of ‘us’ and ‘them’ at which groups are defined. Jenkins argues that we define ourselves in terms of what we are that the ‘other’ isn’t or in terms of what we are not compared to what the ‘other’ is (2003, 20). Sandra Wallman (1978, 1979, 1986) adds to this, saying that ‘othering’, or emphasizing ‘their’ difference happens to enhance ‘our’ identity ‘for purposes of organizations or identification’ (Jenkins, 2003, 19). Ethnicity, she says, happens at the boundary of ‘us’, in contact or confrontation or contrast with ‘them’. Boundaries change as actors’ understandings of themselves or the other changes (2003, 20). Ethnicity is thus “transactional, shifting and essentially impermanent” and ethnic boundaries are always two-sided. What becomes significant is how these boundaries are manipulated for various purposes (2003, 20).

According to this model, key to group identity is identity *boundaries*; boundaries that are constantly defined and redefined in terms of ‘the other’. These boundaries are constantly being defended and protected from ‘the other’. It is in the act of defending ones identity boundary that violence can occur. This is especially the case when those in power define others against their will. This thesis will argue that rather than defending our boundaries we need to learn to share our boundaries. Instead of defending our differences, we need to share our differences. Instead of defining ourselves and others in order to protect ourselves against others, we can begin to let go of definitions in order to embrace shared definitions.

In summary, narratives are our way of bringing coherence to our lives. Our narratives are inextricably linked with others’ narratives. They are also inextricably linked with our perception of history and the formation and expression of our

identity. These narratives can stunt our growth because they limit our social framework and the choices we see as possible or moral. But through critically engaging our narratives we can enlarge their range, thus seeing the impact that political and social conditions have had on us, and help us to begin to see other possibilities. This may be a significant part of the process of healing and reconciliation.

1.5. Narrative and Rwanda

The conflict in Rwanda, perhaps more significantly than most conflict situations, centers around narratives. Gerard Prunier, who has written an extensive account of the genocide in the context of Rwandan history writes that Rwanda has been built up into a 'quasi-mythological land' (1995, xiii). He describes how the creation of this mythological land can quite easily be traced in the events and actions that occurred in the hundred or so years preceding the genocide. He writes that,

“In the last resort, we can say that Tutsi and Hutu have killed each other more to upbraid a certain vision they have of themselves, of the others and of their place in this world than because of material interest. This is what makes the killing so relentless. Material interests can always be negotiated, ideas cannot and they often tend to be pursued to their logical conclusions, however terrible” (1995, 40).

It is for this reason that a sustainable model of healing in the Rwandan context takes into account the 'vision' people have of themselves and others, which is directly informed by their narratives of history and identity.

Johan Pottier builds his entire account of the Rwandan situation around the concept of narratives, arguing that the manipulation of narratives was a key factor in allowing the genocide to happen, and remains a key hindrance to reconciliation in Rwanda today (2002). Kenneth Harrow writes that it is the 'foundational fantasies' of history and ethnicity that turned 'ordinary people into killers' (2005, 17). Harrow argues how shared historical narratives became rigid, divisive

narratives, with a Tutsi version and a Hutu version, and that these rigid narratives forced people into distinct categories that dehumanized the other.

A sustainable model of healing and reconciliation would need to take into account these 'rigid, divisive' narratives which are divisive specifically along ethnic lines. It would need to look at how these narratives developed, what impact they currently have and how we could move towards shared narratives. As long as the narratives remain divisive, reconciliation work has the danger of being superficial and may be under threat next time leaders decide to manipulate those same embedded narratives to their advantage.

1.6. Overall aims and objectives

The overall objective of this thesis is to develop a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation based on a thorough exploration of history and identity in the Rwandan context.

The specific aims are to:

- Explore Rwandan identity and the role of narrative in shaping identity
- Explore the concept of healing and its relationship to reconciliation
- Develop a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation which takes Rwandan identity and history into consideration

1.7. Overview of the chapters

When speaking with Rwandans, one will often hear the terms 'before' or 'after' as time references in their narratives. 'Before' implicitly means 'before the genocide' and 'after' means 'after the genocide' (Koff, 2004). The next three chapters will be built around this same time structure, namely, before the genocide, during the genocide, and after the genocide. The content will largely be based on a review of the literature, and each chapter will look at narratives of history and identity during the above mentioned time frames. These three chapters will give the reader a clear understanding of the background to the Rwandan situation and the context

in which the process of reconciliation is unfolding. This will be followed by a chapter titled 'Rwanda Today' which will examine the years 1999 to 2009.

Chapter six will then describe the research story. This study is based on the collection of four life stories of Rwandans of a similar age and background, but from varying ethnic groups. The first level of study involved the recording of these stories. The second level of study involved the critical reflection of these stories with the four Rwandans to see if further engagement with these stories would in any way change the way they perceived their own narratives. Apart from these formal in-depth interviews, there were also a series of informal and formal interviews with key stakeholders in reconciliation work in Rwanda and with a broad selection of ordinary Rwandans. Lastly, a Reconciliation Forum was observed, which involved training thirty-five community leaders in reconciliation and a two hour dialogue between these leaders. Chapters seven and eight will analyse the life stories, the critical reflection of the life stories, the other informal and formal interviews and the Reconciliation Forum.

Chapter nine will focus specifically on healing and reconciliation, both from the perspective of the literature as well as from Rwandans who are involved in reconciliation work on the ground. It will look at the relationship between healing and reconciliation and introduce narrative approaches to healing in other contexts, such as South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Chapter ten will describe what a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation in the Rwandan context might look like.

CHAPTER 2: BEFORE THE GENOCIDE

“Gentille is Hutu, Raphaël. You talk, you denounce, but like all those guys who want to kill you, you decide her origin and her future. By the colour of her skin and how thin she is. You’re right, the Whites have started a kind of Nazism here. You’re indignant about any kind of discrimination but they’ve succeeded so well that even you turn Hutus into Tutsis just because of narrow noses. When the apocalypse comes, as you rightly say it will, and you’re holding a machete only to defend yourself, a short, squat man will walk towards you. He’ll tell you he’s lost his papers. And it will be true. But you won’t believe him because the man will be short and squat. And thinking to defend or avenge your own, with a clear conscience and sure of your patriotism and democratic ideals, you’ll kill a Tutsi who’s unfortunately been born with the body of a Hutu. Raphaël, Gentille is a Hutu, but that same night you kill that Tutsi with a Hutus body, you’ll save Gentille because her body looks like yours. It’s a prison, that kind of thinking, and death too” (Courtemanch, 2003, 110).

2.1. Introduction

As mentioned in chapter one, the Rwandan conflict has escalated around divisive narratives of history and identity. There is what the literature commonly calls the Tutsi-ideologue narrative and the Hutu-ideologue narrative. The Tutsi-ideologue narrative follows the lines that prior to colonialism, Hutu and Tutsi interacted peacefully, and that the divide between these two groups was not so much ethnic as related to social identity. The term ‘Tutsi’ was used to describe those wealthy through the ownership of cattle and ‘Hutu’ was used to describe the vast majority of agriculturalists. These groups migrated into Rwanda over time and formed one society that was then divided by the colonialists. The Hutu-ideologue narrative is that ethnic division existed in Rwandan society well before colonialists ever entered the country. This narrative argues that Hutu lived in the area we now call Rwanda first, and were then forcefully subjugated by Tutsi who came from the north. When the colonialists arrived they only reiterated what already was

happening in Rwandan society. The ideological differences between these narratives were significant enough to Rwandans to slaughter others in their own communities, neighbourhoods and families. This chapter will explore how such contradicting, rigid narratives formed.

Prior to the genocide a number of historical events had a major influence on identity formation: First, the original migrations that brought various groups to the geographical area now called Rwanda and following this, the cultural, economic and political integration that occurred between these groups. Second, the influence of German, and later Belgian, colonialists. Third, the 1959 Hutu revolution. And lastly, the period of so-called democratic rule, first under the leadership of Gregoire Kayibanda and then General Juvénal Habyarimana. As Richard Jenkins highlights in his 'social anthropological model of ethnicity', identity formation occurs in dialogue with historical events, with identity categories changing and reforming in response to internal and external definitions (2003, 13, 14). This will be particularly apparent as we examine Rwanda's history and how events of the past shaped and reshaped Rwandan identity.

2.2. The roots of Rwandan identity

Both the influence of outsiders, such as early explorers, missionaries and colonialists, and the influence of political and social events within Rwanda and of Rwandan leaders, impacted the formation of Hutu and Tutsi identities. Not only have Hutu and Tutsi become divisive identities, but during the genocide the stereotype pervaded that being Tutsi was somehow superior to being Hutu. Both Hutu and Tutsi speak the same language and seem to share the same culture and yet for a significant portion of Rwandan history the differences between these two groups meant far more than that which they shared.

If Rwanda is not made up of two groups with different cultures and languages, an immediate question is what the terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' then refer to. Tribe, caste, class, occupation, social identity, ethnic group; the discussion with regards to the significance of the terms Hutu and Tutsi are endless. Early explorers and anthropologists from the 1800s assumed the terms referred to different tribes, and

even during the genocide, the horror of the killings was often dismissed by Western journalists as 'ancient tribal warfare'. William Louis (1963) and Jacques Maquet (1961), some of the most prominent early anthropologists in Rwanda, dispel this idea by showing the relationship between Hutu and Tutsi to be a complicated one developed around working the land and owning cattle. They would sooner speak of the original meaning of the terms as describing a feudal relationship, or a class or caste system. René Lemarchand, however, suggests that this may be an attempt at trying to understand the complexity of identity in the Great Lakes region according to European theories, thus falling short of the reality (1970, 18).

According to current researchers, historical investigation reveals to us that the terms Hutu and Tutsi were relatively fluid terms that referred to wealth rather than distinct tribes or races, and became progressively more fixed during the mid-1800s and with colonialism. Alison Des Forges, a researcher with *Human Rights Watch*, discusses how the majority of Rwandans were agriculturalists, with a small number of pastoralists and that "when Rwanda emerged as a major state in the eighteenth century, its rulers measured their power in the number of their subjects and counted their wealth in the number of their cattle" (1999, 31). She argues that over time the governing elite became more clearly defined and began to think of themselves as superior to the many agriculturalists. The word 'Tutsi' thus referred to one's wealth and status, which was measured in terms of cattle owned, and 'Hutu' came to refer to the masses of ordinary people (1999, 32). She argues that although these categories were becoming more and more used, they were not fixed categories at the time of colonialism, and different geographical areas, as Lemarchand also confirms, operated under different rules and norms. Johan Pottier argues that the categories became decidedly more fixed before colonialism, under one of the kings named Rwabugiri. He argues that from about 1860, Rwabugiri "began, or consolidated a process of ethnic consolidation" (2002, 13). This narrative would explain why, when Europeans began exploring Rwanda in the late 1860s, they encountered seemingly distinct, fixed categories of people; either Hutu or Tutsi.

Part of the discussion of what the terms 'Hutu' and 'Tutsi' stand for has to do with whether these groups are of separate origin or not. For those that perceive Hutu, Tutsi and Twa to be distinctive groups with distinctive origins, there are several

disagreements regarding where, in particular, the Tutsi originated. The Twa, being pygmoid, are assumed to have been the earliest inhabitants of Rwanda. The Hutu, of Bantu origin, are seen to have travelled up from the south perhaps some two thousand years ago. Early anthropological accounts suggest that Tutsi were possibly a southern Ethiopian tribe who immigrated into Rwanda around the fifteenth century or several centuries before this. Some of these early accounts support the theory of a peaceful migration with Tutsi winning the Hutu over through a complex cattle relationship whereas others argue for a conquest model, saying that the relationship between Hutus and the Tutsi invaders differed by region.

Interestingly, historical accounts of Rwanda written after 1994 carefully avoid stating the origin of the Tutsi. This is largely because early European anthropologists, carrying with them their Eurocentric racism, believed that the Tutsi were the descendents of the Biblical Ham, a race closer to Europeans than the Bantu Hutus. With their stereotypical tall, thin features, as opposed to the 'short and stocky' Hutu, Tutsi were seen by the Europeans as being a superior race (Overschelden, 1947, Maquet, 1961, Louis, 1963, Lemarchand, 1970). Current writers on the Rwandan situation argue that it is this 'Hamite myth', based on the origin of the Tutsi, which has played a significant role in influencing ethnic division and even genocide. Thus, writers after 1994 have more to say on the danger of the 'Hamitic hypothesis', as Christopher Taylor terms it, than speculating as to the actual origins of the Tutsi (Taylor, 2001).

However, these writers do comment on how the Tutsi integrated themselves into Hutu society. Some researchers, such as Helen Hintjens (1999) and Bernard Noel Rutikanga (2003), argue that the infiltration of Tutsi into Hutu society was entirely peaceful and based on a mutual cattle-based relationship. Others, such as Pottier (2002), Taylor (2001), Stewart and Strathern (2002), Des Forges (1999), and Reyntjens (1999) suggest that there must have been clashes between Tutsi and Hutu. Pottier suggests the Tutsi may have originated from the Hima people, a royalty from Uganda (1999, 12).

Rather than viewing the formation of the Rwandan state and people as a one-sided assimilation, Mahmood Mamdani argues convincingly for a 'process of two-

sided integration' (2001, 61). He suggests that agriculturalists in the area we now call Rwanda had already formed into various powerful states under their own kingships. These states were not necessarily 'Hutu' but rather made up of various clans. Mamdani speaks of the Singa clan, the Zigaba clan and the state of Gisaka, which remained independent well into colonial times (2001, 61). According to Mamdani, the pastoralist Tutsi did not arrive, conquer the agriculturalist Hutu through clever trickery and then develop a serf-like system which subjugated Hutu. Rather, through various migrations over time, various peoples, who were both agriculturalists and pastoralists (Mamdani argues that these activities are 'hardly exclusive') amalgamated in one geographical area, exchanging language, culture and ways of 'doing things', such as administration, military organization and governance, resulting in the central Rwandan state that formed somewhere in the fifteenth century (2001, 61).

Further, Mamdani says that even were the Tutsi a distinctive group that came from elsewhere, they are 'wholly indigenous to Africa' (2001, 28). Pottier points to the large number of movements and migrations within Africa and specifically central Africa, right until the arrival of colonialists who introduced borders and nation states (2002, 11-15). Movement from one area to another was fluid according to economic circumstances, internal wars and so on.

Asked today whether there is a physical difference between Hutu and Tutsi, Rwandans I have spoken to have said that there is not. Some might add, "There is no such thing as Hutu or Tutsi anymore, we are all Rwandan". Others might say, "We don't like to look for difference now that we are all united as one". But in more intimate conversations many Rwandans have pointed out to me who is Hutu and who is Tutsi. "How do you know?" I ask them. "You can see," they tell me.

Many writers on Rwanda contradict themselves on this matter, stating that physiognomy isn't a decisive factor and yet attributing certain physical characteristics to Hutu and others to Tutsi. Taylor, for example, writes that "many Tutsi are taller and thinner than Hutu and have longer and thinner appendages ..." but then adds, "physiognomy ...is not always reliable. Many people classified in a particular ethnic group do not have the group's typical features" (2001, 40). He also writes that Rwandans he has spoken to admit to being wrong about

someone's ethnic identity based on physiognomy about one third of the time, and relates several stories of Hutus killed during the genocide for 'looking' Tutsi and Tutsi escaping the killing for 'looking' Hutu.

However, all early European accounts of Rwandans describe Hutu and Tutsi in quite distinctive terms. Prunier quotes one such early account as saying, "But the Tutsi were something else altogether. Extremely tall and thin, and often displaying sharp, angular facial features, these cattle-herders were obviously of a different racial stock than the local peasants" (1999, 5). Hutu were seen to be, in contrast to Tutsi, as shorter and stockier, with flatter noses. Des Forges suggests the theory that people intermarried within the occupational group they had been raised (agriculturalist or pastoralist) which created a shared gene pool within each group, ensuring that each group developed distinct features (1999, 33). But Prunier writes in a footnote that physiological differences were 'only statistically relevant' as after many years of intermarriage prior to colonialism, many people had the 'wrong' features.

The other controversy is whether Hutu and Tutsi share the same culture or not. Some argue that all Rwandan's share an identical culture. Des Forges writes how "Hutu and Tutsi developed a single and highly sophisticated language, Kinyarwanda, crafted a common set of religious and philosophical beliefs, and created a culture which valued song, dance, poetry, and rhetoric" (1999, 30). However, early historians to Rwanda describe encountering distinct cultural identities. These early anthropologists, whose accounts are often dismissed because of the racial baggage they bring to the subject, nevertheless need to be taken into account as they describe Rwandan society *as they found it* prior to colonialism (as De Heusch, 1995, 3, points out). They go to great lengths to differentiate between Hutu and Tutsi dress, diet, work activities and even activities of leisure.

Maquet, in his study published in 1961, writes that the "The Hutu wore bark-cloth as a sort of skirt from the waist down to the knees ... Before the Europeans came, important Tutsi had for some time replaced the traditional cow-hide of the pastoralists or the bark-cloth borrowed from the agricultural group with large cotton cloths, white or light coloured, elegantly draped" (1961, 20). Tutsi men

even had their hair styled differently according to Maquet. What is particularly distinguished between Hutu and Tutsi is their diet. Maquet writes (and this is confirmed by Overschelden, 1947 and Louis, 1963) that Tutsi ate mostly dairy products whereas Hutu ate large amounts of 'less refined' solid food (1961, 18). "The Tutsi had a strictly controlled attitude towards solid food. They behaved as if the need for nourishment was, if not shameful, at least beneath their dignity" (1961, 19). Maquet interprets this as a conscious strategy by "the conquering pastoralists to stress their independence of the foodstuffs produced by and characteristic of commoners" (1961, 19). These cultural eating habits were present in Rwandan society prior to the genocide and can still be found in Rwanda today. Some of those interviewed spoke of how as Tutsi children they were not allowed to eat at the same table or use the same crockery as Hutu children. Recently I heard a joke by some Tutsi friends regarding the large amounts Hutu can eat.

However, on the other side of the debate, Tutsi and Hutu did share an identical language and similar idioms, ways of speaking and thus perceiving and understanding the world around them, myths and religion. It does not seem as if there are two distinct 'tribes' with different cultural habits. The idea that all Rwandans share one culture fits well with the narrative that Rwanda was harmonious prior to colonialism.

Whatever the case may be, Liisa Malkki issues a warning with regards to the use of categorization, referring to Burundi, whose social context is near identical to Rwanda in this regard. According to Stewart and Strathern, Malkki says that it is "problematic, in fact, to narrate 'the history of Burundi as having fixed category actors' [Hutu and Tutsi] (1995, 21). She recognizes nevertheless that this is how the history has in fact been narrated, and that this narration has in turn influenced the historical consciousness of the people she studies" (2002, 20). Thus, the history of Rwanda depicts a complicated and complex relationship between Hutu and Tutsi, disallowing fixed categories of any kind, but history has been narrated with 'fixed category actors' which has influenced historical consciousness and identity and this has profound effects on reconciliation and healing. As Prunier writes, "The result of this heavy bombardment with highly value-laden stereotypes for some sixty years ended by inflating the Tutsi cultural ego inordinately and

crushing Hutu feelings until they coalesced into an aggressively resentful inferiority complex” (1995, 9).

It may be helpful at this stage to introduce Mamdani’s distinctions between cultural, economic and political identities. Mamdani discusses how the literature speaks about economic identities that developed through the clientele system discussed in section 2.2. He also makes mention of the cultural identity that developed so that there is now a common cultural Banyarwandan identity, which he points out, does not only exist within the boundaries of what we now call Rwanda, but spills over into Burundi, the DRC and Tanzania (2001, 59). But beyond these cultural and economic identities, which aren’t themselves divisive, is Hutu and Tutsi as political identities (2001, 59). Mamdani argues that it is these political identities which lie at the crux of the Rwandan problem: “There has not been one single and constant definition of Hutu and Tutsi through Rwandan history. Rather, the definitions have shifted as a consequence of every major change in the institutional framework of the Rwandan state” (2001, 59). This ties in well with Jenkins’ model, mentioned in chapter one, which would argue that ethnic identities transform all the time, due to their interactions with historical and political forces and with other groups.

Mamdani argues that the way we understand Rwandan history is largely influenced by scholars who recorded that history according to their own political agendas or, perhaps less consciously, according to their own political-social contexts. For example, prior to the 1959 revolution (which is described by Mamdani to be almost as significant an event in Rwandan history as the genocide) Macquet (1961) was the central scholar on Rwandan history and culture (2001, 60). Macquet worked closely with the Royal Court and his views were strongly influenced by this connection, as well as by European race theories. Only after 1959 did other scholars, such as Catherine Newbury (1988) and Jan Vasina (2004), begin to review Macquet’s work.

Macquet and others, such as Louise (1956) and Overschelden (1947), painted a clear picture of Tutsi superiority and Hutu subservience prior to 1959. Overschelden, an early Dutch missionary to Rwanda recorded the following about the Tutsi:

“How many Whites have not gazed in awe at this group and honestly acknowledged that they had never expected to find such beautiful people amongst the negroes! ... The Tutsi cannot be classified as normal black people. In their posture and gestures, and in their entirety, they express such importance, that one can't help asking oneself if one is standing before a royalty that has sprouted from the negro-grass, or before sculptured Whites ... That the Tutsi are not Bantu is evidently clear; they are strangers that have entered Rwanda in the last few centuries, and have subjugated the Hutu through their spiritual superiority, their cunning aptitudes, and inborn talent for domination” (1947, 55, *own translation*).

Such racial stereotyping had profound influence on early Rwandan identity formation.

But how far back did this ethnic stereotyping begin? Influential to the formation of the Rwandan state was the expansion (through warfare) of one of Rwanda's many clans called the Abanyiginya clan, somewhere in the fifteenth century (Mamdani, 2001, 61). At the head of this clan developed the Rwandan monarchy, which borrowed rituals and regalia from the other clans it had conquered. It was the expansion of this clan over several centuries that transformed cultural and economic identities into political identities, according to Mamdani (2001, 62).

2.3. Rwandan identity before colonialism

Rwanda moved from 'statelessness' to kingship, says Lemarchand, through 'the amalgamation of a few autonomous chieftancies' (1970, 19). He explains how this happened in a region near what is now Kigali, under the reign of a Tutsi king (1970, 19). From this time onward, the centre of Rwandan organised society was the king, who was seen as having semi-divine power. He ruled from a central court with high levels of control and organization. Under the king were three types of chiefs; one chief ruled over the cattle, another over agriculture and a third over the military (called a 'chief of men'). Every hill or community had these three chiefs, the chief of agriculture usually being a Hutu, and the chiefs of cattle and

the military being Tutsi. “Complicatedly,” writes Prunier, “a man could be chief of agriculture and pastures on one hill, with a rival chief of men, and at the same time be the chief of men for several other hills” (1995, 11). Those under the chiefs were able to play these chiefs off each other, complaining to one if another mistreated them, thus maintaining a semblance of power within the leadership dynamic. This ensured that no one was unduly oppressed or mistreated.

Based on the theory of assimilation and conquest, many researchers have assumed the monarchy to have been a Tutsi ‘invention’, but Mamdani argues that the aforementioned powerful Hutu states “had institutions of kingship and regalia (drums, royal hammers, etc.) and they had developed ‘ritual power over the land and over rain’” (2001, 62). Several chieftancies amalgamated to form the Rwandan state, under the leadership of the Abanyiginya clan. This clan and the early Rwandan state was located in an area that was mostly pastoral (2001, 62). Mamdani describes at some length how royal rituals and its supernatural status developed, arguing that although military power was said to be held by Tutsis, the supernatural powers were in the hands of the Hutus. Through a complicated progression of events, this shifted by the late nineteenth century and power became increasingly defined as ‘Tutsi’ (2001, 63).

In terms of the contesting narrative between Hutu and Tutsi ideologues the monarchy is either seen as benevolent or cruel, the chosen royalty of all Rwandans, or a manipulative tool used by one group to ensure power over the other. Further, some suggest the monarchy united all Rwandans into one state and others argue that the monarchy was in fact responsible for ethnic division. Mamdani would argue that the answer is different at different times of history. It seems that prior to the mid-1800s, the Kinyarwanda people were organised along clans which held both Hutu and Tutsi. Both he and Pottier put forward the idea that it was under King Rwabugiri in the 1860s, when things became more centralised that identity categories became more solidified and the Tutsi-overlord and Hutu-serf relationship may have taken on a reality.

Cyprian Fisiy supports this view, saying that King Rwabugiri “embarked on an empire building exercise to centralise his authority” and that this “further gave rise to a Tutsi sense of superiority based on economic and martial power” in the 1860s

(1998, 19). He suggests that the Tutsi sense of superiority was based on 'economic and martial power' but it resulted in consolidating division between Tutsi and Hutu (1998, 20). Mamdani argues that it was only at this time that distinct ethnic categories came into play: "Hutu, it appears, were simply those from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who came to be subjugated to the power of the Rwandan state" (2001, 70).

The relationship between Hutu and Tutsi during this time centred around a few complex systems. Lemarchand writes how, in early history, Tutsi "used their cattle as a lever of economic power" and a system developed where cattle was exchanged for agricultural produce (1970, 19). In other words, Hutu would work the land for Tutsi in exchange for Tutsi cows. In this way, Tutsi came to own progressively more land, with progressively more Hutu under their rule. This was called the 'clientele' system (1970, 20). At the same time, there were regions which were unaffected by this relationship, where hills were ruled by Hutu chiefs.

The clientele system and that of the chieftans, mentioned earlier, could be described as mutually beneficial. This clientele system, which every historical account of Rwanda mentions, was called *ubuhake*. What is mentioned less often is *uburetwa*, which Pottier describes as a 'hated corveé labour service' (2002, 13). Pottier argues that until the 1860s, indeed, a positive and mutual clientele relationship seemed to exist between various lineages and clans. But from 1860 onwards, he describes a shift as King Rwabugiri began to gain significant power and needed to consolidate his power throughout his Rwandan nation. Pottier argues that from the 1860s, very few Hutu were allowed into the *ubuhake* cattle contract, but almost all Hutu were forced to fulfil their *uburetwa* obligations (2002, 13). This involved working for the central court one day out of every five; however, this one day often became as many as three days (2002, 13). It was this system of *uburetwa* which introduced or consolidated a process of ethnic polarization (2002, 13).

Mamdani even suggests that it was under the rule of Rwabugiri that the term Hutu came more and more to refer to anyone who was 'subjugated to the power of the Rwandan state' (2001, 70). Those who were conquered at this later stage lost much of their cattle to their conquerors (at this stage in Rwandan history known as

'Tutsi'). They often also lost their land to these conquerors and had to work it for them. Mamdani would argue that this development of the term Hutu for those who were subjugated and Tutsi for those who conquered was gradual but became more and more fixed during Rwabugiri's reign (2001, 78). Thus, when Europeans first arrived in Rwanda at the end of the 1800s, they encountered people called Tutsi who were wealthy in land and owned cattle and Hutu who were subjugated and worked the land.

Prunier describes how to Tutsi ideologues, *ubuhake* "was a mild practice amicably linking different lineages into a kind of friendly mutual help contract" but to Hutu ideologues "it was an ironclad form of quasi-slavery enabling the Tutsi masters to exploit the poor downtrodden Hutu" (1995, 13). Some argue that it was the Belgian colonialists that introduced *uburetwa* and not King Rwabugiri at all. To the outsider, this difference in narrative may seem minor. However, how one perceives the relationship between Hutu and Tutsi prior to colonialism has influenced events in Rwanda ever since. If the relationship between Hutu and Tutsi prior to colonialism is seen as entirely harmonious and mutual, then it is possible to say that we need to 'return to the Rwanda from before', which is indeed a narrative one hears in Rwanda today. However, if ethnic division and tensions existed in Rwanda from the very beginning of Hutu and Tutsi interaction, then healing and reconciliation processes need to take this into account. It would mean that certain stereotypes and ways of seeing and being have been a part of Rwandan society well into history and need to be dealt with in this context.

Pottier argues that it is dangerous to paint a picture that pits poor Hutu against rich and powerful Tutsi (2002, 66). He argues that there were also poor Tutsi who were oppressed by the Tutsi elite, and that there were Hutu who shared in the central court power. Many writers also place great emphasis on the north-south divide. They describe how the king controlled central Rwanda, but the north remained under the leadership of autonomous Hutu kings (Prunier, 1995, Taylor, 2001, Pottier, 2002). This north-south divide has played almost as important a role in the lead-up to the genocide as has the Hutu-Tutsi divide. The current reality, as Kenneth Harrow states, is very complex:

“The difficulty in Rwanda, as in Burundi, is that there is no space identified as the Hutu homeland or the Tutsi homeland: both Hutus and Tutsis lived together, mingled on the *collines*, the hills that formed the identifiable sites of home for all. The population of Rwanda was largely divided into eighteen clans that encompassed Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, all in the same clans, and it was clans that functioned to create the spatial divisions between self and other” (2005, 36).

The truth of this matter, as with all of the Rwandan narratives of history, is difficult to unravel. But it seems important to acknowledge that ethnic polarization did not originate with colonialism alone. It is also important to acknowledge that for different role players, or at different points in history, the relationship between Hutu and Tutsi is perceived significantly differently.

However, the categories of superior Tutsi and inferior Hutu were solidified by colonialists, who misunderstood both the complex development of communities and identities in Rwandan history as well as the intricate clientele and leadership systems in place. With their simplification of both identity and community structures, Hutu and Tutsi were defined as distinctly separate identities. Prior to the arrival of the colonialists, identities were continuously shifting in meaning and people were able to move between identities. But with the introduction of identity cards that stated ethnic identity, this shifting and changing became impossible. Mamdani would thus argue that Hutu and Tutsi identities are largely political as culturally they do form one Banyarwanda community.

2.4. Rwandan identity during colonialism

The political identities that Mamdani described as being the most divisive were formed not so much by conscious political manipulation as by unconscious influence of political contexts (such as the expansion of the Abanyiginya clan and European race ideology). This is true of both the early Rwandan monarchy and early explorers and missionaries to Rwanda. However, the political agenda of first the German, and later the Belgian, colonialists, the international community and

politicised Hutu and Tutsi groups, from the early 1900s onwards was significantly less unconscious.

Due to the writings of various early explorers (who were looking for the source of the Nile river) and missionaries, when colonialists arrived in Rwanda, with their European race ideologies, the scene was set for creating a misrepresentation of Rwandan identity relations which soon became the 'official' version of reality which informed all German and Belgian colonial decision-making (Prunier, 1995, 9).

These colonial powers introduced several structural changes that impacted significantly on Rwandan identity politics. One was that the *corvée* exacted from Rwandans by the central court was distorted; from being a duty that was imposed on a 'hill' where people on a hill could decide how they would fulfil this obligation, the Belgians formed it into an obligation that everyone was responsible for individually (Prunier, 1995). This placed tremendous pressure on the average Rwandan, who found themselves without time to work their own lands and thus led them towards poverty. Another was the introduction of identity cards by the Belgian colonialists in 1933, which explicitly mentioned one's ethnic identity and disallowed further fluidity of movement between Hutu and Tutsi (Pottier, 2002, 65). Further, the colonisers centralized power with the royal court, making the complex system of three chiefs on a hill redundant. They then violently forced all the outlying autonomous Hutu kingdoms in the north under the control of the Tutsi central court, thereby solidifying the north-south divide (Pottier, 2002).

To understand how the process of solidifying ethnic identities took place, Jenkins speaks of the role of boundaries. He argues that there are two ways in which boundaries between groups are created; through internal definition and external definition, the latter being imposed by someone in power (2003, 53). Jenkins then discusses the question of why external definitions become internalised, arguing that this can happen in five ways. The first is that the external category reinforces aspects of identity that already exist (for example, physical features). Second, certain external categorizations may, through a slow process of cultural change, actually form a lived part of group identity. Third, the external category may be produced by people who, in the eyes of the defined group, have legitimate

authority to categorize them (due to their superior knowledge, ritual status etc). Fourth, external categorization is imposed by force (for example, carrying of identity cards) and the categorized cannot resist. Lastly, the categorized do resist, but this very act of resistance is the direct result of having been categorized (2003, 70, 71).

Elements of all of these can be argued to have occurred in Rwanda during the colonial period. Colonialists emphasized physical features. Prunier describes the obsession of the Germans in measuring the length of people's noses, hands and feet. This external categorization indeed formed a 'lived part of group identity'. As Des Forges noted, intermarriage came to an end in the 1800s and it is likely that people married within their 'group', thus reinforcing certain genetic features. Further it was believed that westerners, with their more advanced technology (and military force) had legitimate power to categorise. Apart from having legitimate power, this categorization was enforced through violence. Prunier describes how people were forcefully subjugated by the Belgians through torture, maiming and killing (1995, 11). Lastly, all forms of resistance became part and parcel of the categorization process. On this last point, the monarchy attempted to strategically use this categorization to their advantage (Taylor, 2001, 41). Seeing that westerners categorized them more positively, the Tutsi were automatically given an increase in power. Further the Belgians helped the monarchy secure the northern parts of the country under their central governance. The most disadvantaged were those categorized as Hutu, and with both the monarchy and the colonialists against them, they had little chance of successfully resisting.

It was the 'Hamitic' hypothesis, though, that created the most lasting and profound destruction. This hypothesis, which was reiterated by anthropologists, missionaries and colonial leaders during colonial rule, asserted that in the Great Chain of Being, Europeans rated first place, followed by the Hamites, the tall, elegant Tutsi, and at the bottom of the rung were the 'slow-witted' Bantu Hutu (Taylor, 2001, 55). The Tutsi were seen as the descendants of Ham the son of Noah, 'who was banished to the south of the Promised Land' (2001, 39). This placed the Tutsi, with their more European-like features and their apparently wealthier, higher status in Rwandan society, in a privileged position in the eyes of the Germans and Belgians. Until today, Taylor argues, "Tutsi extremists make use

of their version of the hypothesis to claim intellectual superiority; Hutu extremists employ theirs to insist upon the foreign origins of Tutsi, and the autochthony of Hutu” (2001, 57). Taylor argues that they are reproducing a colonial pattern; “one that essentializes ethnic difference, justifies political domination by a single group, and nurtures a profound thirst for redress and vengeance on the part of the defavourized group” (2001, 57). This is a prime example of how external definitions have become internalized and have formed the basis of internal definitions and divisions between self and other.

Taylor discusses how John Henning Speke, one of the explorers looking for the source of the Nile, was the first to develop the theory of the Hamites as being the ones to bring civilization to Africa (2001, 59). According to this theory, black Caucasians from the Middle East moved through Ethiopia (where they were called the Galla-Hamites), through Uganda (where they were called the Hima) to Rwanda where they were called Tutsi. All subsequent historians and anthropologists took this as their foundational knowledge. Taylor writes how many early anthropologists seemed to agree that, “the Hamites were not Negroes, they were more intelligent than other Africans, and they were physically more attractive” (2001, 60). Further, Tutsi were described as being “intelligent and attractive, but rather frail; they were destined for governance. Hutu were stocky, coarser featured, but not overly intelligent; physical strength made them suitable for agricultural labour” (2001, 60). Catholic missionaries then taught Rwandans these theories as they taught them to read and write

As these categories became enforced, they slowly became lived. Prunier describes how the Belgian colonialists worked hand in hand with the Tutsi aristocracy to write a ‘beautiful’ fantasy (1995, 36). Highly influential in this fantasy was Alexis Kagame, perhaps the best known Rwandan intellectual, who represented the Royal Court, during the 20th century. Kagame worked with anthropologists such as Macquet to reiterate this same ‘fantastical’ history to the outside world. What started off a creation became reality and by the time the 1959 revolution came, ethnic identities seemed cast in stone.

2.5. Rwandan identity after colonialism

2.5.1. The 1959 Revolution

1959 brought with it the revolution, which Mamdani would describe as almost as influential in Rwandan history as the genocide. What brought on the 1959 revolution was both frustration on the part of the subjugated Hutus as well as a shift in European thinking regarding race ideology. Where before, the Western world had supported a hierarchical understanding of race and ethnicity, after World War II there was a significant shift to promoting equality and democracy. The birth of the United Nations, along with an end to colonialism, had a direct effect on ethnic relations in Rwanda. Another influential factor from outside was the arrival in Rwanda of less elitist Flemish missionaries from Belgium. Prior to the 1950s, most missionaries to Rwanda were elite Walloon Belgians who only educated the Tutsi. During the early 1950s, working class Flemish missionaries began to arrive who had sympathy for the situation of the Hutu and worked to educate and uplift them. Concepts such as equality and democracy formed part of their education.

In 1957, a group of nine Hutu intellectuals developed the Bahutu Manifesto with the aim of influencing the UN under whose trusteeship Rwanda now fell. This manifesto outlined the systematic oppression the Hutu felt they were suffering under the Tutsi and colonialist leaders. By 1958, ethnic tensions were high and one of the Hutu leaders, Joseph Gitera, asked the King to get rid of the *Kalinga* (a sacred royal drum said to be decorated with the testicles of conquered Hutu chiefs). The Tutsi nobles protested strongly. Political parties started to form around these various issues (Prunier, 1995, 48). It was in this context that Grégoire Kayibanda developed a periodical that challenged social relations in Rwanda (Prunier, 1995, 44, 45).

From here, political parties began to emerge in Rwanda. Grégoire Kayibanda formed the first (Hutu) political party in 1957 called MDR-PARMEHUTU. Joseph Gitera formed APROSOMO, which was said to be a class-based party but which

only attracted Hutu. These parties became regionally based, with PARMEHUTU being based in Gitarama-Ruhengeri (in the north) and APROSOMA being based in Butare (in the south). In 1959, the Tutsi formed a party, UNAR, which was backed by Communist countries during the Cold War, a relationship that was greatly unappreciated by the Belgians. By late 1959, according to Prunier, the situation was so tense between these various parties that anything could have sparked an explosion (1995, 50). What did spark the explosion was that a PARMEHUTU activist, while walking home one evening, was attacked and severely beaten by UNAR youth. The (false) news of his death spread and resulted in confused fighting: Tutsi houses were burnt regardless if they were the elite, political Tutsi or poor, peasant Tutsi. The *mwami* retaliated and attacked Hutu, especially APROSOMA as it was perceived as the greatest threat. Extreme confusion developed: some thought the King supported anti-Tutsi attacks because he was known for his emphasis on justice and Hutu had been unjustly treated; some PARMEHUTU Hutu rallied the King to attack their APROSOMA rivals; the Belgians supported the Hutu in burning down Tutsi homes; and amongst all of this, mountain tribesmen raided and killed people purely with the intention of looting (Prunier, 1995, 50).

By November, 1959, some order was restored, with 300 dead, and over a thousand imprisoned. Rather than a fight between rich Tutsi and poor Hutu, the fight was now between two political and ethnic groups. Poor and rich from each ethnic group stood together because of the overriding acceptance of a constructed ethnic ideology. Amidst the chaos, Belgium launched the idea of self-governance in November that same year. In 1960, the colonial government replaced Tutsi chiefs with new Hutu ones, who prosecuted Tutsi on their hills, resulting in a mass exodus of Tutsi. In June/July, 1960, colonial authorities organised communal elections and the PARMEHUTU won hands down. The positions of the chiefs became redundant and new burgomasters were appointed, based on the Belgian system. Prunier describes the revolution as Belgian-sponsored:

“The revolution is over’, declared Colonel Logiest in October 1960. This was an appropriate declaration, for inasmuch as the ‘revolution’ had been a Belgian-sponsored administratively-controlled phenomenon, its end could

be administratively proclaimed as its beginning had administratively been made unavoidable” (Prunier, 1995, 52).

Some see the 1959 revolution as a genuine revolution of the people of Rwanda, a popular struggle for democracy and freedom, others, like Prunier see it as a Belgian-manipulated event that only worked to deepen ethnic division. Where Hutu ideologues felt that the revolution resulted in a democratic majority rule, Tutsi ideologues saw it as a switch from one oppressive system to another.

Mamdani argues that during this period, relations in Rwanda were not merely ethnic, but in fact race-based (2001, 102). He further argues that for Hutu ideologues, the position of the Tutsi aristocracy became equated with that of the coloniser. This forms the basis of his thesis: that the Tutsi became the coloniser and that the 1959 revolution was the overthrow of colonial rule – both Tutsi rule and European rule. Unlike in other African countries, where ‘natives’ were overthrowing their western colonisers, no violence was meted out towards the Belgian colonialists in Rwanda. Through the fantasy that Tutsi were an Ethiopian royalty (a fantasy supported and promoted by the Tutsi aristocracy during colonialism) they had set themselves up as an outside ‘other’ who had subjugated the indigenous, native majority. Thus, as the winds of decolonisation swept over Africa, the issue on the agenda of Hutu dissidents was that of Hutus (not Rwandans) overthrowing the ‘Hamites’ – *foreign* Tutsi (Mamdani, 2001, 103).

Because Hutu saw themselves as the subjugated native race, they saw democracy as majority rule, and majority rule as Hutu rule. The Hutu manifesto developed by nine Hutu intellectuals in 1957 is very telling in terms of how identity was experienced and understood prior to the revolution. The manifesto speaks of ‘the political monopoly of one race, the Mututsi’ which is also an ‘economic and social monopoly’ which ‘condemns the desperate Bahutu to be forever subaltern workers’ (in Prunier, 1995, 45). From here onwards, political parties formed along ethnic/racial lines. Interestingly, in 1960 the Tutsi had become unpopular with the Belgians, and the Belgians replaced them with Hutu leaders. The fight was thus still not between ‘native Rwandans’ and European colonisers, as the coloniser was helping Hutus to come to power. The fight remained between the supposed Hutu-native and *Tutsi*-outsider/coloniser. When Rwanda gained its independence

in 1962, it was independence from the Tutsi monarchy rather than Belgian colonialism. Thus it can be seen how, following Jenkins' model, identity categories changed due to external definition, then became internalized, and then became lived. By the time of the revolution, Rwandans were fighting a racial battle but they were fighting along identity categories or definitions that had, perhaps, not existed prior to the 1800s.

2.5.2. The First and Second Republic

In late 1961, Grégoire Kayibanda was elected president. Kayibanda was from southern Rwanda. He came into power only two years after the death of the last of the Tutsi monarchic lineage that had any power, King Mutare III Rudahigwa. A younger brother of Rudahigwa ascended to the throne after his death, but, in the atmosphere of the 1959 'revolution' he was forced to flee the country (Prunier, 1995, 55).

Prunier writes that during Kayibanda's period of rule, often called the First Republic, he ruled Rwanda like a *mwami* (a Rwandan monarchic royalty): 'remote, authoritarian and secretive'. He demanded absolute, unquestioning obedience to authority. The values he upheld were along the lines of the intrinsic worth of being a Hutu, the total congruence between demographic majority and democracy, the need to follow a moral Christian life, and the uselessness of politics which should be replaced by hard work (1995, 58).

Prunier describes Kayibanda's Rwanda as being "a land of virtue, where prostitutes were punished, attendance at mass was high, and hard-working peasants toiled on the land without asking too many questions" (1995, 59). Why was it then that in 1973, Juvénal Habyarimana, a senior army commander in Kayibanda's army, a fellow Hutu, overthrew Kayibanda in a bloodless coup?

Prunier suggests it was because of 'sporadic disturbances' between Hutu and Tutsi and the north and the south, that encouraged Habyarimana to take things into his own hands (1995, 61). Des Forges gives some more detail into the frustration of the Hutu of the north who "saw that all rhetoric about Hutu solidarity

notwithstanding, the southerners were monopolizing the benefits of power” (1999, 60). Attacks on Tutsi in early 1973 were either blamed on the southerners “who hoped to minimize differences with northerners by reminding them of the common enemy; others laid them to northerners who hoped to create sufficient disorder to legitimate a coup d’état by the army” (1999, 61).

When Habyarimana did take power in July 1973, he claimed that it was to ‘restore order and national unity’ (Des Forges, 1999, 61). However, Aible Twagilimana argues that few researchers give enough attention to the effects of regionalism in Rwanda. He even argues that genocide can be as much attributed to ethnic tension as to the north-south divide (2003, xx). He argues that for centuries power lay in the hands of southerners; first the Tutsi monarchy which was based in the south, and then later under Kayibanda. He describes how until the arrival of the colonialists, the north, and especially Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, were independent from the Rwandan monarchy, and ruled by Hutu chieftans (2003, xx). The desire to place power in the hands of northerners was more important to Habyarimana and his supporters even than that Hutu power would be maintained.

Prunier stresses that under Habyarimana’s rule, during the Second Republic, although everything seemed peaceful and stable, the underlying atmosphere of the regime was frightening.

“Tutsi were still ‘foreign invaders’ who had come from afar, but now this meant that they could not really be considered as citizens. Their government had been grandiose and powerful: in the new version of Rwandese ideology, it had been a cruel and homogeneously oppressive tyranny. The Hutu had been the ‘native peasants’, enslaved by the aristocratic invaders: they were now the only legitimate inhabitants of the country. Hutu were the silent demographic majority” (1995, 80).

The group supporting Habyarimana in power was often called the ‘akazu’ or ‘little house’, and included Habyarimana’s wife and her relatives, all originating from the Ruhengeri-Gisenyi area. But even here, Prunier describes how the president and his wife favoured those from Gisenyi over those from Ruhengeri (1995, 86). Pottier argues how all these internal conflicts within ‘Hutu power’ groups were

disguised by ethnic tensions to 'buy the loyalty' of the Hutu majority. He goes further in saying those in power were an elite who maintained their power over those they oppressed by manipulating ethnic tensions, leading the Hutu on the street to believe they were both fighting a common enemy (2002, 10).

But the political and social conditions prior to the 1990s were not all negative. Especially at the start of Habyarimana's reign in 1973, things looked very hopeful. Although Tutsi were politically marginalised on the basis of 'majority' rule, there was a quota system for education and jobs, and there was also a group of elite, highly educated Tutsi who were well-connected with foreigners and worked with foreign NGO's. Habyarimana also brought a semblance of peace and stability to Rwanda. This was partly achieved by outlawing not only political parties but the entire public political sphere. The government was called the National Development Council and Rwanda was seen as a 'development dictatorship' (Prunier, 1995, 77). Prunier writes, "Rwanda was poor, Rwanda was clean and Rwanda was serious; it had no time to lose in the frivolous business of political discussion" (1995, 77). If one asks Rwandans today how Rwanda was prior to genocide, many share stories of how peaceful and harmonious it was. And for many Rwandans who went about their daily lives, didn't get involved with politics, went to church every Sunday and worked hard, their lives, whether Hutu or Tutsi were probably just that, peaceful and harmonious, although perhaps poor.

But Prunier points out that under the surface were many shadows. One such shadow was *umuganda*, communal development labour made compulsory by the government. It was intended to take two days of the average Rwandans time but often cost them four or more. Another shadow was the shift in power, not only amongst the elite but also amongst every Hutu. Just as the first Rwandan ideology had been a perfect construct to legitimise domination by a high-lineage Tutsi over everyone else, the new ideology allowed the new elite legitimate power to dominate over everyone. Prior to the 1959 revolution, even the poorest Tutsi felt proud to belong to the ethnic aristocracy, even though it didn't help their poverty stricken state. Similarly, after 1959, the Hutu poor somehow felt they shared power. Prunier argues how foreign aid workers collaborated in reinforcing this new ideology, as Belgians did with the former ideology. And, as was the case during the colonial period, the Catholic church played a role in educating all

Rwandans in the new ideology. Prunier writes, concerning the Catholic church, “It had admired the Tutsi and helped them rule, but now admired the Hutu and helped them rule” (1995, 81). So although on the surface things may have looked ideal (a peaceful, stable, hard working society, with little crime) “this agreeable façade was built on an extremely dangerous ideological foundation” (Prunier, 1995, 82).

2.5.3. Between peace and genocide

Listening to Rwandans, a common theme is that just prior to genocide there were no ethnic tensions and everyone lived together, side by side, in absolute peace and harmony. Many Rwandans think back on the genocide with wonder and confusion, repeating over and over that Rwandans are gentle and peace loving and that they lived in absolute peace with all their neighbours. Some Rwandans I have spoken to who were children during the genocide say they were not even aware of their ethnic identities or that ethnic identities existed until it was forcefully pointed out to them in the course of 1993 and 1994. Rwandan children I have spoken to in South Africa also seem to know little or nothing about the terms Hutu and Tutsi and were unable to tell me their ethnic status.

Yet, Harrow strongly argues that the propaganda campaign that was implemented in the months leading up to genocide could not have been so successful had it not been grounded in an already existing historical narrative of ethnic division (2005, 38). The ‘them-us’ identity that the propaganda campaign was based on, and that led thousands of labourers as well as highly educated people to picking up machetes and killing their own neighbours and family members, could not have emerged out of nothing.

One of the factors to consider is that Rwanda had been under an authoritarian leadership continuously, from the time of the *mwami's* through to their two presidents, and had the repeated message hammered into them that politics was a waste of time but high morals and a good work ethic were to be admired. Thus it is not surprising that they were caught unawares with the political turmoil of the early 1990s. On a superficial level, life for the average Rwandan was peaceful

and stable and it may well have been the case that Hutu and Tutsi lived side by side without any apparent tension.

In pre-genocide Rwanda, the president was responsible for all appointments, even at low-level administration; he was omniscient, omnipresent, and could not be seen. His rule showed monarchic patterns of leadership (a narrow circle of leadership recruitment, regionalism, lineage competition, favouritism, corruption fused with modern characteristics such as 'progress' and moralism) (Prunier, 1995, 59). The incredible network of authority that ran from the president through to every hill throughout the country meant that at the first signal from the presidents' office, thousands of people were effectively mobilised into an unstoppable killing machine.

So, as Harrow argues, there must have been something brewing under the surface to base the propaganda campaign's success on. Prunier mentions that under both Kayibanda and Habyarimana, a quota system existed, restricting access for Tutsi to education and employment. Rwandans still carried identity cards stating their ethnicity. The country was still ruled by a Hutu-only government with a sole candidate standing for re-election at each new 'democratic election' and the Tutsi refugees (who had fled in 1959 and the 1970s) in countries bordering Rwanda were denied entry to their homeland.

Apart from this, as far as the outside world was concerned, the country was turning into an island. Prunier quotes Claudine Vidal as saying that "the inhabitants were inward-looking and bore the country's slow shrinkage in silence" (1995, 84). One Rwandan I spoke to admitted that they were aware in the early 1990s that something terrible was going to happen and the extended family would have meetings about what to do (Personal interview, Pretoria, March, 2006). I asked her why they did not leave the country. She said that prior to 1994 it was as if the rest of the world did not exist. Even though they were a relatively well-off and educated family, they knew not a single person who had ever travelled and had minimal access to what was happening outside of Rwanda. The country was their entire reality and they could not imagine a world outside of its borders. It may also be worth mentioning a piece of trivia I have heard Rwandans report, that prior to 1994 there were only two people holding doctorate degrees in the country (and

these had to have been secured abroad). The truth of this is debatable, but it reveals how isolated and uninformed of the world outside Rwanda was.

People were taught not to think for themselves, that politics is bad but hard work is good and to be highly moral. Even today, Rwandans are known for being hard working and moral people who attend mass. The question on many peoples' minds is how a country that was 80% Christian could commit such an atrocity. A high percentage of killers were almost certainly churchgoers. Yet they operated in a vacuum, on an island, in a situation so divorced from the rest of the world and alternative possibilities. A question that has been raised is why there was not more organised resistance. But again, there was such a sense of learned helplessness, a resignation to their plight. Donald and Lorna Miller, in a comparative study between Armenian and Tutsi survivors, found that "In some ways, it seems that the mass media contributed to the fatalism that many Tutsi felt, apparently almost resigning themselves to a violent death from the moment the news was broadcast that President Habyarimana's plane had been shot down. Child-survivors reported their parents immediately telling them that now they would be killed" (2004, 137).

Having said this, as negotiations with the RPF mounted in tension, opposition movements within the country were beginning to have a voice. In the early 1990s the Rwandan government had committed to a multiparty cabinet, but in January, 1992 announced a complete MRND cabinet. Some 50 000 people took to the street in protest.

"This was the strongest public challenge his [Habyarimana's] regime had ever faced and as it grew he concluded that in order to save himself, he would have to accept the protestors' main demands. In March he announced that he would name opposition figures to his cabinet and negotiate with the RPF" (Kinzer, 2008, 103).

2.5.4. The Diaspora and the RPF

While this was the situation within Rwanda, the Tutsi diaspora were in a very different social and political environment which impacted on their identity development in quite another way. “As the years passed and memories of the real Rwanda began to recede,” writes Prunier, “Rwanda slowly became a mythical country in the refugees’ minds ... Contrasting an idealised past life with the difficulties they were experiencing, their image of Rwanda became that of a land of milk and honey. Economic problems linked with their eventual return, such as over population, over grazing or soil erosion, were dismissed as Kigali regime propaganda” (1995, 66). This diaspora was experiencing increasing marginalisation in their host countries, yet were also extremely successful economically and educationally on the world arena. Where Rwanda was becoming progressively more a closed off island, the diaspora was drawing from multiple resources internationally.

While Kayibanda and Habyarimana were ruling Rwanda, large numbers of Tutsis fled the country and settled in Burundi, Uganda, the DRC and further abroad. Repeated acts of violence in the 1970s resulted in more and more Tutsi fleeing across the borders. An especially large number of refugees escaped to Uganda, perhaps because of their supposed historical ties to the Ugandan royalty or rather due to an authentic connection to a Ugandan tribe, the Banyamulenge, who live close to the Rwandan border and share much of the Banyarwandan culture and language.

Prunier describes how these Ugandan-based Tutsi refugees struggled to be assimilated in Uganda, and formed an organization to assist refugees suffering oppression. This organization started becoming more politically militant in 1980, renaming its organization RANU, and started discussing returning to Rwanda. The Obote-Museveni conflict ignited in Uganda, at a time when RANU leaders, Fred Rwigyema and Paul Kagame, had befriended Museveni (Prunier, 1995, 70). They sided with Museveni to overthrow Obote, in the belief that Museveni would protect their rights. He failed on his promises to them and they found themselves once again persecuted and oppressed by local Ugandans (Pottier, 2002, 23). General Romeo Dallaire, head of the UN operation in Rwanda during genocide, writes,

“I was reminded of the tale the RPF liaison officer, Commander Karake Karenzi, had told to Brent to describe the Tutsi experience in Rwanda. Karenzi had said that when the hunter and the dog are after the prey, they are equals. But once the prey is caught, the hunter gets the meat and the dog the bones. And that is how the Tutsis in Uganda, who had served under difficult conditions in combat for the NRA [Ugandan army], felt after Museveni came to power. The realization that they would always be the dogs in Uganda had been the impetus behind the formation of the RPF. They wanted to go home and be treated as equals in their own country” (2003, 155).

In 1987, RANU became the RPF, an offensive political party dedicated to the return of exiles to Rwanda, by force if necessary (Prunier, 1995, 73). They started high-level political negotiations around their return to Rwanda which included several violent attacks on the country in the early 1990's. Initially, the RPF was led by Rwigyema but he was killed during the first attack by the RPF on Rwanda on 1 October, 1990 and Kagame took over command. In Stephen Kinzer's biography of Kagame, he writes how, following the defeat during this first attack, Kagame strategically led his troops into the Virunga mountains in northern Rwanda where they built their strength unbeknown to the Rwandan government (2008, 79). During this time, there was an official cease-fire as mediated negotiations between the RPF and the Rwandan government ensued in Tanzania to discuss the return of the refugees to Rwanda.

“On February 8, 1993, the RPF violated the July 1992 cease-fire and launched a massive attack all along the northern front and rapidly drove back the government troops”, writes Des Forges (1999). Kinzer describes how the RPF leadership was certain that the negotiations with the Rwandan government were merely games and that there was no real intention of allowing the refugees to return. Apart from this, during the many years of planning their return the refugees had decided that the only way was to overthrow the Habyarimana regime. “Fighting to go back was the only way. If you negotiate with the dictatorship and then go back, they would put you in prison or worse. ‘No, we have to remove the dictatorship in Rwanda. Only through that can we have peace. It will serve nothing to go back while there

is a dictatorship in power that is ethnic and anti-Tutsi”, Kinzer quotes an early leader of RANU as saying (2008, 49). Not only did the RPF want the right to return to a free Rwanda, they also believed that conditions in Rwanda needed to change. Kinzer quotes Kagame as saying that the level of oppression and injustice in Rwanda ‘was simply unacceptable’ but that many Tutsi in Rwanda had learnt just to ‘bow their heads, keep their opinions to themselves and do whatever was necessary to placate their Hutu masters’ (2008, 99).

The RPF was described as the best-educated guerilla army in history (Prunier, 1995, 117). Behind the army fighting in Rwanda was a far larger ‘army’ of civilians who were raising awareness and support for the cause throughout the world. As the Tutsi diaspora, some six hundred thousand people living in exile, began to hear of the RPF in the Virunga mountains, they started to come in their thousands to join the cause. Many of these were educated in East Africa, Europe, North America and even Australia (Kinzer, 2008, 35). Apart from being well-educated, the RPF was highly politicized. Kinzer says this is something Kagame learnt from his years of experience fighting in the Ugandan bush; people who know what they are fighting for are motivated and committed, prepared to suffer harrowing circumstances for what they believe in and are less likely to desert when the going gets tough (2008, 84). The RPF troops were constantly being educated by their Political Department with regards to the situation in Rwanda and why they were fighting.

Behind the RPF’s offensive in northern Rwanda in the early 1990s lay decades of talking, debating, organizing, planning and strategizing. Kinzer follows the story from the 1980s, where Tito Rutaremara, a revolutionary theoretician living in Paris, took leadership of RANU. He immediately began to train and educate others in the belief that an ‘educated army committed to a cause has an innate advantage over a nonpolitical enemy’ (2008, 49). ‘Political cadres’ were trained in RPF ideology and then educated the refugee communities in Uganda (2008, 50). This political ideology was, according to Kinzer, founded in “Anglophone traditions, revolutionary passion and African socialism” (2008, 103). The emphasis on political education continues to be part of the Rwandan governments’ strategy of leadership today. Understanding the formation of the RPF and its particular

political ideology gives significant insight into the thinking of the current government, and its approach to leadership.

Together with a high level of education and political education in particular, the RPF was called on to be highly disciplined. “In the way we fight, in the way we conduct ourselves, we must always be different from those we are fighting against”, Kinzer quotes Kagame as saying (2008, 84). The RPF disciplinary code held eleven capital offenses, including murder, rape, violent robbery and desertion. And it listed twenty-four other crimes that would result in corporal punishment, such as the use of alcohol and drugs, being idle and disorderly, not paying for goods in villages, having sex with anyone other than a lawful spouse and spreading harmful propaganda (Kinzer, 2008, 83). This ensured that all the actions by the RPF remained focused on the carefully worked out strategic plan by Kagame to take over power in Rwanda.

However, Beatrice Umutesi, a Hutu who became a refugee after the genocide, writes that the RPF committed unmentionable atrocities in Byumba. Although Umutesi initially doubted it was the RPF, her doubts were overcome by countless stories from family members who themselves were the survivors of terrible acts of violence. The wife of her cousin shared the story of finding her dead husband “tied up by his own entrails to a post in his store. The rebels had disemboweled him, pulled out his guts and used them for a rope” (2004, 24). She further describes the systematic way people (including women and children) were “herded into houses, locked them from the outside, and then attacked them with grenades. The survivors were finished off with knives” (2004, 26). Counter to these claims is the theory that the RPF committed no such crimes but that these crimes were staged by the Habyarimana government to turn the Rwandan population against the RPF. Lee Anne Fujii describes these attacks as ‘staged’ by the former government to incite fear in the population (2004, 99).

On the one hand, one reads of the RPF as a well-disciplined army where any person stepping out of line, or committing what would be termed as a crime against humanity, was immediately punished (Prunier, 1995; Dallaire, 2003). On the other hand, evidence is surfacing of many atrocious crimes having been committed by the RPF between 1990 and 1994, having been well hidden from

outside observers. These instances of violence, whether stemming from the RPF or staged by the Rwandan government, brought fear amongst many Rwandans that the RPF were a cruel and bloodthirsty military movement that was seeking control of the country. Kinzer describes how even Tutsi living in Rwanda would flee before the RPF (2008, 98). “You want power?’ a Tutsi who lived in Ruhengeri asked one of the *inkotanyi* who raided the town in 1991. ‘You will get it. But here we will all die. Is it worth it to you?’” (Kinzer, 2008, 99). It was this violence taking place in certain parts of Rwanda, particularly between the border of Uganda and northern Rwanda that, amongst other things, has been said to have precipitated the genocide.

2.6. Identities internalized

Jenkins' model suggests that identity is constructed and negotiated on a daily basis. Rather than identifying key factors that differentiate Hutu from Tutsi genetically or biologically, this model would suggest that that which differentiates one ethnicity from another would depend on *how Hutu and Tutsi themselves define and describe those differences*. Furthermore, this model suggests that those factors that actors might emphasise as differentiating themselves today may not be the same as they used in the past or will use in the future. This is very helpful in understanding the shifting relationship between Hutu and Tutsi.

Jenkins' model also stresses the influence of those in power and of historical and political events. Applying this to the Rwandan situation, we can see how the racial identities imposed by the colonialists became internalized so that during that period of history to be Hutu did mean to be inferior and to be Tutsi did mean to be superior for all those involved (2003, 58). However, that does not mean that to be Tutsi *always* meant being superior prior to the arrival of the colonialists. Ethnic identity is thus not set in stone but is shifting and dynamic and what is more relevant is not to define ethnic identity absolutely but to understand what it means to the actors themselves. As we begin to understand how the actors themselves experience and negotiate their identity we can begin to think about how we might move to a more helpful and less divisive understanding of our identity.

Jenkins speaks of internal and external identification and that these two are in dialogue with one another. This distinction highlights the internal-external dialectic of identification (2003, 58). Our sense of who we are is developed through habits, routines, and the normal, everyday life we are socialized into. This sense of self develops as external significant others tell us who we are and what we must and must not do. There is a dialogue between 'the demands of self' and the 'expectations of others'; the internal-external dialectic. This primary socialization includes an ethnic component (2003, 58). Jenkins writes that "She will learn not only that she is an 'X', 'but also what this means in terms of her esteem and worth in her own eyes and in the eyes of others; in terms of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour; and in terms of what it means *not* to be an 'X', what it means to be a 'Y' or a 'Z' perhaps" (2003, 59).

When speaking with Rwandans, this dialectic is quickly apparent. During childhood, although not always aware of ethnic identities or what they signified, there was nevertheless an awareness of 'the other' and who they were and who I am not. This other was either seen as weaker in some way and less than, or privileged and more than. Into an early developing sense of identity was being built a sense of superiority and pride or inferiority and shame. Even though Hutus were in power and in the majority, in terms of the internal-external dialectic the message was still clearly one of inferiority.

According to Jenkins, our self image is constantly being reassessed in accordance with public image (and public/external feedback). Jenkins gives a lengthy illustration of this describing how our education and employment systems lead people to adjust their identities in line with what opportunities are or are not available to them (for example, someone who cannot meet the educational demands required for a high level occupation begins to adjust their identity and their expectations to a lower level job). He also speaks of how (often negative) external labeling can begin to shape identity. The effects of this latter point can be devastating in the case of ethnic minorities, or ethnically stigmatized groups who then fail to secure certain niches in society or occupational mobility, and this may result in exclusion and a vicious downward spiral (2003, 60). The Hamitic hypothesis is an example of external labeling affecting behaviour, attitudes and the very identity of people, and the affects have indeed been devastating.

Who has the power to exclude and include? Ethnic groups become institutions; they become part of patterns of social practice, part of the 'way things are done' (Jenkins, 2003, 61). The colonial racial identities became part of the social order, and decided for people who could be educated, who could be in leadership, and who could not. It has been argued that many stereotypes have become reality through this 'institutionalization'. For example, during the colonial period, Tutsi were educated and Hutu were not. After the revolution, many of the Tutsi who fled went to other countries where they received an education far more advanced than that available to the average person living in Rwanda. Even those Tutsi who remained in the country, especially in Kigali, could often more easily secure employment with international NGOs and organizations (as access to government controlled employment was limited for them) and through the interaction with internationals, again, their educational level and knowledge of the greater world out there was perhaps more advanced than the average Rwandan. After the genocide, with the return of hundreds of thousands of Tutsi from the diaspora, one of the comments to be heard was that Tutsi were more intelligent because they were all more educated and more capable than the average Hutu. Yet it was political and sociological circumstances that allowed Tutsi greater educational exposure than the average Hutu. Thus these external factors influence internal and external definitions of self and other, reaffirming stereotypes².

A clear example of the internalization of external definition is the Hamitic hypothesis, which strongly influenced the atmosphere and ideology that contributed to the instability and extreme violence that erupted in the 1990s. The tremendous inferiority-superiority complex was reiterated again and again in pre-genocide propaganda, as will be explored in section 3.4.1

The affects of the Hamitic hypothesis were felt in every home, from the youngest to the oldest Rwandan. Although on the one hand Rwandans may well have been living in harmony, on another level the inferiority-superiority complex remained, as the following two stories, one from a Hutu and the other from a Tutsi, illustrate. Jean Paul, a Hutu student, recalled an incident from his youth that made him

² Of course, even this stereotype is no more than that. Statistically, it is most likely that as many Hutu are educated as are Tutsi, and often the reasons for it appearing otherwise may be due to the masking of other factors.

aware of his ethnic identity, although at that stage it still wasn't a clear concept (Personal interview, Durban, December, 2007). His sister was sitting at the table with other children who later became their friends. The older brother of these children, on seeing Jean Paul's sister at the table, said, "I don't want to share food with this *ikipingo*." He flatly refused to eat with the others and went to eat his food elsewhere. Later, Jean Paul and this boy became good friends and they would often share food at each others' homes. At one meal, when some strangers came to eat with them, Jean Paul's sister suddenly said, thinking that the term meant 'stranger', that she was going to eat elsewhere because she didn't want to eat with these *ikipingo*'s. The older brother was there and was terribly ashamed for ever having said something like that. Apparently, *ikipingo* did not refer to a stranger, as Jean Paul's sister had assumed it did, but was rather a derogatory term for a Hutu.

Later, in a conversation with Terese, a Tutsi, I asked her about the meaning of *ikipingo* and she said it meant 'disagreeable', in that it was disagreeable for Hutu to be there; for Tutsi to have to share their space with Hutu (Personal interview, Pietermaritzburg, December, 2007). She also describes how when growing up, adults around her would often speak derogatively of Hutu. If one of the children were greedy, unpleasant or dirty the adults would say, "Stop acting like a Hutu." But as a child, Terese says she didn't know that there were actually people that were Hutus. She thought it was just a word. In her community in Tanzania, most Rwandan refugees were Tutsi and were very proud of being Tutsi. In the vicinity were also Burundian Hutu, who, according to her, were quite unpleasant, stealing and behaving badly. At this point she didn't know there were Rwandan Hutus. She thought Hutus were only these unpleasant Burundians.

So although Hutu and Tutsi may have been living inside Rwanda relatively harmoniously, nevertheless, in language usage, stories shared around the dinner table, in the stereotyping and deeply internalised understandings of identity, the Hamitic hypothesis continued to have life. It was relatively easy for political leaders with political agendas to use this deeply entrenched identity complex in their propaganda campaign.

2.7. Concluding thoughts

The narratives circulating Rwanda today are remarkably politically correct, writes Pottier (2002, 7). My own experience is that many Rwandans seem to regurgitate a seemingly learnt transcript when asked questions of a remotely political nature. The answers are always along the lines of 'we are all Rwandan, there is no Hutu and Tutsi anymore, and ethnic division started with the colonialists'. Pottier's entire book is devoted to dispelling these narratives in Rwanda which he sees as giving simplistic and easy answers to the significantly complex issues of Rwanda's history and social identity. He further argues that the international community, especially directly after the genocide, in a fit of guilt, uncritically accepted these simplified narratives which are often fed to them by Tutsi ideologues.

Pottier argues that although we are correct in not accepting the narratives circulating Rwanda prior to 1994 (those narratives that supported Hutu ideology), we cannot correct that mistake by approaching Rwanda after 1994 with a blank slate. Rather, he argues, all histories are coloured and we need to approach them critically (2002, 8).

"The power of shamelessly twisting ethnic argument for the sake of class privilege was demonstrated most shockingly in the blatant imaginings about history that galvanised Rwanda's 'Hutu Power' extremists. These extremists killed Rwanda's Tutsi and sent their bodies 'back to Ethiopia' via the Nyabarongo and Akagera rivers. The imagined origins of 'the Tutsi', along with their (poorly understood) migrations and conquest of Rwanda, were evoked by power-crazed politicians to instil 'ethnic hatred' in the very people they themselves oppressed: the victims of class oppression were spurred on to kill the minority group which the oppressors had labelled 'the real enemy'" (2002, 9).

On the other hand, in order to justify minority rule: "Post-genocide leaders regard Rwanda's pre-colonial past as something of a golden era, a state of social

harmony later corrupted by Europeans” (2002, 9). They do this through simplifying; screening out complexity and context.

Questions regarding Rwanda’s past, and the origins of its people

“are at the core of the continuous reinterpretation of reality which sustains the potential for conflict ... Distortion, or the screening out of complexity and context, are techniques that work best in situations where confusion – about people’s past, their identities, their rights – has been institutionalised and built into the fabric of everyday life” (Pottier, 2002, 10)

Indeed today many Rwandans I have spoken to either don’t know their past, give a vague account of it or repeat a version that sounds rote-learned and barely internalized.

It is for this reason that we have examined the many narratives of Rwandan history. I have not argued for a ‘true’ account of history but neither have I argued for an account that is untruthful or does not scrutinise the truth. The truth concerning any narrative of history is that there are multiple accounts of what really happened, and that these multiple accounts can stand together in tension, giving the only clear picture of history we can ever have – fragmented and yet crowded with the voices of those whose story it is.

And the story of Rwanda is an infinitely complex one that does not allow for the simple answers of placing blame on one group or another, on colonialists, on propagandists, on the international community, on Hutu, on Tutsi or on any other actor alone. Instead, it implicates everyone. This is the starting point of healing; a narrative in which everyone’s voice is heard and everyone has a degree of responsibility in that narrative. Pottier writes that “Without a broadly agreed account, or (better perhaps) without a vision of the past which acknowledges that different interpretations of history will exist, Rwanda ... will remain entrapped in an official discourse which legitimates the use of violence and makes some, leaders and led, *génocidaires*” (2002, 12).

The following chapter will look at how these stereotypes and inferiority-superiority complex, through a well planned propaganda campaign and political manipulation resulted in one of the most violent and horrific bloodbaths of the twentieth century.

CHAPTER 3: DURING THE GENOCIDE

“We can all turn into killers, Valcourt had often maintained, even the most peaceful and generous of us. All it takes is certain circumstances, a failing, a patient conditioning, rage, disappointment ... For several seconds a killer’s genes rose up in Valcourt’s blood and a flood of protein’s jangled his brain. Only a firm ‘No, Bernard!’ from Gentille prevented Valcourt from becoming a killer. He had seized the machete from the militiaman’s hands and brandished it over his head as the young man woke and with haggard eyes perceived his own imminent death. Flinging the weapon into the ditch, Valcourt returned to the car, appalled to think that if it had not been for Gentille he would have butchered the fellow remorselessly, the way Cyprien and Georgina has been butchered” (Courtemanche, 2003, 105).

The previous chapter discussed the historical role of narratives in creating identities and a context that allowed for genocide. This chapter will examine how these divisive narratives helped make the genocide possible. It will be seen that those planning the genocide made use of these historical narratives to plant a deep fear within a mass of people which led them to become violent in ways beyond imagining. This chapter will begin by exploring some of the many reasons given for why the genocide might have happened. It will then show how something so atrocious was made to seem acceptable and even necessary through the use of narrative. We will then examine the ‘anatomy’ of the genocide through the insights of Christopher Taylor (2001) and Liisa Malkki (1995), who examine genocide in relation to cultural and historical narratives. Lastly, we will look at the role played by some key factors in the Rwandan narrative during the genocide, including the role of regionalism, the church, gender politics, class politics, the international community and the RPF.

3.1. Reasons for the genocide

From the previous chapter, the narrative unfolded of a country built on progressively intensifying ethnic division in an atmosphere of dictatorial control,

where obedience, working hard and keeping quiet in political matters was upheld as one's moral duty. Further, prior to genocide there was a militant group on the border of the country, threatening violence and in some instances instigating violence in parts of the country, feeding fear and instability. Prunier describes the early 1990s in Rwanda as a situation waiting to explode (1995, 85).

Various researchers add the falling world prices for the major export crops, coffee and tea, famine, widespread unemployment, a drop in government revenue, and a population increase resulting in increased competition for land (Prunier, 1995; Pottier, 2001; Fujii, 2004). Fujii makes mention of Western states attaching the strings of political reform to their aid packages at a time when President Habyarimana was "fighting a war on four fronts: a military war against the RPF, a political war against Hutu opponents, a public relations war against the West, and a social war against his own people, who, not surprisingly, bore the worst effects of all four" (2004, 101). Prunier describes how amidst these tensions, the government's response was to 'crack down harder on small crime and moral issues' while eliminating all opposition and critique (for example, people were killed in staged traffic accidents, journalists imprisoned, etc) (1995, 85).

Prunier shows how the French started putting pressure on Habyarimana to reform his single-party 'democracy' and his policy regarding refugees. Under the United Nations, dialogue was entered into between the RPF and the Habyarimana-government, with the goal of getting both parties to sign the Arusha Accords, an agreement that would allow refugees to return to Rwanda, and the establishment of power sharing to take place. From a public relations point of view, however, Prunier argues that it was better for the RPF to present itself as fighting a totalitarian, single-party dictatorship than becoming part of a power sharing agreement (1995, 90). Or as Kinzer was quoted as saying in section 2.5.4, the RPF felt they could not return to Rwanda while an ethnic dictatorship maintained power. Thus, in 1990, the RPF unsuccessfully invaded Rwanda from Uganda and then more successfully attacked northern Rwanda from the Virunga mountains in 1993.

But more than any of these reasons, most researchers agree that what made genocide possible was the narratives of history and identity which reinforced

ethnic identities and ethnic tensions. Fujii writes that in the face of all these challenges, Habyarimana “responded to these threats as his predecessors had done: by exploiting Hutu–Tutsi relations. But this time, any effort to exploit an *ethnic* division had to be powerful enough to overcome the *political* divisions that constituted the real threat to Habyarimana’s circle” (2004, 101). She continues,

“What was needed was a vision of the world that would drown out all others, a hegemonic tale that would reign supreme. This story needed to be self-contained and all-consuming— powerful enough to withstand the distraction of peace talks and the noise of opposition—powerful enough to make the very idea of what it meant to be Hutu and what it meant to be Tutsi an effective weapon for mass mobilization and elite consolidation. The tale, in short, would have to evoke an image so compelling and so immediate that no one could escape its consequences. This tale was a story of genocide” (2004, 101,2).

3.2. The genocide strategy

The genocide was sparked by the shooting down of the aeroplane which was carrying President Habyarimana and the president of Burundi on 7 April, 1994. Who was responsible for this remains under debate, with some accusing the *genocidaires* who felt Habyarimana was too soft, others accusing the RPF as they wanted to side step the Arusha negotiations and take over power in the country, and some accusing the French government. Within hours of this event, Des Forges describes how the military went into action, killing Tutsi and Hutu political leaders. Colonel Theoneste Bagosora was behind the execution of the plans, with most of those involved in the first few weeks being the military, with its young militia called the *interehamwe*, administrative officials, politicians and businessmen who had prior knowledge of the plans (1999, 70). By the 20th of April, Bagosora and his inner circle had almost complete control of the country and used the complex structures of authority in Rwanda to mobilise the population. Prefects passed the message to *burgomasters* (mayors), and mayors called meetings throughout the communes to pass on the instructions to the local population (Des Forges, 1999, 71). Where before, Rwandans were used to days

of community work, spent in service of the country, they were now called to 'work' with machetes and firearms.

Commune leaders were instructed to make lists of Tutsi in their areas. In areas where leaders or villagers were not willing to cooperate, militia were sent in to do the work. In the beginning, specific people were targeted and killed, but in time, Tutsi were herded to public places and killed enmasse. Some Tutsi would gather in stadiums, having been told it would be safe there, only to have the stadiums showered with hand grenades as soon as they were full. Many Tutsi escaped to churches, as these had been sacred and safe spaces in previous violence, but now they too became sites of violence and mass killing. Another strategy that was used were the roadblocks, thousands of which were set up all over the country, blocking every road and every possible escape. These roadblocks were central to the effectiveness of the genocide, not only in preventing people from escaping but also as a meeting place for those involved with the killing. Often manned by *interehamwe*, these young militias could ensure the participation of all local people in the killings and keep an eye on any movements. In terms of encouraging popular participation, Des Forges writes,

“In some places, authorities apparently deliberately drew hesitant Hutu into increasingly more violent behavior, first encouraging them to pillage, then to destroy homes, then to kill the occupants of the homes. Soldiers and police sometimes threatened to punish Hutu who wanted only to pillage and not to harm Tutsi. Authorities first incited attacks on the most obvious targets—men who had acknowledged or could be easily supposed to have ties with the RPF—and only later insisted on the slaughter of women, children, the elderly, and others generally regarded as apolitical (1999, 74).

In the next section we will explore at some length the propaganda campaign which normalised the idea of genocide, explaining why so many people so easily became involved in the genocidal killing machine.

3.3. Normalizing genocide

Fujii argues that the logic of genocide had to be taught in order for a large proportion of the civilian population to participate (2004, 99). Many Rwandans today say that prior to the early 1990s they were largely unaware of overt ethnic tension or worrying about ethnic identity. But in the years preceding genocide, latent fears and stereotypes were reawakened and politicians played on the divisive historical narratives described in chapter two to bring a new awareness to people of their ethnic identity. Not only did ethnic categories have to be ‘taught’, argues Fujii, but violence and killing needed to be normalized (2004, 99). She describes four ways that the genocidal government succeeded in doing this; through repetition, through having a far reach of the general population, through having a monopoly of the discursive space, and through skillful use of evidence that lent credibility to their story (2004, 102). The following section will unpack these methods.

Des Forges suggests that the amount of repetition across different forms of media and by various politicians indicates that this propaganda campaign was deliberate and planned, although this remains a controversial point to some Hutu ideologues (1999, 80). Evidence shows that use was made of radio and newspapers, both widely accessed forms of media in Rwanda. The extremists’ radio station, *Radio Te le vision des Mille Collines* (RTLM) “turned the genocidal message into popular entertainment. Through a mixture of music, banter, jokes, and editorials, the station reinforced the genocidal message over and over again” (Fujii, 2004, 102). Similarly, extremist newspapers such as *Kangura* depicted obscene cartoons of opposition politicians in a way that was both humorous and hateful (Taylor, 2001, 48).

RTLM became the primary tool of communication throughout the genocide, with every roadblock barrier playing its music and announcements throughout the day. Des Forges describes the radio station as being “like a conversation among Rwandans who knew each other well and were relaxing over some banana beer or a bottle of Primus [the local beer] in a bar. It was a conversation without a moderator and without any requirements as to the truth of what was said” (1999,

70). RTLM turned talk of genocide into everyday, normal, acceptable conversation (Fujii, 2004, 104).

Once the genocide had started, travel became difficult and many other forms of communication were completely cut off, making RTLM the only source of news and, as Des Forges stresses, “the sole authority for interpreting its meaning” (1999, 71). Fujii highlights the fact that during times of instability or crises people tend to become more dependent on media for information and guidance, thus giving it more power than it normally would have (2004, 105). During the crises in Rwanda, as people tried to access information through RTLM, the message they were receiving was ‘kill or be killed’ (2004, 105).

Apart from creating a ‘genocidal norm’ through repetition, reach and monopoly of the media, the propaganda campaign also made use of real and staged events as ‘evidence’ for their message. The campaign’s most effective message was that the RPF were advancing, that they were cruel and dangerous and that they wanted to take over Rwanda and rule it as they once did.

“As one perpetrator confessed to journalist Bill Berkeley in June 1994: “I did not believe the Tutsis were coming to kill us and take our land, but when the government continued to broadcast that the RPF is coming to take our land, is coming to kill the Hutu—when this was repeated over and over, I began to feel some kind of fear” (Berkeley, 2002, p 74) (Fujii, 2004, 106).

The RPF’s attack across the Rwandan border in October, 1990, although unsuccessful, nevertheless became ammunition for the propaganda campaign to instill fear in the population. This occurred again when the RPF attacked in 1993, and on both occasions thousands of Tutsi within the country, usually the educated and those in power, were thrown into prison (Prunier, 1995, 93). Alongside these actual attacks, Fujii makes mention of ‘staged’ attacks or rumours of attacks, at which time the general population could ‘practice’ killing and violence could become ‘routine’. Prunier even speaks of ‘settling into a war culture’ (1995, 94). “These massacres,” writes Fujii, “were a crucial element of the text—the genocidal story that the extremists were busy writing and making real” (2004, 108).

In this propaganda campaign, *genocidaires* were constantly drawing from embedded stereotypes in the historical narratives. In section 2.4, it was mentioned that although Rwandans may have lived side by side relatively harmoniously prior to genocide, stereotyping was occurring repeatedly. At no time was this stronger than during the propaganda campaign run by the *genocidaires* in the months running up to the genocide. The use of stereotyping and language specifically used to create an image of Tutsi as 'other', alien and less than human played a significant role in influencing ordinary people to become killers.

Johan Pottier describes how propagandists constantly fell back on crucial aspects of the Hamitic hypothesis:

“The most explicit threat had come from Léon Mugesera, vice-president of the country’s former sole political party, the MRND, who in November, 1992, incited the Hutu majority to eliminate all Tutsi and everyone opposed to Habyarimana. ‘Your country is Ethiopia,’ Mugesera told Tutsi, ‘and we shall soon send you back via the Nyabarongo [river] on an express journey. There you are. And I repeat, we are quickly getting organised to begin this work” (original quotation in Reyntjens, 1994: 119) (2001, 22).

Harrow describes how what he calls a ‘foundational fantasy’ turned ordinary people into killers. This fantasy included the core idea that:

“Tutsis were no longer ‘us,’ no longer ‘subjects,’ but were *inyenzi* (cockroaches) that had to be stamped out. The foundational fantasy is built on the historical narrative of the oppressive Tutsi kingdom, the *corvées*, and with it the identification of Tutsis as ‘Hamites,’ as people from the north (Ethiopia being the favored site); they were depicted as foreigners, as others, with different blood and evil natures, even as evil satanic beings; and this was elaborated in speeches, broadcasts, and publications” (2005, 17).

Harrow argues how shared historical narratives became rigid, divisive narratives, with a Tutsi version and a Hutu version, and that these rigid narratives forced people into distinct categories, categories that dehumanized:

“The scenes of young *interahamwe* butchering Tutsi women and children at various checkpoints have been often narrated so as to arouse our horror at the killers: they are drunk, stoned, inhuman. Indeed, they might have been all of the above, but instead of stopping with the simplistic notion that a man who drinks or smokes marijuana becomes a killer, we would do better to consider that what made possible the suppression of feelings that would normally inhibit such acts required the reinforcement of fantasies that functioned to turn other people into something other than humans, making them radically other, like the *interahamwe* themselves. The people who killed became, themselves, immune to the propositions of intersubjectivity and shared histories, and were able to channel their fantasies into rigid channels that ended any other possibilities of energetic relations with others” (2005, 17).

In fact, during the genocide there was an entire discourse developed to describe the act of killing that assisted killers in objectifying the horrific acts they were partaking in. Darryl Li's analysis of radio propaganda shows how the RTLM repeatedly described the killing with work euphemisms, relating the killings to community service, which normally involved cleaning the vegetation alongside roads (2004, 11). Taylor describes how the killers would speak of clearing away the 'tall trees', which played on the stereotype of Tutsi height. The nation-state was referred to as a garden and people were to clear the 'weeds', and not just the 'tall weeds' but also the 'shoots', which referred to the children (Taylor, 2001, 142).

Apart from objectifying the 'work' of killing, there was a different kind of identity game going on in unifying all Hutu for this 'work'. Li describes how the RTLM continuously made reference to Hutu as *rubanda nyamwinshi* which referred to their ethnic majority status in the country, and how all Hutu needed to stand together against the common enemy. Alison des Forges describes how the propaganda campaign depicted a picture of Tutsi 'clannishness', saying that Tutsi

within the country were linked to those outside (1999, 93). She quotes from the extremist magazine, *Kangura*:

“We began by saying that a cockroach cannot give birth to a butterfly. It is true. A cockroach gives birth to another cockroach...The history of Rwanda shows us clearly that a Tutsi stays always exactly the same; that he has never changed. The malice, the evil are just as we knew them in the history of our country. We are not wrong in saying that a cockroach gives birth to another cockroach. Who could tell the difference between the *Inyenzi* who attacked in October 1990 and those of the 1960s? They are all linked...their evilness is the same. The unspeakable crimes of the *Inyenzi* of today...recall those of their elders: killing, pillaging, raping girls and women, etc.” (1999, 83).

3.4. Narratives underlying genocide

But what was underlying the propaganda campaign that made its message result in a people normally described as ‘peaceful’ to become violent mass murderers? In the following section we will examine the underlying narratives embedded in the Rwandan consciousness that were recalled by the propaganda campaign. These narratives include the ‘Hamitic hypothesis’ with its narrative of inferiority and superiority, the idea of Tutsi as foreign invader, the ‘revolution’ narrative of the democratic majority, and deeply embedded cultural narratives that Taylor (2001) describes, around the themes of ‘flow and blockage’.

3.4.1. The Hamitic hypothesis and foreign invasion

The Hamitic hypothesis, as mentioned in section 2.4, was a European construction used to explain advanced technologies or complex states outside of their own sphere. Finding in Rwanda a well-advanced, complex state structure, Europeans concluded that the reigning Tutsi monarchy were not Bantu, like the Hutu, but descendants of Ham, the cursed son of the Biblical Noah (Noah, of course, being of European origin). From this came the further conclusion that in the hierarchy of superiority, Tutsi would rank just under the Europeans

themselves, followed by the Hutu and under them the Twa. Along with this hypothesis was the implied racial separateness of Hutu and Tutsi. Although Hutu and Tutsi shared the same culture, language and religion, it was concluded that Tutsi must have infiltrated Rwanda from the north and subjugated the Hutu.

Echoes of this hypothesis were constantly heard during the genocide. An early obvious reference to this was by the ruling party's vice-president, Dr Leon Mugesera, in 1992, when he said, "They [the accomplices of the RPF] belong to Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shortcut to get there by throwing them in the Nyabarongo river. I must insist on this point. We have to act. Wipe them all out!" (Taylor, 2001, 80). The two strong messages here – that the Tutsi are other, and that they are from somewhere else – form a central theme of the propaganda campaign. Coupled with this idea is the one of Hutus as being the original inhabitants of Rwanda, who were cruelly subjugated by Tutsi invaders. In the early 1990s MRND (the ruling party) supporters were often heard putting forward the following version of history:

"We Hutu are Bantus. Although the Twa were here first, when we arrived we lived in peace with them. We cleared the land and farmed it. They made pots or hunted in the forests. The first kings in Rwanda were Hutu but the Tutsi say they were Tutsi. The Tutsi used their cattle to trick Hutu into doing their work for them. Then the Tutsi managed to conquer one Hutu kingdom. When the Europeans came, they helped the Tutsi conquer the rest of our lands" (Taylor, 2001, 83).

The Hamitic hypothesis influenced the other side as well. Prior to the genocide an RPF supporter said to Taylor, "We Tutsi were once the nobles in this land and the Hutu were our slaves. Hutu do not have the intelligence to govern. Look at what they have done to this country in the last thirty years" (2001, 85)

Central to this Hamitic hypothesis was the idea of the alluring Tutsi woman, looking to trap Hutu men through their beauty. The Hutu revolution was not able to overthrow the Hamitic hypothesis and the idea of the superior beauty of Tutsi women. The fact that Europeans tended to have very public relationships with Tutsi women didn't help. Hutu extremist literature prior to the genocide depicted

cartoons of Tutsi women luring westerners into supporting the RPF through their beauty (Taylor, 2001, 171). During genocide, (and prior to genocide, in their cartoon depictions) Taylor suggests that “Hutu extremists appear to be attempting to purge their ambivalence toward Tutsi women via symbolic violence, even as they project their own erotic fantasies upon them. At one level they were certainly aware that to preserve the racial purity of Hutu, they had to categorically renounce Tutsi women as objects of desire. At the same time they also knew that they themselves were not free of the forbidden desire” (2001, 174).

3.4.2. The ‘revolution’ narrative

This narrative insisted that Rwanda would no longer be ruled by a foreign minority but by the democratic majority, in other words, Hutu Power. Where other African countries were throwing off their colonial past by anger and violence directed at the colonialist, in Rwanda, the Belgians were welcomed as friends of democracy, and the Tutsi were seen as the true oppressors (Mamdani, 1999; Taylor, 2001). From this time onwards, a clear and unambiguous narrative was woven that painted the Tutsi as the cruel and sly oppressor and the Hutu as the hard working masses who had been tricked into subjugation. But the revolution brought this to an end, freed the Hutu from oppression and allowed them to rule a country rightfully theirs. This rewritten history became the official history. Taylor describes how after the Hutu revolution, nationalist rituals were held, such as ‘animation’: people would be excused from work to gather together to sing or chant, rehearsing litanies about the country’s development or the accomplishments of the president and leading party. On national holidays these would be publicly performed with competitions between groups. During these rituals: “the values of democracy and equality would be extolled and the overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy and rejection of *ubuhake* would be evoked” (2001, 108).

It was from this foundation that the propaganda campaign could easily tap into Rwandans fears and unexpressed beliefs. If the Tutsi were to come into power again, they would yet again subjugate the Hutu masses. In Mugusera’s speech, he warns his listeners: “Know that the person whose throat you do not cut now will be the one who will cut yours” (Des Forges, 1999, 86). As Fujii writes, “With this

warning, Mugusera brought the story of Hutu and Tutsi full circle. If Tutsi rule depended on Hutu subjugation, then Hutu survival depended on Tutsi extermination” (2004, 106). Mugusera refers to the fatal mistake Hutu made in allowing Tutsi to escape the country before; that fatal mistake, he urges his listeners, should not be made again (Fujii, 2004, 106).

3.4.3. Cultural narratives

Taylor suggests that specific forms of violence were used repeatedly during the genocide because certain deeply embedded narratives were written onto the bodies of victims by perpetrators. He suggests that within this cultural narrative, the genocide of Tutsi was a ‘massive ritual of purification’ whose roots lie in pre-colonial sacred kingship practices (2001, 101). These include impaling, evisceration of pregnant woman, forced incest, forced cannibalism of family members, widespread killing of victims at roadblocks, the severing of Achilles’ tendons, emasculation of men, and breast oblation of women (2001, 105).

These violent practices, Taylor argues, relate to Rwandan cognitive models of illness which he studied in the 1980s which are based on the idea of blockage and flow. “Popular healing aims at restoring bodily flows that have been perturbed by human negligence and malevolence. Bodily fluids such as blood, semen, breast milk, and menstrual blood, are a recurrent concern as is the passage of ailments through the digestive tract” (Taylor, 2001, 112). He recounts a story that illustrates how the flow/blockage symbolism starts at birth: Mother and child are secluded for a period of nine days (today it is shorter), during which time the child is examined for anal malformations. Then the child is presented to the family, and given a name. Children are present at this occasion, are given their favourite food, and bestow a nick-name on the baby. The meal given to the children is called *kurya ubunyano* which means ‘to eat the baby’s excrement’ ‘for Rwandans say that a tiny quantity of the baby’s faecal matter is mixed with the food’ (2001, 114).

“This appellation celebrates the fact that the baby’s body has been found to be an ‘open conduit’, an adequate vessel for perpetuating the process of ‘flow’. In a sense, that baby’s faeces are its first gift and the members of his

age class are its first recipients. The children at the ceremony incorporate the child into their group by symbolically ingesting one of his bodily products. Their bestowal of a name upon the infant manifests their acceptance of the child as a social being” (2001, 114).

He goes on to describe how if the baby’s anal passage was blocked, it could receive but not give, and therefore be unable to socially participate in reciprocity. A moral person would be one who could reciprocate – to receive and to give or pass on; to ingest and to excrete. This makes the mouth and the anus important (2001, 114).

That which prevents flow is seen to be malevolent. According to Hutu extremist ideology, Tutsi were seen as ‘eaters of our sweat’, ‘weight upon our backs’, ‘invaders from Ethiopia’, and so Taylor argues that Tutsi were perceived as ‘blocking beings’, blocking the nation from its pure, unified Hutu-ness (2001, 140). During the genocide, Taylor describes how these metaphors of blockage and flow characterized the entire genocide, from the way violent torture was focused on the digestive and reproductive system, to the severing of tendons, to the thousands of roadblocks, to the throwing of bodies into rivers.

On this latter point, he makes reference to the aforementioned speech by Mugesera, for the Tutsi to return to Ethiopia through being thrown into the Nyabarongo river. Taylor describes how the river played an important ‘restorative and purifying role’, where the ‘blocking agents’ could be excreted into and washed away. He uses the term ‘excreted’ in the belief that the ‘blocking’ Tutsi were seen as excrement, supported by the fact that victims were regularly thrown, either dead or alive, into latrines (2001, 130).

Roadblocks formed an integral part of preventing people from escaping. At roadblocks, Hutus were forced to do their civic ‘duty’, of torturing and murdering Tutsi trying to escape. However, Taylor points out that these roadblocks were so closely placed together as to become redundant and argues that their purpose was again rooted in cultural symbolism – blocking the path. This links with the cutting of tendons, which *Medicins Sans Frontiers* described as the most common wound they encountered. Not only those who would run away, but even those too

young or old to run, were wounded in this way. “As with barriers on paths and roadways, there is a deeper generative scheme that subtends both the killers’ intentionality and the message inscribed on the bodies of their victims ... Power, in this instance, in symbolic terms, derives from the capacity to obstruct” (Taylor, 2001, 135).

The effectiveness of ethnic ‘purification’ lay with these roadblocks, which prevented Tutsi, or even Hutu that looked like Tutsi, from escaping the country. These roadblocks were erected by the *interehamwe*, police, neighbourhood protection groups, the Rwandan government army (FAR) and even by the RPF, in the areas they controlled (Taylor, 2001, 130). Taylor describes the barriers as “ritual and liminal spaces where ‘obstructing beings’ were to be obstructed in their turn and cast out of the nation ... They were scenes of inordinate cruelty” (2001, 131). He speaks of people paying to be killed quickly, and how many were intentionally mortally wounded but not killed, left to slowly die amongst the corpses. All Hutu civilians were expected to fulfill their civic ‘duty’ at the roadblock. In her autobiography, Beatrice Umutesi describes how her brother’s lapse in this civic duty almost resulted in the death of the entire family and that he eventually gave in to spending the nights there to save the people under his care. It was in this way that every Hutu civilian was implicated in the killings, even if they had no desire to participate (2004, 56).

Other forms of violence included impalement, which obstructs the bodily conduit, and emasculation and breast oblation, which were both practiced during earlier periods of Rwandan history and point towards a preoccupation with the reproductive system and parts of the body that produce fertility fluids (Taylor, 2001, 140). Repeated rape, and forced incest bring about the image of misdirected flows. “Not only were the victimized brutalised and dehumanized by this treatment – their bodies were transformed into icons of asociality, for incest constitutes the pre-emption of any possible alliance or exchange relation that might have resulted from the union of one’s son or daughter with the son or daughter of another family” (Taylor, 2001, 141).

Thus, Taylor argues, Hutu extremists blocked flows as a sign of power through roadblocks and cutting of tendons, and further inscribed on the bodies of their

victims their identity as 'blocking agents' through impalement, emasculation, breast oblation, forced incest and rape. As would have been the case in pre-colonial Rwandan society, obstructers were sacrificed to purify the nation. "Sacrifice took the form of interdicting the flight of Tutsi, obstructing the conduits of their bodies, impeding their bodies' capacity for movement, subverting the ability of Tutsi to socially or biologically reproduce, and in many instances, turning their bodies into icons of their imagined moral flaws – obstruction" (Taylor, 2001. 145).

It can thus be seen that much of what happened during the genocide was grounded in the historical narratives described in chapter two and in this section. The Hamitic hypothesis brought by the colonials and internalized by Rwandans allowed for the dehumanization of the other. The 'revolution' narrative fed both fears of renewed subjugation and a sense of entitlement to hold onto power by whatever means. The cultural narratives described by Taylor shed some light on the way in which genocide was executed, and again draws from hundreds of years of Rwandan history. These deeply embedded narratives were used by politicians to manipulate and destroy people for their own political agendas.

3.5. By-narratives during genocide

Apart from these historical and cultural narratives, there were also other narratives that assisted in creating a context for genocide. These include narratives of gender, class, and region. Further, within these narratives, some key actors have included the Church, the international community and the RPF. These narratives and actors will be explored in the following section.

3.5.1. The role of class

Several researchers point to the fact that a large number of *genocidaires* were in fact unemployed, landless, disillusioned youth who, by joining young militia groups not only had their basic needs met but were also given a new sense of status (Des Forges, 1999; Pottier, 2001; Prunier, 1995; Umutesi, 2004). Des Forges writes:

“Of the nearly 60 percent of Rwandans under the age of twenty, tens of thousands had little hope of obtaining the land needed to establish their own households or the jobs necessary to provide for a family. Such young men, including many displaced by the war and living in camps near the capital provided many of the early recruits to the Interahamwe, trained in the months before and in the days immediately after the genocide began. Refugees from Burundi, in flight from the Tutsi-dominated army of Burundi, had also received military training in their camps and readily attacked Rwandan Tutsi after April 6” (1999, 90).

Beatrice Umutesi calls these young militias ‘delinquents’ and says that the war belonged to these young boys who loved to watch the ‘wealthy tremble before them’ (2004, 53). Pottier further reiterates that where social inequality was high, massacres occurred between neighbours; where it was low, peasants were less likely to participate (2002, 33). “The authorities redirected the hatred and potential violence of the poor – especially of angry, desperate young Hutu men – away from the rich and onto ‘the Tutsi’, the latter wrongly portrayed as invariably aristocratic and privileged” (2002, 34). The propaganda machine told the poor that they were allowed to take ownership over the land and possessions of those they killed, making the incentive to kill higher for the very poor. For many of the uneducated, unemployed Hutu youth it seemed as if the war was between the impoverished majority and a Tutsi aristocracy that still, somehow, had a monopoly on resources and wealth (Pottier, 2002, 34).

3.5.2. The role of region

The north-south divide can be traced to before colonialism, where the south was the heart of the Rwandan kingdom, ruled by a Tutsi monarchy, whereas the north remained divided into autonomous Hutu chiefdoms. It was only with the arrival of the colonialists that northern Rwanda came under the central Rwandan rule. This division was reiterated by the Kayibanda-Habyarimana conflict, with Kayibanda being a southerner who favoured southerners during his rule, until he was overthrown by Habyarimana, a northerner who then favoured northerners (Pottier, 2001; Prunier, 1995).

Both before and during the genocide the north-south divide was strongly evident, even to the point where Umutesi writes that many southerners saw the war as an affair between the northerners and the Tutsi and felt it had nothing to do with them (2004, 64). In fact, in the southern positioned university town of Butare, ethnic tensions were minimal and thus the genocide impetus less effective, until *genocidaires* were sent in from other regions. Des Forges writes that in the north, where Habyarimana's support was strongest, the general population was quick to participate in genocide, but in the southern areas "many Hutu initially refused to attack Tutsi and joined with them in fighting off assailants" (1999, 101).

This divide was made even greater when France implemented Operation Turquoise, a United Nations operation which was based in the north-west. Its explicit purpose was to stop genocide, but coming at a stage when the genocide was almost over and millions of Hutu refugees were fleeing Rwanda, it instead became a refuge for *genocidaires* in the north (Prunier, 2000, 294).

3.5.3. The role of gender

During the genocide, women were both agents of violence and symbols of violence. Taylor describes how women participated in killing but also how Tutsi women were raped and even kept as sex slaves (2001, 150). This was unusual in a society where, prior to genocide, rape was not common at all. Added to this, prior to genocide, men were far more often affected by violence than women; during genocide, men and women were equally targeted (2001, 156).

Interestingly, Rwandan society was also characterized by strong woman leaders, for example, the prime minister, Agathe Uwiringiyimana, who "threatened the regime as an anti-ethnicist, a southerner, and as a highly educated and articulate person, but the fact that she was also a woman potentiated all these factors" (Taylor, 2001, 164). Within days of Habyarimana's death, Uwiringiyimana and the ten Belgian United Nations soldiers protecting her were murdered.

A characteristic of Hutu extremism was its male dominance, which Taylor argues had probably never existed in Rwanda's previous history (2001, 155). Taylor suggests that the reason Hutu extremists were especially against Tutsi women was that they created 'liminal spaces'. More Hutu men were married to Tutsi women than the other way around, and marriages between Tutsi women and foreigners were also common, with these Tutsi women then producing 'impure' children (2001, 156).

Already prior to genocide, the government had undertaken a 'morality campaign' against self-sufficient single women, women traditionally holding male positions and women who were becoming too European, especially in their style of dress (2001, 157). It was felt that Tutsi women undermined high Rwandan morality, especially when they took over western sexual practices (2001, 172, 3). It is ironic that many extremist Hutus had either Tutsi wives or mistresses. Even amongst Hutu refugees from Burundi, Liisa Malkii recorded Burundian men as saying that Tutsi women used their beauty to entrap innocent Hutu into marriage where then they would be under control of the sly Tutsi (2001, 170). Taylor describes how Tutsi women were denounced by Hutu extremists as objects of desire, while being objects of forbidden desire for the denouncers (2001, 170). He writes:

"Hutu extremists appear to be attempting to purge their ambivalence toward Tutsi women via symbolic violence, even as they project their own erotic fantasies upon them. At one level they were certainly aware that to preserve the racial purity of Hutu, they had to categorically renounce Tutsi women as objects of desire. At the same time they also knew that they themselves were not free of the forbidden desire" (2001, 174).

A most fascinating insight into the way Hutu extremists perceived Tutsi women is evident in the Hutu manifesto released in December, 1990, which states:

- "Every *Muhutu* (Hutu man) should know that wherever he finds *Umututsikazi* (a Tutsi woman) she is working for her Tutsi group", thus making a Hutu who marries or employs such a Tutsi a traitor.

- “Every *Muhutu* should know that our *Bahutukazi* (Hutu women) are more worthy or, and more conscious of their roles as women, spouse and mother. Are they not pretty, good secretaries and more honest!”
- “*Bhutukazi* (Hutu woman), be vigilant and bring your husbands, brothers and sons back to the path of reason” (Taylor, 2001,175).

Taylor asks why Hutu women needed to draw their menfolk back if the allure of Tutsi women wasn't very strong (2001, 175). Interestingly, when the French set up Operation Turquoise, the extremist propaganda, seeing the French as their friends, broadcast the following over the radio station: “You Hutu girls wash yourselves and put on a good dress to welcome our French allies. The Tutsi girls are all dead now, so you have your chance” (quote from Prunier, 1995, 292). This kind of inferiority complex, Prunier mentions in a footnote, accounts for the degree of sadism unleashed by Hutu death squads against Tutsi. Taylor says that ‘special measures of terrorism were reserved for Tutsi women by the extremists’ (2001, 176).

3.5.4. The role of the Church

A worrying aspect of the genocide was that an enormous amount of mass killings happened at churches, where people were seeking refuge. Where in the past, churches were seen as sacred places, they became integral parts of the killing strategy (Prunier, 1995; Mbanda, 1997; Des Forges, 1999). Not only were churches sites of massacres, church goers and even leaders, were participants in genocide. In an article about the role of the churches, Ian Linden describes how bishops and Archbishops were identified as key players in the killing machine (1997, 50). Why was the church, which is commonly perceived as being neutral in times of crises, so highly implicated in genocide?

One reason was that the Church, and the Roman Catholic Church in particular, has been part and parcel of Rwandan society and governance since colonial times. Des Forges describes how the Catholic Church was a staunch supporter of Habyarimana and his government and that some 60 percent of Rwandans were

members of the Catholic Church. She adds that the Anglican and Baptist hierarchies also tended to lean towards support of the government (1999, 111).

Another reason may be that Rwandans were taught to follow religious leaders unquestioningly, and when their religious leaders participated in the killing, this was a sign that they were morally free to do the same (Mbanda, 1997, 86). Meg Guillebaud, an Anglican missionary in Rwanda, describes at some length in her book how ethnic division was part of church culture in Rwanda for decades prior to genocide and that similarly, the leadership was riddled with complicated power plays and political intrigue that made participation in genocide more understandable (2002, 300). However, having said this, Laurent Mbanda stresses the point that for every church and church leader that participated there was one that acted heroically, saving lives or choosing to be a martyr rather than a killer (1997, 89).

3.5.5. The role of the international community

A repeated theme in the literature is the horrifying indifference of the international community. The delayed action on the part of the United Nations has left many Rwanda bitter and angry. General Romeo Dallaire, military leader of the UN intervention to Rwanda, describes how with a troop force of five thousand, and the correct mandate, the genocide could either have been stopped in its early days, or prevented altogether (2001, 110). Instead, the United Nations in Rwanda (UNAMIR) had a force of only five hundred, and a mandate which disallowed them to act other than in self-defense.

Reasons for international indifference abound, from conspiracy theories that implicate the French government to measuring the international worth of a small, poor nation. Apart from *Médecins Sans Frontières*, not a single humanitarian aid organization and hardly a single European remained in Rwanda during the genocide (Prunier, 1995, 273). Sadly, Linda Melvern suggests one of the reasons for the lack of interest was the far more exciting news of South Africa's new democracy in April, 1994 (2004, 232).

Indifference on the part of the UN is often attributed to the crises that occurred only a year earlier in Somalia, which resulted in the death of several Americans (Prunier, 1995, 274; Des Forges, 1999). Further, some fingers have been pointed at Secretary-General Boutros Ghali for stalling on calling the massacres 'genocide' (with its related implications in terms of international law) and not reacting sufficiently to General Dallaire's appeal for more resources and troops (Prunier, 1995, 275; Dallaire, 2001). There have been some indications that Boutros Ghali had support for the genocidal government due to their shared Francophone links and that the presence of a member of the genocidal government on the UN Security Council's board further delayed UN reaction (Dallaire, 2001; Khan, 2000).

As Des Forges writes,

“During the first weeks, when firm opposition to the genocide would have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, international leaders refused even simple actions which would have required no military force and no expense. Complicit in the refusal to speak the word “genocide,” they failed to denounce the evil, either jointly—which would have been most effective—or even singly, in outraged voices” (1999, 256).

3.5.6. The role of the RPF

Prunier describes the RPF, under the leadership of General Paul Kagame, as probably the best educated guerilla force in the world, being made up of a worldwide Tutsi diaspora who took with them the education and experience they had gained in Europe, the US and elsewhere (1995, 116). This well-trained, well-organized, disciplined military force has become the centre of much controversy. On the one hand, researchers laud its high discipline and its heroic ending of the genocide in the face of international indifference. On the other, it has been accused of committing crimes against humanity, large scale massacres, and even delaying stopping the genocide for strategic purposes.

Dallaire, military leader of the United Nations intervention in Rwanda, is one who both praises and criticizes the RPF. He makes mention of the high level of discipline: "So far [Kagame's] troops had handled themselves quite well. There had been a case of rape that was dealt with summarily – the guilty soldier was shot. We had witnessed no looting per se" (2001, 344). However, throughout his account of his dealings with Kagame, Dallaire describes an uneasiness, an uncertainty about what was really going on behind the scenes.

This was especially apparent as the RPF gained more ground and life started to return to normal in Kigali. Dallaire writes that the UN could not "ignore the reports we received of revenge murders, looting and raping, as undisciplined rear elements of the RPF and returnees sought their own retribution. Rumours of secret interrogations at checkpoints for returnees were making people nervous. We investigated and publicly denounced these atrocities just as we had condemned the genocide" (2001, 479). Dallaire was also uncomfortable with the coldness of Kagame and other high RPF leaders to the suffering and death of so many people. Dallaire records Kagame as saying, "There will be many sacrifices in this war. If the refugees have to be killed for this cause they will be considered as having been part of the sacrifice" (2001, 358).

Des Forges describes how the RPF stopped the genocide by destroying the interim government and its armies. However, she and other researchers imply that the RPF's priority was not to stop the genocide per se but to take absolute control of the country (1999, 258). Kagame insisted that where for the genocidal government, the war was an ethnic one, for the RPF the war was about returning democracy to Rwanda (Dallaire, 2001, 357). The idea of genocide being used by the RPF as a military excuse to overrun Rwanda is hinted at even more strongly by Dallaire who says that 'had he been a suspicious soul' he would wonder whether there wasn't a direct link between the United States' constant delaying (through the UN) in reacting to the crises and the RPF's refusal for UNAMIRII to be implemented, nearing the end of the genocide (2001, 364). Dallaire suggests the UN's role was to play as scapegoat so that the world out there could seem concerned without doing anything.

As the genocide was coming to an end and the RPF was starting to bring order to the country, the international community began to want to play a part in the crises. Kagame's response to this, in terms of Dalaire's suggestion of a United Nations intervention force was: "Those that were to die are already dead. If an intervention force is sent to Rwanda we will fight it. Let us solve the problems of Rwandans. The international community cannot even condemn the massacres of poor, innocent people ... All my soldiers that I command have individually lost family, starting with myself. My idea is not to divide the country but to hunt the criminals everywhere they might be" (2001, 342).

Pottier brings to attention what he calls a strategic ploy on the part of the RPF, to use the international community's apathy during genocide as giving them no right to be critical of the RPF or of the new government under Kagame after genocide. Because of international guilt, ignorance and moral sympathy with Tutsi survivors, the international community praised everything the RPF did and were prepared to accept whatever version of the Rwandan narrative the RPF wanted to sell to them (2002, 4). It was only some years later that the international community (journalists, human rights organizations, humanitarians, diplomats) began to realize that the RPF had an almost dictatorial control over the country, and reports of human rights abuses and massacres began to filter through. Until today, however, these are rarely acknowledged or spoken about in Rwanda.

Yet without the RPF's intervention, the extermination of the Tutsi may well have become a reality. Kinzer emphasizes in his biography that the intention of the RPF was not to restore Tutsi power but rather to restore democracy and equality to Rwanda. With most of the RPF having relatives in Rwanda it is difficult to believe they would allow their family to be killed unnecessary. More likely would be that Kagame had a carefully laid out strategy that would ensure a complete overthrow of a regime that he saw as essentially harmful to the progress and development of a country that he loved. Kinzer records an anecdote in 1993, when the RPF attacked Rwanda and almost took Kigali until Kagame called his troops back. Kagame's officers were shocked and asked him why he didn't allow them to then take Kigali. His response was,

“Why did the RPF start the war? Was it for ourselves or for Rwanda? If, as the French say, we are fighting for the Tutsi, we can fight, win and then say we won our right to take over. But our philosophy is that we were thrown out of the country and want every Rwandan to be able to live here peacefully” (2008, 105).

3.5.7. The role of heroes

Again and again, the literature reiterates how not all Hutu were guilty, and for every Hutu who was a killer there was a Hutu who saved a Tutsi life. Many times, the genocide is described as having been against the Tutsi *and moderate Hutu*. Alongside this, there was a small minority of Tutsi who acted in bad faith towards fellow Tutsi in an effort to save their own lives, or to take advantage of circumstances. Bernard Rutikanga describes the long list of possible perpetrators: high ranking military and civilian officials and big business men afraid of losing their position and keen to get a piece of power-pie; middle-level leaders wanting to advance their careers; grassroots leaders and masses blindly following orders from the top; people coerced or intimidated to participate; people wanting to settle an old score; poor people wanting to loot or take over victim’s land, property, or animals; people intoxicated by drugs and alcohol distributed by leaders; and Hutu refugees from Burundi (2003, 140).

Prunier describes the complexity of the situation during genocide, where someone might be killed by a long-time friend and neighbour and someone else saved by a kind-hearted *interehamwe* (1995, 257). The situation was especially difficult for those of mixed marriage. Although in Rwanda, a child takes on the ethnic identity of the father, some Rwandans of mixed parentage had consciously taken on the term ‘Hutsi’. The heroes of genocide have often been overlooked, especially as post-genocide discourse has had it that those who were still alive after genocide must have been complicit in it. But Prunier describes how people moved by faith or human decency would risk their own lives to save those of others (1995, 259). It is these heroic stories that play a significant role in later reconciliation work as they form at least a tendril of hope that we can be human before being from one ethnic group or another.

3.6. Concluding thoughts

Ervin Staub, Laurie Anne Pearlman and Vachel Miller write: “Understanding genocide helps people move beyond the belief held by many people in Rwanda that what they experienced was incomprehensible evil. It helps them to see genocide, however horrible, as a human process. It helps them to see their common humanity with others who have suffered mass violence” (2003, 290). For many Rwandans the horror of genocide makes it unimaginable and incomprehensible. Yet, when dissected step by step, as was done in this chapter, one begins to see how ordinary people can be manipulated through their fears to do things they would normally never consider. Understanding genocide and its underlying narratives becomes an important factor in the healing and reconciliation process as we can begin to see how deeply embedded stereotypes, inferiority-superiority complexes and ideologies are and begin to work on transforming this level of our shared consciousness so that these narratives might not be so easily manipulated in the future.

The following chapter will look at Rwanda after genocide, when the country had been destroyed and most of its population displaced. Some of the extreme challenges to healing and reconciliation will become evident as the story of Rwanda after genocide unfolds.

CHAPTER 4: AFTER THE GENOCIDE: 1994-1999

“He was moving in a strange universe here, composed entirely of women, old men and children. Their gaze was not empty but chillingly absent, turned inward, or quite simply dead. Like people who can see but will not. Only a few women would speak, in hushed voices, their eyes fixed on the ground, where they kept them long after they had finished their almost clinical descriptions (for they had only concrete words) of the murders of their husbands and sons. The rapes these shy, prudish women described with a wealth of blood-curdling detail, as if they were dictating the reports of their own autopsies” (in Courtemanch, 2003,233).

4.1. Tensions in the ‘after’-narrative

In the previous two chapters, we have seen the role that certain divisive narratives have played in inciting and sustaining violence in Rwanda. These narratives have been described as being rooted in history and developing along ethnic lines. In the Rwanda after genocide, much of these divisive narratives continued to play a significant role amidst the difficult task of rebuilding a destroyed country and people. The following chapter will look at how the Rwandan government managed to develop the country beyond all expectations. It will also unpack how age-old divisive narratives continued to undermine reconciliation by looking at two streams of narratives: the narrative of the ‘new’ Rwanda, embraced by the government and (mostly Tutsi) Rwandans returning to their country from the diaspora, and the less heard narrative of the Hutu refugees who fled to the DRC and those who remained in the country.

When the RPF liberated Rwanda in May, 1994, there was great relief, both within Rwanda and without. Their victory brought with it the end of the horror of genocide as well as hero status to the victorious party. The expectation of many, within and without was that order, good governance, democracy, stability, equality and peace would come to Rwanda. Some others, however, feared revenge and retribution and a reversal of everything that had just happened. Instead of a Hutu-dominated

society, it would now be Tutsi-dominated. Instead of Hutus being favoured for jobs, education and positions, now Tutsi would be. Instead of Tutsi fearing for their lives, Hutu would fear for theirs.

The following section will examine how some of these fears became a reality while others were dispelled. Further, it will explore how the new government was able to rebuild a country able to sustain itself in the light of enormous obstacles and challenges. And it will unpack how the new Rwanda continued, and continues, not surprisingly, to be riddled with ethnic division and tension.

4.2. The narrative of the 'new' Rwanda

Immediately after genocide, Special Representative of UNAMIR Shahrya Khan, described Rwanda's capital as being 'macabre, surrealistic and utterly gruesome' (2000, 14). After a hundred days in which over 800 000 people had been killed and some two million fled to neighbouring countries, it is not surprising that he describes Kigali after genocide as seeming to have been hit by a 'neutron bomb' (2000, 297).

"There was no sign of life. The buildings were mostly wrecked, pock-marked by mortar and machine gun fire. Every shop, every house, had been looted ... The market place was destroyed and deserted. There was not a kiosk in the entire ghost city that sold a Coke or a box of matches ... There were corpses and skeletons lying about picked bare by dogs and vultures" (Khan, 2000, 14).

Prunier describes Rwandans as being like the 'living dead'.

"Psychologically, many people were in various states of shock and many women who had been raped were now pregnant with unwanted children. Most of the infrastructure had been brutally looted, as though a horde of human locusts had fallen on the country. Door and window frames had been removed, electric switches had been pried off from the walls and there were practically no vehicles left in running order except RPF military

ones. There was no running water and electricity in the towns, and on the hills there was no one to harvest the ripe crops” (2000, 297).

It was this that the RPF army was left with in July, 1994; a country devastated of people and resources. Khan describes that within only a few months, Kigali started to take steps towards revival, as people began to trickle out of their hiding places and large numbers of Burundian Tutsi “could be seen driving around in their swanky cars” (2000, 29). While the press and humanitarian aid organizations concentrated their attention and resources on the millions of refugees outside of the country, little aid or assistance was being offered to those within.

Khan describes month by month, the development of Rwanda from a horrific country of the dead, to a living, active, and fast-growing nation. Markets, shops and cafes started to open, farmhouses were reoccupied and ambassadors returned to their posts (2000, 47). By November, a mere six months after the end of the genocide, towns and communes were alive again, with houses being rebuilt and schools reopened (2000, 81).

However, it was near impossible for the government to make much headway. When the RPF took over governance, almost all offices, communications, electricity, water and roads had been damaged and destroyed. The previous government had walked out with all state money, resources and administrative systems (Khan, 2000, 55). Apart from this, the entire judicial system had been destroyed. “There were no judges, prosecutors, magistrates, court officials, gendarmes or police. There were no prison officials to guard the growing number of prisoners. Nor were there buildings that could serve as courts” (Khan, 2000, 56).

Under these circumstances, the international community placed enormous demands on the new government to fulfill certain standards in order to receive funding, including certain political conditions. Yet, there was no funding in order to satisfy these demands (Prunier, 1995; Khan, 2000). Tensions increased between the new government and the international community. Apart from this, the RPF now in power saw the international community as partially responsible for what had happened (Khan, 2000, 60).

From the start, the new government was presented as a return to the Arusha Accords of 1993, which included shared governance. They called this the Government of National Unity. But they veered from these Accords by giving the seats that were appointed for the former reigning party, the MRND, to the RPF. Further, they created the post of vice-president, giving this position to the RPF leader, Paul Kagame. Pasteur Bizimungu, both a Hutu and a member of the RPF, was appointed president (Prunier, 1995, 328, 9). The new government, according to Khan, saw themselves as holding the moral high ground for having stopped genocide and, when in power, sticking to the Arusha Accords. Further, they saw themselves as standing alone in rebuilding a devastated country, and wanting to do it their way, not the way of the international community, understandably, after having been largely abandoned by the international community during the genocide.

From the start, the new government adopted an ideology of national unity. This ideology insisted on the idea that there was no longer Hutu, Tutsi or Twa but only Rwandans (Des Forges, 1999, 851). This was politically necessary in a country where the RPF found themselves in the minority, and where hundreds of thousands of old case-load refugees were streaming into the country. (The term 'old case load' refugee is commonly used in the literature to refer to Tutsis who became refugees prior to 1994 (in 1959, 1972 and 1973, for example). 'New case-load' refugee refers to Hutus who became refugees shortly after the genocide, in July, 1994). Further, it was in line with RPF ideology from the early RANU days where 'Rwanda for all Rwandans' was a foundational philosophy.

Apart from the fact that some 150 000 mostly Tutsi homes had been destroyed, hundreds of thousands of old case-load refugees were seeking a place to live in a country already over-populated. In this situation, it was not uncommon that the homes of either the fleeing Hutu refugees or deceased Tutsi were 'taken' by these newcomers and survivors (Prunier, 1995, 324, 5). Prunier describes how some 400 000 old case-load refugees had entered Rwanda by November, 1994, entering a country devastated of resources and infrastructure (1995, 325). Each group of refugees came from different countries, the vast majority never having lived in Rwanda at all, and brought with them their unique cultures and styles

(Prunier, 1995, 325). Prunier describes the Zairians as the ones with the least money, the Ugandans as the ones who planned their entry to Rwanda the best, and the Burundians as the most aggressive and arrogant (Prunier, 1995, 126).

Writes Dallaire,

“Increasingly, we could see the immaculate cars of Burundian returnees or the oxcarts of the Ugandan Tutsi refugees in the streets of Kigali, as members of the scattered diaspora took up residence throughout the better parts of the capital, sometimes even throwing out legitimate owners who had survived the war and genocide” (2003, 476).

Thus, added to the tensions between fleeing Hutu refugees who were being encouraged to return, survivors of genocide who were desperately trying to piece their lives back together, and Hutus who had chosen to remain in Rwanda, there were hundreds of thousands of people new to Rwanda, who nevertheless felt they had a strong claim to its land and resources. Yet the new government was welcoming people back, inviting all Rwandans to help rebuild their country. The message they were sending was one of national unity, of all Rwandans standing together for a common cause.

In the new Rwanda, a new history, a new story was needed to counter that of the extremist Hutu Power. As Pottier describes, the RPF walked into a country which they could reinvent (2002, 109). The primary focus of the new government was to reinvent a Rwanda without ethnic categories. The presiding message of the new government was and still is, “There is no Hutu and Tutsi, there are only Rwandans” (Des Forges, 1999). This reinvention of Rwandan identity would need to be built on a retelling of history. Where Hutu extremists had painted a picture of Tutsi masters subjugating the Hutu masses, the new government developed their history on the foundations of a harmonic, idyllic pre-colonial Rwanda (Des Forges, 1999; Pottier, 2002, 111). This picture of Rwanda, as described in chapter two, would allow the government to encourage Rwandans to return to the Rwanda of before colonialism. It would also allow them to place most of the blame for ethnic division squarely on the shoulders of the colonialists and colonial policy (Des

Forges, 1999, 855). The following section will examine some of the narratives that were silenced to make room for this new dominant narrative.

4.3. The silenced narratives

In this section we will look at some of the marginalized narratives. The first of these is that of the mass exodus of refugees into the DRC. This will be followed by the narratives of Hutu within and outside Rwanda who began to feel increasingly voiceless.

4.3.1. The refugee exodus

That two million refugees streamed over the borders of Rwanda into neighbouring countries, and the DRC in particular, is no secret. That refugees suffered and died in their thousands from cholera, hunger and fatigue is neither hidden. That ex-genocidaires intimidated those in the refugee camps is openly known. But what happened after the media spotlight found other events to shine its attention on, some two years after genocide, remains the unspoken story of a few survivors scattered across the globe.

Between April 7 and July 14, 1994, the RPF achieved military victory after military victory against former government forces (the FAR), driving them first towards the north, and then right out of Rwanda, over the border into the DRC. What no one had prepared for was that these genocidal forces would drive with them hundreds of thousands of civilians in a mass exodus rarely seen before. Prunier describes how, as the interim government disintegrated, thousands of people streamed out of Kigali on foot, either to the northwest, 'which was seen as the last government bunker' or the French 'safe humanitarian zone'. "Many people now moving had fled several times before during RPF offensives in 1992 and 1993. For them, the RPF generated enormous fear and visions of devil-like fighters engaged in massive killings everywhere. But the fear was such that even some Tutsi were running from their 'saviours'" (1995, 294). He describes the crowd of some 300 000 being a mixture of 'dispirited *interehamwe* who did not even bother to kill the few Tutsi who walked alongside them', FAR troops, civil servants and their

families, peasants, businessmen, abandoned children, priests, nuns and even madmen (1995, 195).

Khan describes the scene at one of the largest refugee camps these hundreds of thousands of people would arrive at. "The road from the airport was full of starving, sick and dying refugees. Scores of dead bodies lay strewn about rotting in the sun, with people simply stepping over the dead carcasses ... Dead children lay next to mothers who were also dying of cholera, hunger or simply exhaustion" (Khan, 2000, 33). Prunier further describes scenes of corpses falling into the lake, spreading the cholera epidemic that had traveled with the fleeing refugees (1995, 302).

But one of the foremost issues in the camp was that of security. Apart from several hundred thousand civilian, there were several thousand known genocidal leaders amongst the refugees. This 'criminal element' in the refugee camps would result not only in continued suffering for the masses of civilians but in eventual war that would spill over into several countries in Central Africa for at least another decade. Prunier quotes a former leader during the genocide as saying, "Even if the RPF has a won a military victory, it will not have the power. It only has the bullets, we have the population" (1995, 314). Soon after the establishments of the camps, it became apparent to humanitarian aid workers that former genocidal leaders had taken over control of the camps, organizing the masses of refugees into the same commune structures as in Rwanda, guaranteeing that the same extremists would hold power and have influence over the civilians (Prunier, 1995, 315; McCullum, 1995, 43; Khan, 2000, 72). Apart from this, Khan describes a Human Rights Watch report that cited clear evidence for the training and recruiting of refugees by the former genocidal leaders with the support of the DRC government (2000, 141). These trained forces would undertake cross-border raids into Rwanda, causing further insecurity within the country.

It was thus strongly to the advantage of former leaders to hold onto the civilian refugees, and they did this by continuing the genocide-fear-propaganda campaign. Ian McCullum describes how many refugees "believed the propaganda that the Tutsi-dominated RPF would exterminate them. Radio Mille Collines, now on wheels, pumped out stories of massacres, although few could be confirmed by

the UN ... Most of all, the people were cowed by the intimidation and terrorism practiced by the former government and its army and militias ... Those who tried to return to Rwanda were beaten, tortured or killed" (McCullum, 1995, 55).

Very soon after the new government was in place, efforts were on the way to encourage refugees to return to Rwanda. Many felt that the only way forward in terms of reconciliation would be for all Rwandans to be together in one country and for justice to be meted out. However, the bulk of the two million refugees in the DRC, Tanzania, and Burundi refused to return. Suggested reasons for this included that the conditions in the camp were better than what many of the refugees had ever experienced back home, that they were guilty and therefore afraid to face justice, or that they were genuinely afraid of the revenge of the RPF and Tutsi.

Khan describes how in the refugee camps, refugees were guaranteed food for the children, medical assistance, schools, and even in some camps, cinemas, night clubs, churches and educational and upliftment activities (2000, 146). Both he and McCullum write how some two million dollars were poured into the refugee camps by international donors every month, ensuring the absolute comfort and ease of the refugees (McCullum, 1995, 88; Khan, 2000, 146). However, the stories of refugees themselves differ with this somewhat. Umutesi speaks of receiving only enough food for one week on a bi-weekly basis, resulting in malnutrition amongst children. She describes how many refugees were forced to hire themselves out to the locals to supplement their diet, receiving a handful of grain in return for a full days labour. Provision of heating wood was also insufficient, resulting in refugees scrounging every piece of usable resource in the surrounding area. She mentions the humiliation of having to wash her rags during periods in full view of those around her, and the rivulets of blood that ran with water between their temporary shacks (2000, 85).

Apart from the physical challenges, she speaks of the suffering of the refugees at their own uselessness. She describes the frustration of someone else deciding how much you will eat and when, and having to beg for extra when the little you are given is not enough. "To forget their uselessness, refugees threw themselves headlong into drink and debauchery" (2000, 83). Pottier also counters the idea of

well-fed refugees in describing how the food distributed was not culturally appropriate – maize grain, which is costly and difficult to ground – was the staple diet, whereas Rwandans were accustomed to cassava (2002, 80). The reason why refugees may have given the impression of being well-fed, argues Prunier, is that the top leadership was well-fed, having taken over food distribution from humanitarian aid workers, ensuring that most of it would be channelled to themselves at the expense of the greater civilian population (1995, 315).

As small numbers of refugees trickled back and time passed, the growing feeling was that the refugees remaining were guilty of genocide. Pottier writes, “After some 700 000 refugees returned to Rwanda in November 1996, and the US military declared only ‘warring parties remained’, Rwandan officials declared the crises was over” (2002, 148). Those who remained were described as extremists and their camp followers. Pottier describes how the refugees were regarded by the Rwandan leadership and the international community as “one mass who spoke with one (extremist) voice. They were collectively guilty, collectively disposable” (2002, 149). There was even the sense that the cholera, death and suffering of the millions of Hutu in the refugee camps were their ‘just punishment’ for their supposed collective participation during the genocide (Prunier, 1995, 303).

By making the refugee mass out to be a collectivity, a guilty Hutu mass, Pottier argues that aid agencies did not take into consideration the north-south divide, the difference between respected leaders and self-appointed leaders, and that there were skilled and able people amongst the refugees who wanted to take an active part in their plight rather than just be dependencies (2002, 131,2). Even if not all refugees were seen as guilty, they were all seen as ‘hostages, collectively trapped under the claw of the unrelenting extremists’ (2002, 132).

Refugee accounts communicate a deep sense of fear amongst refugees about what would happen to them were they to return to Rwanda which impacted their choice to remain in refugee camps. McCullum writes,

“There is no doubt that the calamity was of apocalyptic proportions and that people were petrified by the advancing RPF army, which had by then taken

about half the country. 'If Tutsis catch you, they slit your skin from head to foot and skin you alive,' said one refugee. In fact, aid workers fishing bodies from the swollen Kagera River reported that the corpses bore the same brutal wounds as those inflicted on people slashed to death in churches inside Rwanda" (1994, 43).

He recounts stories of Anglican bishops not wanting to return, saying that they knew of and had spoken to people who had gone to Rwanda only to return to the refugee camps wounded, and with stories of revenge killings and danger (McCullum, 1994, 83).

Khan further describes the continual mixed messages regarding whether it was safe to return to Rwanda or not. The UNHCR was reporting that the 'new government is enough in charge to reasonably guarantee [the refugees] safety' (2001, 132). Other reports were saying that security in Rwanda had deteriorated, and there were arbitrary arrests and ill-treatment. There was a doubling back of returning refugees back into the DRC. Also, many would-be returnees knew that their homes and businesses had been occupied by the 'old case-load' refugees, Tutsis who had come to Rwanda from abroad after the genocide, perceiving it as now being 'their' country.

The fear the refugees experienced was largely seen as either the result of the genocidal leaders propaganda campaign, or else the refugees own distortions of the truth. More and more, the mass of refugees was painted to be collectively guilty. Pottier argues that this story of 'the guilty refugees' was one fabricated and sold by the RPF to the international community to give the RPF a free hand in dealing with the refugees as they saw fit (2002,130).

Whether the international community bought the story as much as Pottier claims they did, they remained largely inactive in doing anything about the refugee problem, apart from doling out enormous amounts of money for humanitarian aid in the first couple of years, and then forgetting about the plight of these refugees after that. In the light of this inactivity, Khan mentions how the Rwandan government made continued noises that they "might be obliged to reach across the border and 'sort out the killers themselves'" (2000, 141). He refers to a speech

Kagame made to the effect that it would take them only a couple of days to 'clean-up' the intimidators in the camps (2000, 142).

After 1996, Umutesi describes how the refugee camps in the DRC were forcibly closed down, while at the same time the country was swept into a confusion of uprisings and civil war. She describes her harrowing trek across the DRC, while being pursued, she claims, by the RPF who wanted to eliminate every surviving refugee. At this point, Umutesi describes herself as being forgotten by the international community, labeled a genocidaire, and deserving of the hell she found herself in (2000, 102). Some tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of refugees were killed either in stampedes, from hunger and disease or as a result of direct violence meted out upon them by the RPF and various factions within the DRC who wanted the camps closed and perceived the refugees as a threat (Umutesi, 2000; Pottier, 2001).

The narrative of the 'cleaning-up' of the camps remains a largely silent one. Further, the many stories of suffering of what are referred to as 'new case-load' refugees are also silent as they are said to be incomparable, even unimportant, in the light of genocide. But the implications of these stories, and the suffering and agony they hold, remaining unspoken, unheard, and unacknowledged may become a block in the process of healing and reconciliation.

4.3.2. Counter narratives

While on the one hand the government was working hard to rebuild Rwanda, amidst the chaos in the DRC, on the other, critics of the government were starting to voice concern. In a report on Rwanda over the period of 1998 and 1999, Filip Reyntjens describes the growing critique against a government that was starting to look more and more like a dictatorship (1999, 6). He speaks of the 'Tutsification' of the state machinery and he writes that, "One does not have to suffer from ethnic fundamentalism in order to see that a regime claiming to fight ethnicity is actually spearheading ethnic policies" (1999, 6).

By August, 1995, the Government of National Unity started to disintegrate when Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu left the cabinet along with the Interior Minister, Seth Sendashonga and three other ministers, four Hutu and one Tutsi. Sendashonga claimed having been threatened for criticizing RPF measures: “accusing [the RPA] of creating an atmosphere of tension and insecurity in the country. He quoted arbitrary arrests, the prison system and an oppressive attitude towards the majority community that, in his view, were reversing the process of reconciliation in the country” (Khan, 2000, 148). Twagiramungu claimed there was ‘a government within a government’ that made all the crucial decisions.

Amidst this political critique there was a growing concern with regard to possible human rights abuses committed by the RPF and the new Rwandan Patriotic Army. The RPF was heralded the savior of Rwanda for bringing an end to genocide, something the international community and United Nations failed to do. But along with this heroic act also came less praiseworthy reports. The massacres of former government agents and employees, along with their families, at Byumba and Ngarama are perhaps the best known (Prunier, 1995, 359; Des Forges, 1999; Dallaire, 2001, 378). Des Forges describes how many of those Hutu who did not flee with the former government to the DRC, were rounded up in stadiums and murdered (1999, 801). A commonly known massacre event is that of the three bishops and ten priests who were killed by RPF soldiers in Kabgayi (Des Forges, 1999; Dallaire, 2001, 414). Des Forges reports how people were told that they would receive essential foods if they would assemble at a public place. Once there, the killing sprees would start (Des Forges, 1999, 802).

Apart from massacres, summary and arbitrary executions and assassinations were also common. People seen as a threat to the RPF were often killed at their homes, with former government leaders and officials particularly targeted (Des Forges, 1999, 806). Some people mysteriously ‘disappeared’. Dallaire makes mention of rumours of secret interrogations at checkpoints for returnees. And when UN personnel saw a truckload of returnees being waved to one side, over a hill, at an RPF roadblock and then were prevented from observing what was going on behind the hill, Dallaire saw this as “personal proof that Kagame was allowing the security checks of returnees to go beyond what had been discussed with me and I could only think the worst” (2001, 503).

Prunier describes the high level of confusion in Rwanda after the genocide, where fresh corpses were dumped with old corpses, making evidence for RPF violence difficult to ascertain (1995, 360). In fact he describes a scenario where there were 'so many unburied corpses lying around' that 'a fair amount of killing could easily be passed off as part of the general mayhem' (1995, 361).

Further, humanitarians as well as the UN were systematically denied entrance to certain parts of the country. International Red Cross staff, refusing to close down their hospital in Nyanza, were repeatedly threatened until they gave in. In this way, access and information were controlled by the RPF, compromising the ability of human rights observers to do their job, and bringing to question what the RPF was up to in these closed areas (Des Forges, 1999, 810).

The RPF leadership maintained that all these acts of violence were random acts by undisciplined soldiers, particularly new recruits from within Rwanda who had survived genocide, and would be dealt with internally. Dallaire makes mention of how this was indeed the case, with guilty soldiers often being summarily shot (1999, 344). However, the RPF denied and still deny the growing evidence that seems to point to possible systematic, planned killing from higher levels of leadership.

A damning report in terms of human rights abuses came from Robert Gersony and a team of two others, who were undertaking research for the UNHCR into speeding up the repatriation of refugees. Their report stated that the RPF had engaged in "clearly systematic murders and persecution of the Hutu population in certain parts of the country" (Des Forges, 1999, 705). "They reported massacres following meetings convoked by the authorities, murders committed by assailants who went from house to house, and the hunting down and murder of people in hiding" (Des Forges, 1999, 705). The Gersony report estimated that between April and August of 1994, between 25 000 and 45 000 people had been killed (Prunier, 1995, 360; Des Forges, 1999, 706).

This report was made available to the United Nations leadership, who immediately briefed the Rwandan government on the findings. Khan describes in his book

how Gersony's report was taken very seriously, and that an independent UN research team found his claims unfounded. Khan revealed these further investigations to Gersony, who apparently "expressed his complete satisfaction at the way his report had been received by UNAMIR and the Rwandan government" (Khan, 2000, 54). From here on, the Gersony report was suppressed. Des Forges writes that when attempting to gain access to the report the reply was: "We wish to inform you that the 'Gersony Report *does not exist*'" (Des Forges, 1999, 707). Khan diplomatically suggests that rather than RPF arranged massacres there was an increase of violence from Burundian Tutsi towards returning Rwandan Hutu refugees; he even suggests that some higher leader in the RPA could have played a role in this, but he refuses to give any sway to the idea that it could have been preplanned from the top levels of the RPA (2000, 55).

4.4. Some concluding thoughts on Rwanda after genocide

The greatest challenge in the new Rwanda has been and still is the question of ethnicity. Mahmood Mamdani points out that Rwanda can either become a divided state with a Hutuland and a Tutsiland, or a union with bipolar political identities, or it could "forge a political identity that transcends Hutu and Tutsi" (2002, 265). It is this latter option which the new government has attempted.

However, the way they have done this includes rewriting history in such a way that it favours a particular perspective. Further, they have discouraged any dialogue or debate that would counter or question their ideology. Through developing specific laws, they have quieted dissidents and disallowed ulterior voices in their quest for national unity. As one government official commented to me, "It will take time to get used to the fact that we are no longer Hutu and Tutsi but all Rwandan. It will take time, but people will get used to it" (Personal interview, Kigali, June, 2005).

Filip Reytsjens points out the conflict between the new governments' rewritten history and that of opposition parties. He describes a document put forward by one opposition party that insisted that even before the colonial period, there was no unity in Rwanda, that the events of 1959 truly were a revolution that kindled the

idea of democracy, that the monarchy rather than external factors undermined the country, and that the allegation considering all Hutu to be *genocidaires* contributed to the insecurity in Rwanda (1999, 6). Reyntjens describes how these claims were very politically incorrect in the eyes of the new government, who advocated the exact opposite and that the opposition parties were compelled to rethink their position (1999, 6).

This chapter has described how the new government has embraced unity and reconciliation and has tried to instill this in all Rwandans through writing a new narrative. The following chapter will explore Rwanda between 1999 and 2009, to see if Rwandans are indeed 'getting used to' a united identity and how the process of healing and reconciliation is unfolding after the devastation and development described in this chapter.

CHAPTER 5: RWANDA TODAY: 1999-2009

As was described in the previous chapter, the divisive narratives of Rwanda's history continue to play a significant role in Rwandan society today. The inferiority-superiority identity complex, competing versions of history, competing versions of how to understand the genocide and a continued sense of inequality and injustice pose challenges to the possibility of sustainable reconciliation. As the Rwandan government has continued its amazing spate of development and has had to meet the challenge of bringing justice and reconciliation to an almost destroyed nation, we will see both stories of hope and despair.

This chapter will look at some of the national narratives in Rwanda in the past ten years. It will examine the government's vision, its National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, laws and policies and the judicial process for dealing with the vast numbers of genocide related crimes, called *gacaca*. It will then consider some alternative narratives from genocide survivors, perpetrators, Hutus in the country, Hutus abroad and human rights organizations, some of who are critical of developments in the country. Lastly, it will explore some of the efforts on the ground, by churches, organizations and communities to bring about reconciliation on a grassroots level. Along with the previous three chapters, this chapter will shed light on the specific issues that need to be considered in terms of developing a framework for sustainable healing and reconciliation in the Rwandan context.

5.1. National narratives

From the outset the Rwandan government called itself the Government of National Unity and Reconciliation, declaring its intent to move beyond ethnic division towards inclusivity. In a research report for the African Studies Centre, Arthur Molenaar comments on the 'profound influence of central authority' in Rwandan society and that positive policy can have a far reaching impact on all levels of society (2005, 48). He then describes the official national discourse which has a strong emphasis on 'abandoning ethnicity'. This is done through

rewriting history and educating citizens in the governments' vision at public gatherings and through the media (2005, 52). The following section will unpack this national strategy, describing the efforts of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, *gacaca* and the process of democracy and development between 1999 and 2009.

5.1.1. National unity and reconciliation

In section 4.2, some of the challenges to the new government were described. In 1999, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) was launched by the government to assist in the process of reconciliation in Rwanda. NURC represents the government's policy and action in terms of reconciliation and national unity.

At its inception, NURC ran a country-wide survey which asked the following two questions: what do you think is the cause of genocide and what do you think are the strategies to meet the challenge of unity and reconciliation? The main causes of genocide were listed to be bad leadership, a distorted history, poverty and a culture of impunity. NURC then developed the following strategies in response to this: civic education, the writing of an objective history, supporting community initiatives, and conflict management and peace building activities (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). NURC's official aim is "organizing and supporting national round tables on the promotion of unity and reconciliation amongst Rwandans" (IJR, 2004).

Apart from countless activities related to the above-mentioned around the country, NURC has published various papers on reconciliation, the position of women and land reform in Rwanda. They have also established *ingando*, which are solidarity camps initially for the purpose of reeducating ex-prisoners and reintegrating them into society. Today, every Rwandan is encouraged to attend *ingando*, and they are mandatory for anyone wanting to enter tertiary education.

Public debates, workshops and conferences as well as research papers and educational syllabuses have been developed to educate people in principles of good governance, human rights and responsibilities, citizenship, democracy and

the like. During the civic education activities, a representative from NURC described how they teach things like: “You are not from Chad, Hutu; you are not from Ethiopia, Tutsi; you are not from the forest, Twa. Even taking into consideration migrations, for each one of you your heritage is Rwanda” (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). The primary goal, however, according to the NURC representative, is to take Rwandans to the place where they share the same understanding of Rwanda’s past, the reasons for conflict and the way forward in the future. The NURC representative strongly emphasized the importance of a same understanding and a same thinking, arguing that when everyone is thinking in the same way, there will be no more division, and there will be unity and reconciliation.

Similarly, Arthur Molenaar quotes a government official who was responsible for a public gathering in his province as saying,

“The goal is to make people have the same opinions. It is very important that people in Rwanda think the same way because we need unity in this country. What we hope to achieve is that after a meeting, 75% of the people leave with the same mindset. Those people will also talk with other people so that we reach almost the entire population” (2005, 59),

This is in line with the official government position which says that ethnic identity was the result of colonial constructionism and that it is time for Rwanda to return to how it was prior to colonialism, when there was unity, peace and harmony between all Rwandans. As described by the NURC representative, the government would like to see all Rwandans accepting a united identity and a common understanding of history, the reasons for genocide and the way forward.

5.1.2. *Gacaca*

Directly after genocide, as was mentioned in chapter four, the entire judiciary system had been destroyed and the jails were filled with some 800 000 people (or one in four of the adult Rwandan population) awaiting trial. According to Molenaar, it may have taken up to 200 years to prosecute all prisoners using a classic system of justice (2005, 2). The government thus came up with an alternative,

gacaca. This Kinyarwandan word is said to mean 'on the grass' and is a grass-roots form of justice that was used in Rwanda prior to colonialism. It is described as a community-based, restorative model of justice that involved communities sitting together, with both victim and perpetrator, to come up with possible solutions to the satisfaction of all parties. The result was normally along the lines of symbolic restitution and the restoring of the perpetrator into the community. The government adapted this model to address a modern day Rwanda with its unique challenges.

The *gacaca* process started with the election of judges, normally respected members of a community, who were trained by, amongst others, the international legal NGO *Avocats Sans Frontiers* (ASF). Community members then had to bring all the information they had to these judges who organized them into one of four categories. The Act on the Organization and Pursuits of Crimes of Genocide or Crimes Against Humanity of August 1996 created four categories of alleged criminals: Category 1 are planners, organizers and leaders of genocide, those who have acted in positions of authority, presumed infamous assassins and those alleged to have committed sexual crimes involving torture or rape; category 2 are co-perpetrators, or accomplices of voluntary homicide or violence with the intention to cause death or serious bodily harm leading to death; category 3 are perpetrators of serious bodily injury to others without intention to murder; category 4 are perpetrators of crimes resulting in property damage. *Gacaca* courts have jurisdiction over the last two categories; those in higher categories are prosecuted before the national criminal courts. In 2005, weekly *gacaca* trials began to be held within communities across the country, with people coming together at a central point, carrying with them their benches or blankets and settling around the appointed judges.

In many respects, though, it is far from the original model. Perhaps the key difference is that the model has shifted from a restorative one, where the perpetrators and their family would face the victim with their family and they together would discuss restitution, to a retributive one, where judges mete out punishment to the perpetrator. Perpetrators are promised a reduced sentence if they admit guilt and show remorse.

Gacaca remains a controversial issue within Rwanda although there is a sense that it has achieved what it set out to achieve in that the vast majority of cases have been recorded and tried. Communities have had the opportunity to give voice to what happened, survivors now know how friends and family died and where their dead are so that they can be buried and the details of how the genocide unfolded have come to light (Molenaar, 2005, 123).

5.1.3. *Ingando*

The *Ingando* solidarity camps were established in 1996 to help Tutsi returnees reintegrate into Rwandan society. But with the establishment of NURC, *Ingando* became its responsibility and has targeted a far wider range of people, including ex-combatants, released perpetrators, teachers, students and leaders of a variety of backgrounds. The purpose of *Ingando* is to foster reconciliation through education in Rwandan history, why the genocide happened and Rwandan identity. Following NURC ideology, the central message is that 'we are all Rwandan' and need to accept the centralized understanding of Rwandan history. In addition, depending on the group targeted, there may also be education on HIV/Aids, basic military training and practical assistance in terms of reintegrating into civilian society.

Most pertinent to the case studies considered in this thesis, is the *Ingando* camps for students entering tertiary education. Chi Mgbako describes three phases of these camps. The first two weeks are spent in activities encouraging critical thinking, followed by activities helping the students identify political, social and economic issues facing the nation. In the third phase, the students break up into small groups to debate and discuss solutions to the identified problems (2005, 217). A strong emphasis during these student camps is 'erasing the myth of ethnic difference' and helping students see 'there is no Hutu or Tutsi, we are all Rwandan'.

Mgbako is critical of *Ingando* camps, describing them as political indoctrination camps in a context where such indoctrination has had dangerous consequences in the past (2005, 202). Although the students were encouraged to engage in

dialogue and asked for suggestions on how *Ingando* could be improved, Mgbako describes how students seemed reluctant to say anything critical or contrary to what they had been told by government officials presenting the lectures (2005, 217). He suggests that *Ingando* would be more successful were the government to allow a greater degree of open dialogue about history and a higher degree of political pluralism (2005, 203). On the other hand, *Ingando* forms an important channel between released perpetrators and ex-combatants into daily life. It also provides a necessary opportunity for public debate around critical issues in Rwanda

5.1.4. Democracy and development

In an interview that can be found on the Rwandan governments' official website, President Paul Kagame describes democracy as a process that needs to be carefully guided. In 2000, he argued that political parties needed to be suspended during the transitional period so as to avoid politics along ethnic lines. He describes how the government has been "been moving systematically and deliberately, making sure we lay a firm foundation".

Proponents of the government appreciate the government's clear position and decisiveness in bringing about their vision. Opponents believe this vision to be close to brainwashing, enforcing all Rwandans to hold 'the same' view regardless of what the truth or the diversity of opinions might be. However, in a country where literacy is around 69%, with only 53% of children enrolled in schools, a high HIV/Aids rate and few resources, some would say the country needs to be run tightly (USAID, 2005). USAID reports that there has been an increase in citizen participation in government affairs over the past few years due to government encouragement (2005, 2).

Alongside the national narrative of reconciliation is the narrative of development. Countless newspaper and magazine articles within Rwanda and internationally speak of the Rwandan governments focus on development, particularly in the area of IT. In an interview with President Kagame in the Rwandan magazine *Enterprise*, he speaks of the necessity to develop human capacity and physical

infrastructure. 16.5% of total public expenditure is channeled towards education (2009, 8). The June, 2009, edition of *Rwanda Dispatch* describes Rwanda's 'e-Dream' of development through IT. In this magazine, Kagame writes an article in which he encourages the country to develop itself. "We appreciate support from the outside, but it should be support for what we intend to achieve ourselves. No one should pretend that they care about our nation more than we do, or assume they know what is good for us better than we do ourselves" (2009, 10). Alongside this strong rhetoric is tangible action in the form of policy decisions that encourage development. This includes supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, the adoption of English as the national language, installing fibre optic cables across the country for wireless internet access, and brokering deals that allow Rwanda's greatest exports such as coffee to be sold to the 'world's most demanding customer's' at a high price (2009, 10).

These national narratives of reconciliation, justice, democracy and development are countered, however, by narratives of fear, voicelessness and dictatorial control. The following section will explore some of these less heard narratives as this will bring to light some of the factors that need to be considered in developing a model for sustainable healing and reconciliation.

5.2. Alternative narratives

The alternative narratives come from a range of sources. Survivors of genocide have become a distinct and organized group in Rwanda over the past ten years, feeling they need to protect their rights in a country which has been overrun by Rwandans from the diaspora. Many survivors feel the country has moved on without compensating them for their suffering. Further, many have lived in fear as there have been reprisal killings, partly triggered by the *gacaca* process. Perpetrators and released prisoners have their own complaints. Some of them claim to have been unjustly accused. For those who were guilty, reintegration into their communities is a painful process, especially as in their absence, others may have moved into their homes and taken their land. Hutus who somehow managed to escape involvement in genocide are nonetheless collectively implicated and it is difficult for them to reintegrate into a country that has changed so significantly in

such a short space of time. Lastly, human rights organizations have followed activities in Rwanda closely and point to many human rights violations that have taken place over the past ten years. The following section will explore some of these narratives. Although they may not all be a full or accurate reflection of Rwanda or the government, they give insight into the mindsets of many Rwandans today, helping us understand what factors may stand in the way of healing and reconciliation processes.

Highlighting the negatives is a risky endeavor as it can lead to cynicism and an unbiased dismissal of all the significant and important good that has taken place. But as Eduard Jordaan writes in an article around the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) peer review process, being sufficiently critical is important for development. Jordaan argues that the Rwandan government is not sufficiently self-critical with regards to the state of economic, political, social, and corporate governance in the country. In his abstract he states:

“This article examines Rwanda's evaluation of its political governance during this first stage, as reflected in the January 2005 version of this country's self-assessment report. After sketching the compromised political environment in which the report was written, it is indicated how this rosy report inadequately addresses a number of serious political problems in Rwanda, such as Rwanda's involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the inadequate separation of powers in the Rwandan political system, tensions in Rwandan society, and the flawed presidential and parliamentary elections of 2003. While it remains to be seen to what extent Rwanda either acknowledges its political problems in the final version of its self-assessment report, or is censured in the subsequent stages of the peer review process, it is concluded that the greater the failure to do either, the greater the doubt that will linger over the value of the African peer-review exercise” (Jordaan, 2006, 333).

The following section will unpack some of these political problems.

5.2.1. Political opposition

In December 1999, “some forty university students, most or all of them Tutsi, left for Uganda in denouncing the "dictatorial" nature of the government” (HRW, 2000). Human Rights Watch describes people being thrown into jail without trial for criticizing government, and especially for holding ‘inappropriate political ideas’ around returning to the monarchy. While this was going on inside the country, the governments’ army was fighting in the DRC, “where its troops committed numerous violations of international humanitarian law” (HRW, 2000). Numerous people in Rwanda were killed for being ‘insurgents’, others were jailed without trial and tortured in military facilities. In mid-2000, “several bodies were sighted floating down the Akagera River, and other persons were said to have ‘disappeared’” (HRW, 2000). Masses of Hutu fled Rwanda in fear of their lives, including local and international journalists who felt themselves to be in danger for criticizing the government.

In 2000, “The speaker of the national assembly, the prime minister, and the president all quit their posts under pressure within the first three months of the year, leaving a shrinking circle of power holders in control of the Rwandan government” the HRW report states (1999, 21). At this point Kagame took over the presidency, a post HRW alleges he had held from behind the scenes from the beginning. Due to a reshuffle of cabinet, in violation of the Arusha Accords, the RPF now held ten of eighteen seats. In a report on Rwanda five years after genocide, Filip Reyntjens writes, “The regime, faced with its internal contradictions and political impasse, however, remained closed to all proposals for debate. On the contrary, the regime’s key word remains ‘control’ and its way of governing the political space is still very military in nature” (1999, 21).

Most of the human rights organizations active in Rwanda are critical of the level of control the Rwandan government, and particularly its president, maintains over all the affairs of the country. In an article critiquing international criminal tribunals, Helena Cobban says the following about the situation in post-genocide Rwanda:

“Post-genocide Rwanda has been dedicated in its pursuit of war crimes prosecutions. But it has borne that country little fruit. At one point when

Rwanda was still trying to prosecute all those accused of participating in the 1994 genocide, more than 130,000 of its 8 million citizens were detained. Yet President Paul Kagame has also kept all major elements of society, including the judiciary, the government, and the media, completely under his thumb. That undermines the rule of law in Rwanda, no matter how dedicated the regime is to seeking justice. In 1994, Freedom House gave Rwanda a “Not Free” rating for its political rights and civil liberties—basic components of the rule of law anywhere. In 2004, Rwanda received the same rating” (2006, 27).

A report from the international NGO, Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), describes how in 2002 a criminal law was passed that barred “any propaganda of ethnic, regional, racial or divisive character or based on any other form of divisionism.” Public incitement to discrimination or divisionism is punishable by up to five years in prison, heavy fines, or both (2004, 2). Because the boundaries of this law remain unclear it has easily been used in response to a variety of scenarios, particularly against anyone who might be seen to be critical of the government. HRW describes how political opponents of the RPF and nongovernmental organizations have been accused of divisionism (2005, 2). In 2005, the Senate apparently commissioned a study to identify ‘genocidal ideology’ amongst NGO’s and scholars. At risk was anyone who had expressed any doubt as to the *gacaca* process or the way the government does things. As a result, HRW describes how NGO’s have tailored their activities to avoid ‘confrontation with authorities’ (2005, 2).

The result of this law has been to increase the fear on all sides. Those who already experienced feeling voiceless under the divisionism law are even more afraid to speak out their opinions. Perpetrators that have been released fear being falsely accused of genocidal ideology by neighbours who resent their release into the community. Survivors experience an increased fear as they hear of more and more people being identified by the authorities for apparently spreading ‘genocide ideology’. As HRW states, “With repeated official statements that such ideas must still be feared, survivors are more afraid, continually reminded that their very existence as members of the Tutsi ethnic group may suffice to expose them again to injury and death” (2007, 40).

A problem with the strict law of genocide ideology is that it disallows any group to be favoured over any other on the basis of ethnicity. This works in the disfavour of the Batwa, a minority ethnic group in Rwanda (some 30 000 people) who have been severely marginalised throughout Rwandan history. HRW reports that “authorities refused official recognition to the Community of Indigenous Peoples in Rwanda (CAURWA), which defends the rights of the Batwa minority, saying its ethnic focus violated the constitution” (2007, 3). In a personal interview with a representative from NURC, it was stated that this was a problem the government acknowledged but that in order to be consistent in terms of insisting that ethnic groups do not exist this would need to be true for the Twa as well (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

5.3.2. Survivor fears

HRW reports that in November, 2006, a genocide survivor and nephew of a *gacaca* court judge was killed, followed by reprisal killings of eight other people (2007, 1). The report states that “in recent years dozens of genocide survivors and others involved in the *gacaca* process have been killed” (2007, 1). Numbers remain vague but one figure suggests 160 survivors having been murdered since 2000 (2007, 1). A *gacaca* judge said that in communities where only one or two remaining survivors were left they were sometimes murdered by those accused, as they were the only remaining witnesses of what had happened (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). This has left survivors in continued fear of perpetrators, and of the *gacaca* process, which will force them to tell the truth of what they know. The government response has been to establish an office of witness protection but according to HRW their work has been hampered as they are based in Kigali whereas most of the incidents occur in rural Rwanda (2007, 10). Ibuka, an outspoken organization supporting survivor rights, has suggested that it will take action where necessary to protect its members (HRW, 2007, 11).

A Penal Reform International (PRI) report says that many survivors not only experience fear but a sense of bewilderment that people that they now have to live alongside are clearly responsible for genocide related crimes but have not yet

been convicted for these crimes. PRI further states that survivor organizations like Ibuka have tried to prevent the release of prisoners as they feel they don't deserve to be released. The PRI report quotes a survivor as saying:

“Recently one of the persons who were released said that the Government should compensate them for having detained them without reason. In reality, this person does not even know why he was released! In this country there are two categories of people. There are us, the survivors of the genocide, and there are those who perpetrated the genocide. Usually, everybody who has committed an offense should be punished” (2004, 45).

5.3.3. Released prisoner fears

Fourth category perpetrators prosecuted by *gacaca* courts are released back into their communities on completion of their prison sentence. Apart from this, President Kagame has released various groups of prisoners over the past few years. In 2003, for example, he released 22 000 sick or elderly prisoners. PRI reports that the primary reaction of released prisoners is delight to return home, but that this is followed by various fears. In fact, PRI states that “Sometimes there is so much fear that some people, because of their crimes or their confessions, give up going back home to their hill and run away” (2003, 43). Alongside this, prisoners know their return is not always welcome and fear reprisal. Their release is provisional so that the possibility of being newly accused by someone who is unhappy with their presence in the community seems likely. Further, PRI states that their “fears may be considered justified insofar as some detainees’ family members have been killed in suspicious circumstances, particularly in Kibuye and Umutara, and these murders have not been solved to this day” (2003, 43). A worrying development, according to HRW, is the fact that victims are taking the law into their own hands and that, following a killing of a genocide survivor, there is a growing response of reprisal killing. Although the murder of a genocide survivor (and potential *gacaca* trial witness) is acted on harshly by authorities, reprisal killings are not taken as seriously (2007, 2).

Released prisoners also fear those they have denounced as their accomplices who are still walking free (PRI, 2004, 44). Denouncing accomplices, or telling the whole truth, is a mandatory part of the *gacaca* trial process which may allow the accused a lessened sentence. PRI describes some prisoners considering suicide prior to their release due to these fears (2004, 44). They relate how a group of released prisoners was seen leaving the *Ingando* camp to return to their homes, walking very slowly, even sitting at the side of the road, displaying their reluctance to a return to a situation that is so uncertain (2004, 30).

5.3.4. Being voiceless

Although many policies have been put in place by the government to support reconciliation, there are others that leave people feeling fearful and insecure. Some of those I interviewed, Hutus in particular, speak of being afraid to speak out and criticize the government or its policies. Some interviewees felt that they did not feel at home in their own country, even though they had lived there all their lives. They said that it sometimes felt that those who had lived in the country for only ten or twelve years had more rights than they did. Further, they did not feel they had the freedom to stand up for their rights (Personal interviews, 2005 and 2007). An illustration concerns one informant who fled the country at the start of genocide. On return, a few years later, his home had been taken by someone else. He feels he has no place to legally deal with this as he is from the 'wrong' ethnic group. He fears that the one who took his house might falsely accuse him of genocide in order to get him out of the way (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

A part of this insecurity is created by the fact that *gacaca* deals only with the crimes of genocide and not with the crimes against humanity on the part of the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). A representative from Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF), the lawyer rights organization that has worked closely with the *gacaca* process, agrees that this creates resentment and a sense of insecurity for a large portion of the population. When ASF challenged the government on this matter, their response was that accusations against the RPF were to be taken to the military court system. But this is not publicly known to the population and the

majority of people are too afraid to take this step. The government needs to confront these fears and create a space where all Rwandans feel they have equal rights, an equal voice, and equal access to justice and legal assistance.

5.3.5. Lack of independent journalism

Perhaps the most prominent critique from the side of human rights organizations is that of the lack of independent journalism. In a report released in 2004, CPJ describes how journalists live in fear of harassment and imprisonment, and how others have been forced to flee after receiving death threats. Although the 2003 constitution guarantees press freedom, this is only in so far as the law allows and the divisionism law limits this freedom significantly. CPJ writes, "The current Tutsi-led regime, which consolidated power in the 2003 election, has increasingly used allegations of ethnic "divisionism" to silence critics. Such allegations have been used against Rwanda's only independent newspaper, *Umuseso* (The Dawn), and against the Rwandan League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (LIPRODHOR). Several members of these organizations have fled the country in fear for their lives" (2004, 2).

The accusations of spreading genocidal ideology also reach foreign radio stations operating in Rwanda. These are among the few providers of independent news in Rwanda, but now may be forced to reveal their sources. Radio stations in eastern DRC, which can be heard in western parts of Rwanda have also been accused of spreading 'ethnic hatred'. "The report pointed a finger at a number of stations, including Radio Okapi, a joint project of the United Nations and Hirondelle, an award-winning Swiss organization that promotes peace through media" (CPJ, 2004, 2).

An Amnesty International 2007 report states that: "Journalists were subjected to intimidation, harassment and violence. The authorities failed to conduct independent and impartial investigations into attacks or threats against journalists. The authorities repeatedly denied that there were restrictions on freedom of expression in Rwanda, accusing independent journalists of "unprofessionalism"". They then go on to describe an incident taking place in late 2006, where the news editor of *Umuco* reportedly had his home in Kigali ransacked in January by four

men armed with clubs and knives. Before this attack, *Umuco* had criticized the ruling party for ineptitude and for allegedly controlling the judiciary. A second incident involved editor of the *Umuseso* who was given a suspended sentence of one year in prison and a fine for "public insult". In 2004, *Umuseso* had questioned the integrity of a parliamentary Deputy Speaker.

5.3.6. Political prisoners

Amnesty International reports that in the run up to the 2003 elections, prominent members of civil society mysteriously disappeared.

“Augustin Cyiza, a prominent member of civil society, was reportedly a victim of enforced disappearance in 2003 during the run-up to elections. Rwandan officials denied knowledge of his whereabouts in 2005, but sources claimed he had been abducted and killed ... Léonard Hitimana, a member of the Transitional National Assembly, disappeared in April 2003. In April 2006, the President of the National Commission for Human Rights stated that the investigation into his case was confidential, and that results would be released in due course. The fate of Léonard Hitimana remained unknown” (2007).

Further, there are the well-publicized cases of former president of Rwanda, Pasteur Bizimungu, and Charles Ntakirutinka, who together started a new political party and were imprisoned in 2005 on charges of “inciting civil disobedience, associating with criminal elements and embezzlement of state funds” (Amnesty International, 2007, 2). Many human rights observers would say these men were imprisoned to get rid of political opposition.

5.3.7. Condition of prisons

In the previous chapter, conditions of prisons following the genocide were described as appalling. Amnesty International suggested that this had hardly

changed in their 2007 report. During 2006, 69 000 people were still incarcerated, with prisons across the country being significantly overpopulated. Amnesty International describes prison conditions as “extremely harsh and amounted to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment”. Underground cells were reported to exist in some prisons as well as detention centres (2007, 2). Further, they report that 48 000 detainees still await trial in for genocide related crimes.

In describing the conditions, Khan writes:

“There was no room to sit or lie down, only to stand and doze while leaning against another prisoner. Day after day, week after week, month after month these prisoners, most of whom were suspected of genocide and who had been put into prison without due process of law, would simply stand and pass the time. Many became gangrenous in their legs due to lack of circulation” (2000, 120).

Khan describes in some detail efforts made by the UN to try to address the problem of the prisons, but in defence of both the UN and the new government, describes how international donors were more interested in pouring money into refugee camps, survivor programs and education than in building new prisons (2000, 120). Directly after genocide, the new government was entirely without resources or infrastructure to deal with the vast amount of accused. The death sentence was abolished due to international pressure in 1999, but prison conditions did not improve.

In a forty-page report regarding prison conditions in Rwanda, HRW bring to attention the death of twenty detainees that were killed between November 2006 and May 2007. Where the official statement says that these prisoners were shot by prison guards while trying to escape, HRW suggests they were shot in reprisal killings following the 'highly publicized' killings of survivors (2007, 1). Although both the United States and United Kingdoms' governments, along with human rights organizations have asked for investigation into the matter, HRW expresses doubt as to whether this will take place with an independent investigation process (2007, 2).

Detainees on trial for crimes unrelated to genocide also find themselves victims of police abuse and killings (2007, 16). HRW describes incidents where police have been called to the scene of a crime, arrest suspected criminals then shoot them a short distance from the crime scene. The report has a table listing the names of detainees killed, either by police or soldiers, the dates on which they were killed and where they were killed (2007, 15, 16).

Although national police have announced several ways of lodging a complaint against police abuse, HRW cites a case where such a complaint was lodged by the family of a murdered detainee, without any response from the police many months later. Referring to a report given to HRW by the national police in December, 2006, they say:

“All the detainees were killed within days and in some cases within hours of their arrests. In no case had trials begun, far less verdicts been reached, yet in the opening paragraph of the statement, several of the detainees are referred to as “killers,” not suspects. In its final paragraph, the statement acknowledges that some of those killed by the police had no involvement with genocide but nonetheless it declares that “the suspects involved in these cases were of extreme criminal character ready to die for their genocide ideology.” It concludes that these detainees were “terroristic in nature and don’t care about their own lives leave alone others” (2007, 25).

Alongside these accusations on the part of HRW, the police statement (which is attached to the HRW report) does state that the national police is in need of training with regards to firearm use in the case of escaping detainees, could do with more handcuffs, and would like to ensure toilet facilities are available inside police stations as their being outside provides detainees with an 'advantage to escape' (2007, 37).

Filip Reyntjens makes mention in his report of the issue of releasing those without files, which was suggested by the Minister of Justice in 1999. However, genocide survivors and especially *Ibuka*, an organization protecting and supporting genocide survivors, denounced this, arguing that it consolidated “the culture of impunity favouring a general amnesty” (1999, 7). Until today, releasing prisoners

remains a hot topic, with Kagame releasing some tens of thousands of prisoners who were either sick or elderly in the past years, in the midst of much protest and controversy.

5.3.8. Conflict in the DRC

Making international news on a regular basis is the continued challenge for Rwanda of the situation on its border in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). In a 90-page report concerning the situation in the DRC, HRW state that in 2006 and 2007, countless violations of international law took place including attacks on civilians (murder, rape and the recruitment of child soldiers) and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people from their homes (2007, 3). Former genocidal forces in the DRC have formed the Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) with the explicit aim of overthrowing the current government of Rwanda although HRW suggests they have attacked Congolese citizens more than engaging the Rwandan military (HRW, 2007, 3).

Further, the Rwandan government has been in support of Laurent Nkunda, the former Congolese general who is fighting against Congolese president Joseph Kabila. Rwanda's stake in the DRC is significant; the USAID report states that the Rwandan government sees itself as being in a key position, centrally placed on the map, and a key strategic point of stability within an instable region full of globally sought-after resources (USAID, 2005, 104). According to HRW, the Rwandan government allows Nkunda's forces to recruit soldiers, including children, from amongst Congolese refugee camps in Rwanda (2007, 7). In their report, HRW strongly recommends the UNHCR disallow repatriation of Congolese refugees in Rwanda back to the DRC unless they are certain of their safe return, implying that at this point UNHCR is becoming an inadvertent partner in the recruiting of child soldiers (2007, 8).

The United Nations Human Council for Refugees (UNHCR) report states that there are still some 50 000 Rwandan refugees that need repatriation, the majority of those in eastern DRC. With the implementation of *gacaca* trials in 2005, several thousand people from Butare and Gikongoro fled Rwanda, seeking asylum in

Uganda and Burundi (2006, 102). They argue that the continued stability in Rwanda assists refugee repatriation but the situation in the DRC brings further uncertainty (2006, 102).

“On 1 January 2005, some 47,800 Rwandan refugees were living in 19 African countries. This group is mainly of Hutu origin, with only a few Tutsis and people in mixed marriages. About 20,000 people belonging to this group are expected to have returned by the end of 2005 and another 20,000 are to return in 2006. Five thousand refugees are expected to opt for local integration” (UNHCR, 2006, 103).

The repatriation of refugees continues to be a challenge, especially in the light of tensions around *gacaca* trials and violence between those accused and survivors. The UNHCR publishes a bi-monthly newsletter titled 'Rwanda Returnee News' which depicts positive stories of returnees to Rwandan refugees to encourage them to voluntarily repatriate. Not only are Rwandan refugees a challenge, but also refugees from the DRC and Burundi that are in Rwanda. USAID reported in 2005 that 42 000 refugees were seeking asylum in Rwanda, 95% of those being Congolese (2005, 5). Having said this, USAID reports how the Rwandan government is a key player in regional peace talks and in returning stability to the Great Lakes region through negotiations with the DRC, Tanzania, and Uganda (2005).

These were some of the more negative stories from human rights organizations reporting on Rwanda. The following section will look at some of the more positive stories coming from NGOs working in Rwanda.

5.3. Reconciliation narratives

Stories from local NGO's working in the field of reconciliation show that amidst the many complex issues abounding in Rwandan society today, many Rwandans are open to reconciliation and want to move on from the division that caused genocide. This section will focus on local NGOs that do a variety of work, from poverty reduction to talk shops between victims and perpetrators.

Solace Ministries is an NGO to which people widowed by the war can come together to support each other emotionally and share resources. The director of Solace, Jean Gikwanda said that people want to reconcile and they want to get on with life; they don't want to sit around and talk about reconciliation (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). At Solace, both Hutu and Tutsi widows work on practical projects like bead work and sewing to supplement their incomes. As they work together and share in each others hardships, reconciliation begins to take place.

MOUCECORE, on the other hand, runs workshops where people can talk about reconciliation. Michel Kayitaba who heads up this organization, says that talking about the process of reconciliation is important when it is coupled with action as well (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). At MOUCECORE workshops people are educated around the terminology of reconciliation and then are invited to share their wounds. Workshops include both perpetrators and victims, both Tutsi widowed by the genocide and Hutu widowed by the violence of the civil war. Kayitaba described how sharing stories has been very powerful for healing, especially if it was followed by practical activities, such as perpetrators and victims rebuilding their homes together.

Another project that involves sharing stories is in a town called Byumba where Dutch researchers implemented a pilot project termed 'sociotherapy'. Here, groups of people living in the same area meet together weekly with a trained facilitator and work through a program that allows them to talk about their pain but also their futures. This group supports and heals itself through the process of working together therapeutically as a group. Currently, 43 groups are meeting on a weekly basis, reaching 1300 people (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

Working from a slightly different angle, the organization PHARP focuses on Hutu refugees in the DRC after 1994. Their primary aim is to create open dialogue, especially between refugees who may collectively have been labeled 'genocidaire' and other Rwandans. The director, Reverend Anastase, felt strongly that practical activities are good but do not heal the underlying wounds that need to be spoken out (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). PHARP creates safe spaces

where perpetrators and victims can be together and speak out their pain, repentance and forgiveness. As of 1995, they have distributed a newsletter related to reconciliation called *Umuhuza*, which means 'hope'.

Shalom, Educating for Peace is a small NGO that focuses on educating people in conflict resolution and nonviolent communication. It is not working directly in response to genocide, but rather wants to foster an understanding of peaceful ways of interacting in daily life. Following a period of training with Shalom in reconciliation, a church choir in the Rwamagana area developed a repertoire of songs celebrating unity and reconciliation which they now perform for local communities. Shalom seeks to foster dialogue between people around topics of reconciliation and forgiveness, to unpack what these mean when lived out in daily life.

African Evangelical Enterprise (AEE), which was already active in Rwanda prior to genocide, works not only on the individual and group level but is influencing reconciliation narratives on the national level. Members of AEE are involved with government initiatives such as NURC. Further, they hold campaigns and events across the country that are attended by thousands of people, where victims and perpetrators share their stories and take collective responsibility for their role in the violence. International speakers are regularly invited to these events where they speak around themes of reconciliation and hope for the future.

Bernard Rutikanga highlights the role of the Church in reconciliation efforts (2003, 159). Although he mentions how the Church has been compromised due to its involvement in the genocide, it maintains a significant role in 'eradicating ethnic distrust and discrimination and promoting respect for human rights' (2003, 160). In 1996, many church leaders from a variety of church backgrounds came together for the Detmold Confession where "Hutu and Tutsi participants confessed and apologised for crimes committed by members of their respective groups.

"The Hutu apologised for the crimes committed against the Tutsi between 1959 and 1994 and especially the heinous nature of the crimes" 'torturing, raping, slitting pregnant women open, hacking humans to pieces, burying people alive ... forcing people to kill their own relatives, burning people

alive' (Detmold Confession 1996, 51)'. The Tutsi 'apologised for repression and blind vengeance which members of our groups have taken, deposing all claims to legitimate self defence'. They also apologised for 'certain arrogance and contemptuous attitudes shown to [Hutu] throughout our history in the name of a ridiculous complex of ethnic superiority' (Detmold Confession 1996, 51-52). Western participants apologised for having sowed the seeds of Rwandan division and violence, for having aggravated violence by delivering arms, and for having neglected the suffering of Rwandan refugees" (2003, 161).

This kind of public action by leaders of the church in a country where the vast majority of people are church going plays an important part in the reconciliation process.

This is a brief overview of some of the more prominent activities towards reconciliation in Rwanda that were started and are sustained by Rwandans. More of their efforts will be explored at a later stage. Through interaction with these organizations it is clear that there is a desire for reconciliation and that reconciliation narratives dominate the national discourse.

5.5. Conclusion

As was stated at the beginning of this chapter, there are hopeful and positive as well as ominous and dark signs as to where Rwanda is today. Some have said the country is on the brink of another genocide whereas others sing the praises of its stability and progress. Perhaps the most powerful sign of hope is the work that ordinary Rwandans are doing on the ground, where communities are being transformed by the message of reconciliation.

At the heart of the challenges in Rwanda are the issues of identity and history. What is constantly in flux is how to understand one's identity and one's personal history within the wider scope of the national and international histories. Much of the conflict in Rwanda is hinged on defending a particular story over others and a particular understanding of identity above others. Where individuals grapple with

what it meant and still means to them to be Hutu or Tutsi, the government tries to foster a new, united identity. Where individuals struggle to make sense of their role in the enormous movements of politics and history, the government tries to rewrite history in a way that would bring all Rwandans together. And yet this movement to a united Rwandan identity and common understanding of Rwandan history remains fraught with difficulties, creating a conflict of its own. In the quest for a united identity, some people feel voiceless, helpless and without a meaningful identity. In the quest for a common understanding of history, some feel their stories are being sidelined, ignored and dismissed.

Unfortunately, the divisive line remains on the basis of ethnicity, with many Tutsi publically supporting the government, its policies, its version of history and its new identity, but with many Hutu continuing to feel sidelined and marginalized. As one Rwandan said, this is leading a to a growing resentment amongst the majority of Rwandans who may be kept in line by strict government policies but are not participating in the process of reconciliation and national unity willingly or with a sense of ownership (Personal interview, Pretoria, September, 2009).

Further chapters will investigate the complex issues of identity and history that people in Rwanda grapple with in the face of tumultuous political and societal events. Before this, the next chapter will look at the research methodology that was used.

CHAPTER 6: THE RESEARCH STORY

6.1. Understanding narrative research

This study will make use of a narrative research method. Narrative is suggested as a way of bringing about reconciliation and healing Rwanda but it is also the research methodology used in this study to gather data relevant to better understanding issues of history and identity in the Rwandan context. In using this methodology, as will become clear in this chapter, there is an element of participatory research, where the researcher and the participants in the research together attempt to work towards solutions to a particular problem. In the case of this research, researcher and participants together grappled with the issue of reconciliation and how it can be either hampered or enhanced by narratives of identity and history.

At the centre of this research is the analysis of four Rwandan life stories. These life stories are not only analysed and reflected upon by the researcher, but also by the four Rwandans themselves, and their reflections form an integral part of the research. Supplementing these life stories are a series of five formal interviews with leaders of NGOs working in the field of reconciliation and twenty informal interviews with ordinary Rwandans inside and outside of Rwanda. All these interviews were collected between January 2005 and December 2009. I was also able to observe a *gacaca* trial session in January, 2007 where three people were tried and a Reconciliation Forum in June, 2009, where thirty-five community leaders discussed reconciliation. In June, 2008, I attended the Amahoro Gathering, which is an annual international conference for African Christian leaders exploring various topics relevant to the African continent. In 2008, the conference was held in Kigali and the theme was reconciliation.

Each of these experiences formed part of the narrative research approach. Amia Lieblich, Rivka Tuval-Mashiach, and Tamar Zilber write that narrative research is any research that uses or analyses narrative material, either as the object of the research or as the means to study another question (1998, 2). They assert that

narrative research provides “one of the clearest channels for learning about the inner world [of individuals] ... Narratives provide us with access to people’s identity” (1998, 7). They further say that we “know, or discover ourselves, and reveal ourselves to others, by the stories we tell” (1998, 7). This research methodology is highly relevant to this research project in its exploring of identity-related issues.

Like Lieblich et al. (1998, 8) this research

“[does] not advocate total relativism that treats all narratives as texts of fiction. On the other hand, we do not take narratives at face value, as complete and accurate representations of reality. We believe that narratives are usually constructed around a core of facts or life events, yet allow a wide periphery for the freedom of individuality and creativity in selection, addition to, emphasis on, and interpretation of these ‘remembered facts’” (1998, 8).

Rosenwald and Ochberg take this point further in referring to the embeddedness of our narratives in our social-cultural and political contexts (1992, 8). Our very acts of remembering are a result of our contexts and also our identities. Alongside this, when recording a life history we capture a frozen photograph, a static moment in time and analyse it, looking for insights into identity and meaning. Yet, identity is constantly in flux and we never capture ‘the’ ultimate identity. “The particular life story is one (or more) instance of the polyphonic versions of the possible constructions or presentations of people’s selves and lives which they use according to specific momentary influences” (Lieblich et al., 1998, 8).

Lieblich et al. believe that “The use of narrative methodology results in unique and rich data that cannot be obtained from experiments, questionnaires or observations” (1998, 9). Narrative research is a highly relevant research methodology for exploring issues of history, identity and reconciliation. Smith, in a discussion around life story research, speaks of how “The act of constructing a life story, whether as actively engaged in by the one constructing the story or as secondarily engaged in by an engaged listener, has a powerful, potentially transforming, (re)organizational impact” (2000, 13). It is this ‘emancipatory’ role of

narrative research, as Rosenwald and Ochberg describe it, that further makes this methodology relevant. It is believed that constructing life stories, listening to these, analysing them and then reflecting on them again will indeed have a 'potentially transforming, (re)organising impact'. However, Smith also warns that the exact opposite can happen, and that instead of emancipating, telling the story can 'disempower, degrade or pathologise'. This potential negative effect of narrative research will be discussed in section 6.3.2.

6.1.1. Theoretical foundations of narrative research

Narrative research has developed largely out of a criticism for adopting too much of the method of the natural sciences in the field of social science. Lazar (1999, 16) discusses in some depth the journey which research methodology in the social sciences has taken, from being purely 'naturalistic' (drawing conclusions through 'rigorously repeated observations') to completely interpretive (interested in the interpretation of *meaning*). On the one hand are those who argue that the only 'true' knowledge is knowledge gained through objectivity, distancing oneself from ones subjects and using the methods of the natural sciences. On the other, is the belief that the social sciences are all about intersubjectivity, interaction, intercommunication, and language, which demand a less rigid, more 'messy' form of research (Lazar, 1999, 16).

Part of the shift from a naturalist methodology (as in, a method adopted from the natural sciences) to a more interpretive, and maybe even relativist, approach, have been ethical considerations. Johan Galtung, writing from a perspective of non-violence, argues that the naturalist method had the danger of being 'violent' to those being researched. He argues that 'the researched' are often exploited and are encouraged to bare their souls in order to further the career of the researcher (1975, 266). Further, researchers enter the research project with the assumption that they have knowledge, insight or understanding about the researched that the researched themselves don't have (1975, 268). Researchers are also described by Galtung as fragmenting the researched; individuals are researched (interviewed, for example) independently from each other, with the assumption that 'normal society [consists] of fragmented, unconscious people'

and that what happens to one individual can be generalised to communities of people (1975, 271). Lastly, Galtung argues that researchers see themselves as 'unalterable, unchangeable, fixed points' and take on a 'detached, cool, non-committal' attitude towards the interviewees, thus marginalising them (1975, 272). The fear of doing violence to the researched has influenced me to adopt a narrative method over and above a more so-called 'objective' method, although even the narrative method has its own ethical issues to be considered, as will be discussed in section 6.3.1.

David Walsh discusses the shift that has happened in society in general, towards cultural relativism and a critique of ethnocentrism (1999, 218). A research methodology with the researcher as detached and 'objective' observer often comes with the assumption that the researchers' cultural values and perceptions are more 'logical', 'right' and superior. Through the influences of postmodernism and deconstruction, it is becoming more and more accepted that all cultures have an internal logic of their own and are equally important in their own right (Walsh, 1999, 218). This is a foundation of narrative research.

6.1.2. Characteristics of narrative research

Narrative research works with a small sample and aims at gathering in-depth, rich data. It is a time-consuming research methodology that requires a sensitivity on the part of the researcher. Narrative research does not pretend to be objective but is consciously aware of the researcher influence on the research process.

Interpretation of the data is always personal, partial and dynamic. Lieblich et al. describe it as 'dialogical listening' to three voices: the voice of the narrator as represented by the transcribed text, the voice of the theoretical framework, which provides the tools for interpretations, and a reflexive monitoring voice, namely, self awareness in drawing conclusions from the material (1998,10). This research has added to that the reflective voice of the research participants. The danger of interpretive methodologies is that they may seem 'wildly' subjective, but Lieblich et al. argue that they are in fact based on careful analysis of the text, careful examination of other related, published material, the theoretical framework and painful self awareness (1998, 20).

Another characteristic of narrative research is that rather than starting with an a priori hypothesis, the hypothesis emerges from the material (Lieblich et al., 1998, 10). Narrative researchers would argue that this is a more 'genuine' approach. Rather than the researcher imposing a research direction onto the researched it is as if the researcher is discovering what the material itself is demanding. In the case of this research project, what emerged was significantly different from what was expected beforehand. In particular, it was imagined that identity in the Rwandan context was largely a hindrance to reconciliation whereas it emerged that it may in fact be an important channel through which reconciliation may take place.

A narrative approach does not try to generalize its findings from one individual or groups of individuals to the larger society and for this reason does not strictly require replication of results as a criterion for evaluation (Lieblich et al., 1998, 10). This is a significant point to keep in mind, as this research project never assumes that the experiences of the four Rwandans narrating their life histories can allow us to draw conclusions about Rwandan society in general. What these life stories can do is provide us with material for exploring issues relevant to those four individuals as they engage Rwandan society and relate this to aspects brought to the fore by the literature. Similarly, the interviews with five NGO leaders cannot be generalized to apply to all NGO activity in Rwanda, but is only relevant in its limited and immediate context.

6.1.3. The position of the researcher in narrative research

Walsh sees four possible positions for the researcher. Firstly, as a complete participant the researcher is thoroughly involved as a participant in the research, generating 'complete' knowledge but with the ethical compromise of pretending to be something s/he is not. Secondly, as a complete observer there is reduced reactivity but the possibility of alienation occurs. Thirdly, the position of participant observer is an honest approach but has the danger of 'going native' and losing perspective on what is being studied. Finally, the observer as participant is safer but might result in superficial understanding (1999, 222). His suggested best

approach is that of 'marginal native', where the researcher is "poised between a strangeness which avoids over-rapport and a familiarity which grasps the perspectives of people in the situation" (1999, 226). "This position creates considerable strain on the researcher as it engenders insecurity, produced by living in two worlds simultaneously, that of participation and that of research" (1999, 227). This difficult position is the one I have most tried to adopt; that of being well aware of myself as outsider, as stranger, and yet at the same time being involved in the lives of those I am researching, thus allowing me to more deeply understand their perspectives. Further, those being researched have become participant researchers, giving direction to and becoming involved in the research project.

In terms of the position of the researcher, rather than seeing the relationship between researcher and narrator as objective, Ochberg argues that the researcher influences the way the narrator tells their story as well as what the narrator says. According to him, the narrator is forming a relationship with the interviewer, with those interviewed trying to make themselves likeable or even keeping the interviewer at bay. "To see what a life story means, we have to see what effect the speaker is trying to create" (2000, 119). Narrators, Ochberg argues, may not expect or even want their audiences to understand them as they understand themselves.

"Our sense of ourselves depends on our experience of how others understand us. However, I do not think that our sense of ourselves necessarily depends on others seeing us *the same way* that we see ourselves. In fact, just the opposite may be the case. Our sense of who we are may depend on feeling that others see us differently than we see ourselves. We may, for example, cherish the idea that we are keeping a secret or that we are too complicated for any but the most attentive audience to comprehend" (2000, 120).

This viewpoint on the position of the researcher and the impact of the researcher on the narrator leads to a more complex understanding of the kind of data that is allowed to emerge. Not only is a narrative research approach interested in the content of the life story but the very way it is related and the relationship that

develops between the researcher and narrator, and in this case, also between the four Rwandans as they engaged with each others stories. For example, with the life histories as well as the formal and informal interviews, there was sometimes the sense that the speaker was trying to second guess the direction I was taking, trying to answer not what I asked specifically, but what I might need them to say to satisfy my research and prevent me from probing any further. I often had the sense that I was being directed away from certain topics that seemed unsafe and towards others that almost had a rote answer. For example, I had a strong sense that certain interviewees wanted me to have a clear impression that they supported the government and that I would have no doubt at all of this. There were also times when interviewees would emphasise how relaxed and open they were to speak to me, but at the same time it seemed as if there were things they were uncomfortable to discuss.

Ochberg says we all know of people who want to seem ambivalent about being understood, maybe because they are distrustful; they may want to feel connected to others but fear it may be dangerous.

“For anyone who doubts the perfect goodwill of their audience, telling a transparently open life story may seem foolish: If, instead, the goal is to create relationships that are only partially open, one must tell stories that are semi-opaque. Such stories must engage an audience yet keep that audience at a distance. Telling a story in this manner – and thereby creating a contested or guarded relationship with one’s listener – in turn confirms a particular sense of self” (2000, 120).

Such vagueness and ambivalence, which included contradictions in accounts and changes of subject, were common within the context of this research project.

Ochberg suggests that some people would want this ambiguity to be removed, for example, by creating a more trustful relationship. But he argues against this, saying,

“We do not become more ourselves in the absence of these (protectively constructed) dangers; instead – were such a thing possible – we would no

longer be ourselves. Therefore, not only is it inevitable that our informants struggle against us, this struggle may be essential to their self creation ... To see how narrators struggle with their audiences – pushing them away and pulling them closer, inviting understanding and disparaging it – is to see more of the complexity in both life stories and lives” (2000, 122).

In addition to this, who the narrator is also has an impact on the researcher and the way the life story sharing or interviews unfold. I was aware of asking either more or less direct questions depending on the openness or comfortableness of the narrator. With some of those interviewed, it was easier to be candid and open whereas with others it felt necessary to be sensitive and guarded about the topics we engaged in. Rather than this being a hindrance to objectivity, it rather added to the richness of the data as my own responses to the interview situation gave clues to some of the underlying issues at stake. For example, if it felt that the conversation was becoming more guarded and less direct I took note of this to consider whether it might indicate uncertainty of what could or could not be discussed within the confines of government policy and law.

As mentioned before, engaging with such an understanding of the relationship between the narrator and the researcher allows for both more complex data and the opportunity for deeper analysis.

6.1.4. Narrative research models

Lieblich et al. have developed a simple measurement which takes into account the unit of analysis and hermeneutical approach when developing an appropriate narrative research model (1998, 12). The unit of analysis ranges from extracting a section from a complete text (categorical analysis) to taking the narrative as a whole (holistic analysis). In categorical analysis, the story is dissected and phrases or words are categorized; this is helpful for understanding phenomena that affect a group of people. In holistic analysis, the life story of a person is taken as a whole and sections of the text are considered in context of the whole text, which is helpful for understanding an individual's development towards a particular position.

How we read the text can vary from the explicit (what happened, why, who participated) to the implicit context of the text (the meaning, motives, symbolism) or the form of the text, such as structure, plot, sequence of events, coherence and complexity. Lieblich et al. say that a content analysis 'seems to manifest deeper layers of the narrator's identity'. The table below gives an overview of the unit of analysis and hermeneutical approach in relation to one another, outlining four possible approaches to narrative research (Lieblich et al. 1998, 13).

<p>Holistic-Content</p> <p>Uses the complete life story of an individual and focuses on the content presented by it.</p> <p>Analyzes sections of the narrative in the context of the whole narrative.</p>	<p>Holistic-Form</p> <p>Looks at the plot and structure of a complete narrative. Considers climax, or a turning point, which sheds light on the whole narrative.</p>
<p>Categorical-Content</p> <p>Content-analysis; categories of the studied topic are defined, separate utterances in the text extracted, classified and gathered into these categories.</p>	<p>Categorical-Form</p> <p>Stylistic or linguistic characteristics of defined units of the narrative, eg. Metaphors, passive or active voice. Instances are counted and categorized.</p>

The current research falls largely under the 'holistic-content' model of narrative research. Within this model, according to Lieblich et al., the entire story and content is taken into consideration. Central themes that run through the narrative as a whole are significant (1998, 18). Rather than analyzing individual utterances or categorizing specific aspects of the narratives, this research project has focused on the complete life story as it interacts with the larger narratives in Rwanda and the Great Lakes region.

6.2. Narrative research as applied to this study

6.2.1. Reasons for the study

What first sparked my interest in the research topic was my introduction to the Rwandan community in Pietermaritzburg, where I was living and studying at the time. Most university centres in South Africa have significant numbers of government-sponsored Rwandan students as well as Rwandan refugees. These Rwandans, as students in any foreign country may well do, formed a Rwandan community. The Rwandan community in Pietermaritzburg was particularly close-knit at the time I was there (2002-2004) and enjoyed eating Rwandan food and celebrating Rwandan culture together.

My experience of this community was significantly positive, and I had a very strong sense of hospitality, warmth and that people deeply cared for one another. At the same time, I became progressively more aware of undercurrents that I found out to be related to political and ethnic differences. Being a government-sponsored student was something quite different to being a refugee who was studying here. And being Hutu or Tutsi in origin certainly affected community relations. Alongside this, I was fascinated by allusions to the 1994 genocide, which had left not a single Rwandan untouched. References to genocide tended to be on the clinical side and were sometimes even mixed with humour, albeit cynical or sardonic. The relational dynamics, coupled with the way various people individually and as a community were processing one of the most horrendous events of human history, moved me deeply.

In January, 2005, I had decided to make this the topic of my doctoral thesis. At the summer school early in the academic year, I had the opportunity to meet a number of other Rwandans who were studying by distance and had flown from Rwanda for the purpose of attending the week-long school. This gave me access to a new and diverse group of Rwandans who were studying in the same field, with similar interests.

In July, 2005, I made my first reconnaissance trip to Rwanda. The agenda of this trip was completely open. My intention was to look, see, hear and feel. I stayed with a Rwandan, in his home, for the period of one week. During this week I visited Rwandan friends who had moved back from Pietermaritzburg, family members of friends from the Pietermaritzburg community, friends I had made at the summer school and saw some of the sites. Wherever I went, people were made aware of my research, and most social, casual conversations led to discussions around the genocide, healing, reconciliation and politics. This formed the first level of my 'data collection'.

In January, 2007, I returned to Rwanda for a two-week period, this time with the intention of interviewing people to gain a clearer concept of the process of reconciliation in Rwanda. I stayed with a study colleague who is researching the *gacaca* hearings in Rwanda and also worked for the UN in Kigali. This gave me a different perspective on Rwanda than the previous visit. During this trip, I interviewed five NGO leaders and had informal interviews with some ten other Rwandans. I also had the opportunity to experience a *gacaca* hearing. This formed a second level of 'data collection'.

Having a clearer picture of the situation in Rwanda, and combining this with a thorough literature review in the area of Rwandan politics and history, reconciliation theory, and narrative theory I felt equipped to start on what formed the core of this research, namely, the recording of four life stories. In May 2008, I returned again to Rwanda for two weeks, this time recording life histories and attending the Amahoro Gathering, an international conference whose theme this year was reconciliation. This contributed to my grasp of the Rwandan situation and the concept of reconciliation. I stayed with the editor of a controversial newspaper in Rwanda. This editor had been beaten and left for dead only a year previously, as a result of articles he had published in his paper. Experiencing Rwanda through his eyes gave yet another perspective.

In June, 2009, I returned to Rwanda for another two week trip. During this time, I held follow-up interviews with some of the young men whose life histories I had recorded. I also attended a Reconciliation Forum which was hosted by Shalom, Educating for Peace in conjunction with the National Unity and Reconciliation

Commission. I had further conversations with Rwandans I had had informal interviews with on previous trips. I stayed with a close Rwandan friend who, due to the nature of our friendship, was able to share honestly about experiences in Rwanda. These short trips over a period of five years helped to see the process of reconciliation in action over time.

6.2.2. Selection of the sample

My sample selection was initially influenced by the community of Rwandans studying in Pietermaritzburg that I first came into contact with. It has further been influenced by the Rwandan students I met at the summer school. My sample method may be described as 'cascading' or 'snow-balling'. Each person I met introduced me to someone else, furthering and diversifying my network. I consciously chose to work with people based in Kigali who were students and could speak English. Part of the reason for this was practical. Not having to work through a translator has many advantages, and having a shared academic background means that those I engaged with understood, at least to a degree, the concepts and methodology I was working with.

Of the four Rwandans who shared their life stories, two were collected from refugees outside of Rwanda while the other two came from Rwandans living in Rwanda. The intention with the life stories was to gather in-depth narratives from eight Rwandans of varying backgrounds to explore the relationship between history, identity and reconciliation. In the event, it proved exceptionally hard to find people willing to speak on the record, into a dictaphone, with a signed consent form before them. Many people who had engaged freely with me in casual conversation about these matters were very reluctant when it came to formalizing these conversations in an official interview. This was particularly the case with people of older generations. The four who did agree to be interviewed were all men between the ages of twenty-five and forty. A factor contributing to their willingness may be that none of them were the heads of their households at the time of the conflict and thus had fewer responsibilities. Another possible reason may be that those of older generations seemed to hold stronger prejudices and stronger fears.

Perhaps because of the nature of Rwandan culture, many of those I have met have become friends. I have visited in their homes, shared food with them, and often shared travel or other social experiences with them. Every one of those sharing their life stories is a friend. As will be discussed later in this chapter, trust is a major factor in Rwandan society. Rwandans, by their own admission, tend to be very careful about what they say to whom. Complete strangers would never share with me at the level of honesty that my friends have been prepared to share, and my findings would have been considerably less significant or relevant.

6.2.3. Formal and informal interviews

As mentioned above, I engaged in informal interviews in Rwanda between 2005 and 2009, and formal interviews in 2007, 2008 and 2009. In addition, I have been in constant conversation with Rwandans in Pretoria, Pietermaritzburg, and Durban and email communication with Rwandans throughout the world over the five year time span. These informal conversations and emails contributed to my understanding of the situation and dynamics in Rwanda as much as reading books and articles, if not more so.

Clive Seale draws attention to the fact that with every interview we have access only to the speakers version of an account, and that it is very difficult to ascertain how this version corresponds with reality (1999, 203). Apart from the content of a speakers account, the way in which they share their account, the words they choose to use, the themes they choose to emphasise, the emotions they express and their body language is of importance. The aim with the interviews was not to draw universal conclusions based on information gathered from large numbers of Rwandans, but rather in-depth, authentic insights into atmospheres, feelings and subjectivities (Seale, 1999, 205). Large sample research has been carried out by various research institutes to measure the extent to which people are ready for reconciliation. Such research brings different results than spending time over several years with people in close relationship and 'feeling out' as it were, where their hearts lie in terms of reconciliation.

As I approached my trips to Rwanda, I would think about what I wanted to have clearer insights about. I would draft conversation topics, and central questions to which I wanted answers. I allowed my genuine curiosity to lead conversations towards my intended topics. So although I had drafted concepts or questions I wanted to explore, my approach was flexible, and allowed for following up interesting leads (Seale, 1999, 205). In this way, I was often led to new ideas and angles I had not encountered in the literature or considered before. I was also exposed to undercurrents that would often be hidden from a researcher taking a more formal approach.

In an environment where it can be perceived to be a danger to share anything which might be construed to be 'inciting ethnic hatred', it is difficult for people to speak openly and honestly about issues of identity and reconciliation. In conversations with people over time, it was almost as if the same conversation would be repeated but each time another layer would be peeled off, and I would gain a little more insight into the speakers 'true' feelings on a matter. With each layer, a little more of the complex dynamic would be revealed. For example, in initial conversations with many speakers, when asked whether there were tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, the response would almost always be, "There is no tension. We are all Rwandan. We live together, we eat together, we share the same language and culture". As this peeled away, the speaker might start to admit that there was some level of mistrust and that they would trust someone of their own ethnic group more than someone of another ethnic group. As the next layer peeled away, they might start to admit certain prejudices they were brought up with, certain stereotypes they were taught as children. And as the next layer peeled away, they might tell me about their own prejudices, their own stereotypes, their intense fear of those of the other ethnic group, and in some cases, an admission that they would act to protect their own ethnic group at whatever cost, even if it meant violence, and even if it meant killing. This careful peeling away of the layers would not be possible with a survey, a questionnaire, or even a formal interview with a stranger. It was only possible because of the generous trust and friendship given to me by Rwandan friends who, like me, hope that somehow, together, as we explore this complex dynamic, we can begin to build healing and reconciliation.

The more formal interviews with NGO leaders followed a somewhat less relational path. I had conversations with Antoine Rutayisere from African Evangelical Enterprise, Michel Kayitaba from MOUCECORE, and Rev Anastase from PHARP, each of whom have engaged in research into reconciliation in Rwanda, are familiar with the concepts I am working with, and have interacted with quite a number of other researchers working in the same field. It was thus easy to speak with them freely on an analytical and conceptual level. The purpose of these interviews was to test some of the findings beginning to emerge around identity, history and reconciliation in Rwanda. For these interviews, I developed a set of questions in order to facilitate comparisons. These questions, listed under Appendix A, included, for example, how they would describe the reconciliation process in Rwanda and where they thought it was and was going. I asked them to explain the identity-dynamic that seemed to suggest that on the one hand 'we are all Rwandan' but on the other there is still much underlying ethnic tension. I asked them to share their views about whether Rwanda was being forced to accept a particular politicized understanding of history. I asked whether they believed there was an openness for dialogue in Rwanda or if Rwandan society was still dominated by fear, suspicion and mistrust. Their answers were candid and honest, and allowed for in-depth discussion of some difficult and critical issues.

Similarly, the formal interviews with Avocats Sans Frontiers (ASF) and the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) allowed for honest exploration of these issues. These two interviews differed from the above three in that these were not faith-based NGO's, but government-related organizations. NURC is a governmental body responsible for implementing and monitoring national unity and reconciliation through a range of projects and programs. ASF has the specific role of monitoring the *gacaca* process and other legal processes dealing with genocide as well as current legal disputes. Although ASF is independent of government, it works very closely with government projects and departments. With these two organizations, I explored many of the questions mentioned above, but with a level of greater care, being acutely aware that these were government-related organizations with all the implications this holds. Nevertheless, representatives from both organizations were also very open and allowed critical questions to be discussed.

In addition to these, some twenty informal conversations provided valuable research data. I recorded all formal interviews by taking notes with pen and paper and then fleshing these out later. All informal conversations were recorded afterwards, thus perhaps losing some of the details, but maintaining the 'feel' of the conversation, which was often more relevant than the actual content. For example, it was significant that several people felt the need to whisper in their own homes when speaking of certain topics and that some people would shift their opinion depending on who was with us during different conversations.

As Liisa Malkki found in her ethnographic research in a Burundian Hutu refugee camp in Tanzania, during informal conversations about everyday matters, historical narratives would almost inevitably arise (1995, 49). I am convinced that my informal conversations offered much more material for my research than would have resulted from more formal methods. As Malkki describes, it was far easier to find men willing to engage in formal interviews than women (1995, 49). However, on an informal basis I was in continual conversation with a number of Rwandan women over a period of five years about matters related to this research. Their contribution has been invaluable but is unfortunately not 'on the record'.

Due to the sensitive nature of this research, almost all of those interviewed, except the four NGO leaders and the representative from NURC, have asked to remain anonymous. This means that the names and particulars of the interviews have not been recorded in this thesis.

6.2.4. Life stories

The difficulty of finding Rwandans willing to engage in the life story component of my research was discussed in section 6.2.2. The diversity of the life stories was further limited by the number of interviewees I was able to get hold of within the time limit of my research. However, this had the unintended advantage that all four life stories that were recorded had similarities of focus that I could then explore in greater depth. It also unintentionally resulted in a dialogue between two Ugandan Tutsi and two Hutu refugees, all four of them being highly educated

and articulate Rwandans. This is significant in that much of the conflict around the way forward in Rwanda is not between peasant farmers but between the Ugandan Tutsi government and the Hutu intelligentsia, the larger part, or at least the vocal part, of which remains outside of Rwanda.

The life stories may either have been enhanced or limited by my long-standing friendship with all but one of the participants, who is a close friend of a relative. The interviews were enhanced by this because trust is a major factor for Rwandans and it is unlikely that anyone outside of a trust relationship would have participated as honestly as did these four young men. It often felt more of a collaborative project between myself and four friends than a researcher-researched relationship. This was in line with my hesitation with the researcher-researched dynamic which, as was described by Johan Galtung, can become a form of violence. However, the limitation of interviewing friends is the potential for researcher bias which will be discussed in section 6.3.

Another limitation was the difficult position I found myself in when engaging with the highly divergent views between the Hutu refugees and the Tutsi Ugandans. None of those interviewed would want to be categorised in this way and each of them dissociated themselves from these categories in various ways, but there were certainly powerful differences of opinion between the two groups. I was aware of the fact that I might be compromising my integrity and their trust in me if I seemed supportive of the Ugandan Tutsi viewpoint when with the Ugandan Tutsi and supportive of the Hutu refugee viewpoint when with the Hutu refugees. In fact, in each case I was supportive in so far as I could see how the situation looked from their viewpoint and was at that moment fully convinced of their way of seeing things. In each case, though, I could also see how their views may have been coloured by prejudices or pushed to unhealthy extremes. I realise in retrospect that the way I engaged in informal conversations with interviewees may have influenced the kinds of things they shared in the formal recording. This may particularly have been the case when we discussed the summaries of the other three life stories and supports Ochberg's comment that the very relationship between researcher and narrator forms part of the research.

When discussing the summaries, I fully participated in the conversation with the desire to play the defendant of each interviewee. To the Ugandan Tutsi, I defended the views of the Hutu refugees and vice versa. My purpose in this was to try to establish as far as possible whether there was any understanding on either part for the side of the other. I was not only interested in 'measuring' the level of understanding one participant might have for another, but to actually influence this, through dialogue with other participants with myself as impartial mediator. This role of researcher as mediator was made clear from the start and all participants knew that I was hoping to create some form of useful dialogue between the four of them without them having to meet. Meeting, in their case, would be far too dangerous, perhaps even to the risk of their lives, according to one of those interviewed. He suggested that were he to air his views publically then members of his family might be jailed or simple 'disappear'. The chosen research methodology seemed the closest alternative to an actual dialogue between people on seemingly different sides of a divide.

6.3. Limitations of narrative research

6.3.1. Limitations in the literature

The most obvious weakness of the narrative research method is its subjectivity. The entire process rests on the subjective interpretation and analysis of the researcher. Further, the participants' involvement is also subjective. Responding to this, Lieblich et al write,

“No reading is free of interpretation ... The illusion that we have a static text of narrative material, and then begin a separate process of reading and interpreting it, is far from the truth ... Based on our experience, our claim is that in the mere act of being together in a room, stating the purpose of the encounter, asking questions, relating to the responses, and participating in the creation of an atmosphere, some interpretive choices have already been made ... Narrative studies may profit from the researchers’

sensitivities to and awareness of these subtle processes and their willingness to share them with the reader” (1998, 166).

In evaluating quantitative research, the key criteria are reliability, objectivity, validity and replicability. These

“contradict the very nature of the narrative approach, which, starting from an interpretive viewpoint, asserts that narrative materials – like reality itself – can be read, understood and analysed in extremely diverse ways, and that by reaching alternative narrative accounts is by no means an indication of inadequate scholarship but a manifestation of the wealth of such material and the range of different sensitivities of the reader” (Lieblich et al., 1998, 171).

How then must one evaluate qualitative research? Runyan (in Lieblich et al., 1998) argues that there are internal criteria and external criteria. In terms of internal criteria, what is important is style, vividness, coherence and apparent plausibility; and for external criteria, correspondence with external sources of information is essential (Lieblich et al., 1998, 172). He lists several subpoints to these criteria that the researcher needs to fulfill: providing ‘insight’ into the person, clarifying what was previously meaningless or incomprehensible, suggesting previously unseen connections, providing a feel for the person, conveying the experience of having known or met him/her, helping us to understand the inner subjective world of the person, how s/he thinks about their own situation, experiences, problems, and life, deepening our sympathy or empathy for the subject, effectively portraying the social and historical world that the person is living in, illuminating the causes (and meanings) of relevant events, experiences and conditions, being vivid, evocative and emotionally compelling to read.

Lieblich et al. have developed their own criteria, which includes width, coherence, insightfulness and parsimony. Width refers to the comprehensiveness of the evidence, including the quality of the interview and observations as well as to the proposed interpretation or analysis. Coherence refers to the way different parts of

the interpretation create a complete and meaningful picture, both internally (how the parts fit together) and externally (how it fits in with existing theory and research). Insightfulness looks at the sense of innovation or originality in the presentation of the story and its analysis; has it resulted in greater insight and comprehension regarding the readers own life? Lastly, parsimony refers to the ability to provide an analysis based on a small number of concepts, and elegance or aesthetic appeal (Lieblich et al., 1998, 173).

Rather than referring to a truth-value, they propose a process of consensual validation through sharing one's views and conclusions and making sense of them within a community of researchers and interested, informed individuals (Lieblich et al., 1998, 174). This is another reason for sharing the summaries of the life story interviews amongst those interviewed and even the completed research project was shared with various interested Rwandans and their feedback incorporated into the finished product.

6.3.2. Limitations in the Rwandan context

Until quite recently, Rwanda has been described by various researchers as a military-state, or even a military dictatorship. Although Rwanda is officially a democracy, practicing democratic principles, this is not always the reality. Until today, whether due to high levels of trauma or government policy, there remains for many an atmosphere of fear, suspicion, uncertainty and insecurity. This level of fear is difficult to understand until one is fully immersed in the Rwandan context.

In conversations with Rwandans prior to traveling to Rwanda, I was aware that they seemed slightly guarded in what they said, but I could not really work out why. People did warn me that I needed to be careful about what I said and the questions I asked once I was in Rwanda. I took this warning seriously, but also quite lightly. On spending a week in Rwanda in 2005, I was fully baptized in a high dose of Rwandan fear, suspicion and paranoia. By the end of that week, I was looking over my shoulder at every moment, thinking and rethinking every word I

spoke and running conversations over and over in my mind to pinpoint possible things to be suspicious of.

On the second trip, in the company of two friends who had no prior knowledge or experience of the Rwandan situation, I was surprised to find that all three of us were fearful and suspicious by the end of our two week stay. A number of people said to us that president Kagame is 'very clever' and has an omniscient presence through his intelligence system. In casual conversation, mention would be made time and again of Kagame's intricate spy network, and that 'anyone we talk to could be one of those spies'. Consequences for saying the wrong thing ran from 'mysteriously disappearing' or being in a sudden fatal accident to at the very least, being barred from the country, which has indeed happened to the Belgian researcher, Filip Reijntjens.

The fear and suspicion is of such heights that after distributing a newsy, light newsletter about my first trip to Rwanda to Rwandan friends, I was horrified to find out that one of the Rwandans I had spent some time with during that trip felt the need to carry his passport constantly for fear that he might need to flee the country as a result of a passing comment I made that might be read as being critical of the government. On considering publishing an article on my research thus far, a Burundian friend sent an email in which he wrote, "remember that there is quite a strong presence of RPF militants in [South Africa], so be careful who you talk to there" (Email correspondence, 13 April, 2007). According to several Rwandans, a military person chose to embark on a study in the same field as mine with the express purpose of keeping an eye on my own and other projects researching the Rwandan situation. During my research, I have become more and more wary of talking to people and trusting people. I have become suspicious of every Rwandan I have interacted with and have found myself wondering, after every conversation, what that person wanted me to think and why; what agenda they had, what card was up their sleeve. It has become difficult for me to enter into a conversation with a Rwandan without wondering what is going on at a level I perhaps cannot perceive or interpret.

It is not clear whether this fear and suspicion is grounded in anything real or is the most real aspect of Rwandan society imaginable. An outsider reading this may

well think this level of fear and absolute paranoia bordering on the absurd. For a Rwandan, it is second nature, a way of life. For a Rwandan, it is unthinkable that I do not take their warnings 'not to trust *anybody*, even me' absolutely seriously. To be told by the vast majority of Rwandans I have interacted with that 'even what I say may not be true, even I have an agenda' is a potential limitation of my research. Focus groups, interviewing strangers and formal interviews of ordinary people become a challenge in this context. A relatively close friend has told me that he cannot tell me the truth because of fear and because of a lifetime of speaking in layers. This pervasive atmosphere of fear in Rwanda hinders open dialogue. This is what led me to reject the idea of a focus group. Some Rwandans I spoke to felt it would be a waste of time to put Rwandans of different ethnic groups, or even the same ethnic group, in the same room, and expect to gain any meaningful insight into the Rwandan situation.

This is the background which led to my chosen research methodology, which developed during the research journey and differs greatly from my original intentions. Analysing this very issue, of fear and suspicion, mistrust and paranoia, has formed an important part of my research, and has given a clearer understanding of the context in which healing and reconciliation need to occur. Being immersed in it myself has allowed me to begin to grasp the complexity of being in relationship with someone yet never fully trusting them; loving my country but never being sure of where I stand in it; dreaming of reconciliation during the day, but having nightmares of being hacked to pieces by a neighbour in the night.

Thus my greatest limitation was this atmosphere of fear, mistrust, suspicion and paranoia. This limitation was also my ethical bane. To gain a person's trust in the Rwandan context means so much more than it does in any other context I have operated in. At no point did I want to exploit that trust for the purpose of my research. And yet this happened in spite of my best intentions. One example of this was the betrayal one Rwandan friend experienced when he fully realized that every word he spoke in casual conversation with me had the potential of becoming a quote in my research project. I had assumed it would be commonly understood that anything said relating to my research topic could contribute to my final research product but this assumption was not shared with those I was in conversation with. After this experience, which took place early in my research, I

became a lot more explicit about my desire to use conversations in my research. Because conversations often developed unplanned, over breakfast, or drinks in a restaurant, it would be difficult to ask permission to use conversations before they happened. But I became a lot more conscious about asking after a stimulating conversation whether that was 'on the record' or not, and whether I could use it in my research project. I also talked to my Rwandan friends about my research methodology and the implications that would have for them. After understanding my approach, most Rwandans I interacted with continued to be open in conversations and supported my project.

As the project developed I began to see it less as mine and myself less as researcher versus researched, but more and more I saw it as a shared project to which we were all contributing for a common purpose. Especially once the life story research began, I had the feeling people were sharing details for the express purpose of allowing me deeper insight into difficult issues so that more of the 'truth' would be revealed. Nevertheless, my ethical over-stepping of the boundaries in 2005 resulted in much regret, and it is a testimony to the tremendous generosity and kindness of the person in question that our friendship has continued in such good faith.

Liisa Malkki, whose ethnographic research was amongst Burundian Hutu refugees in Tanzania, writes that the success of her fieldwork was not so much the result of "a determination to ferret out 'the facts' as on a willingness to leave some stones unturned" (1995, 61). She writes that she displayed her trust in her informants in not prying where she was not wanted but accepting that which they offered her. She argues that there is no guarantee that the 'hidden' will reveal to us what we are looking for and that it may be better research not to extract the truth just to get to the bottom of the truth (1995, 61). I approached my research similarly, not ruthlessly digging into things that people avoided but allowing all those I spoke with the space to withdraw, to change the subject, to share as much or as little as they were comfortable with, believing that in this very dynamic lay a lot of the 'truth' or relevance of the unique context being explored.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter has explained the narrative research method and the reasons for making use of this method in the context of this research project. It has argued for an inter-subjective, relational approach which places emphasis on the researchers' interpretation of the data which allows for depth and insights a more formal approach might not allow.

The next chapter will explore the four life stories, analysing the content and discussing some insights interactions with these four Rwandans brought to the fore. It will also focus some attention on the formal and informal interviews in so far as they dialogue with the life stories.

CHAPTER 7: ANALYSING THE LIFE STORIES

7.1. Introduction

This chapter will analyse the four life stories, looking at the themes of history, identity and reconciliation. In the previous chapter it was explained that the narrative research methodology used in this project falls under the 'holistic content' model where the entire story and content is taken into consideration. Central themes that run through the narrative are considered significant rather than the analysis of individual utterances or categorizing specific aspects of the narratives (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998, 18).

The four life stories, which were collected in sessions lasting around two hours, were recorded on a dictaphone and then transcribed. The transcriptions were summarised for the next step in the research project which was to have all four participants read each others' summaries for the follow-up interview. This chapter will analyse the life stories, and the following chapter will focus on the participants' responses to each others' life stories.

Although the life story interview was open-ended, it made use of several guiding questions. The opening question was for the participants to share their story from birth until today, describing where they grew up, their family history, their education and significant life events. This was followed by the question of when they became aware of their ethnic identity and the existence of ethnic groups. Next was a series of questions that explored their awareness of what was going on politically and socially around them and how that impacted them and their understanding of identity. Lastly, they were asked to share their thoughts on how they thought reconciliation in Rwanda could become a reality. Coupled with this question was the question of what it meant to them to be a Rwandan. The following section will give a brief background to each participant's life story before exploring the life stories according to the arising themes.

7.2. Background to the life stories

The life story interviews were held between October 2007 and September 2008. One of the reasons for this long time period was due to geography, as two of the participants were in Rwanda and two outside, so the interviews depended on my travel schedule. Another reason was the hesitancy of participants to participate and the need for several conversations prior to the actual interview. The interviews were held at locations decided on by participants and progressed as relatively open conversations between us.

Although participants were all relatively relaxed and ready to share their story, there was uncertainty about the possibility of being asked 'political' questions which might compromise them. Three of the four participants asked me not to ask them any direct question about the president or anything that might force them to take political sides. Participants were regularly reassured that they did not have to answer any question with which they might be uncomfortable. Interestingly, though, alongside the fear of being compromised in terms of what they said, all four participants expressed a desire to tell the truth as they saw it. For the protection of the participants, their names were changed with their consent.

7.2.1. Life story 1: Robert

Robert grew up in Uganda during Idi Amin's rule. His family lived with other Rwandans, called 'Ugandan Rwandese'. For a period, he and his family experienced living as refugees in a Rwandan camp in Uganda. After he completed his secondary education, he joined the RPA to fight for the refugees to be allowed to return to Rwanda. During the interview it became evident that his ethnic identity had little significance, and even being a Rwandan meant less to Robert than having a place in which he could determine his own future. While living in Uganda this was threatened, and returning to Rwanda was more about securing his future for education, a career and self-determination as opposed to a patriotic act per se. He emphasized his desire for an East African community which would allow people to move freely across borders, saying that the denial of

entry of Rwandan refugees back into Rwanda prior to 1994 was at the heart of much conflict.

7.2.2. Life story 2: Fred

Fred also grew up in Uganda. His parents owned their own home in the capital city and lived with other Rwandan families. They never had the experience of being in a refugee camp but did experience being negatively treated because they were Rwandan. Fred completed his studies in Uganda while the RPA were invading Rwanda. It was only after the war and genocide were over that he went to Rwanda to see if he could find a job there or make a contribution. He did find a job with a humanitarian aid organization and has stayed in Rwanda since then. Being a Rwandan is important for Fred largely because it allowed him a sense of belonging that he did not experience while living in Uganda.

7.2.3. Life story 3: Francois

Francois' family was from the south but he grew up in the north, and the north-south divide plays a significant role in his story. It was only due to the events of the early 1990s that he became aware of ethnicity. Because he came from mixed ethnic parentage, his sense of belonging to either ethnic group has always been in contention. He stayed in Rwanda after the war in the hope of being part of something new. After completing school, Francois was sent to an *Ingando* camp and told he needed to fight in the DRC, but he was not interested in going to fight and instead left the country. During the interview, Francois stressed repeatedly his love for truth and justice and how he felt that these were two things severely lacking in Rwandan society today. He had a strong desire to return to Rwanda but only if he could feel free to express his views and bring attention to the injustices he saw. He felt strongly that no person should be forced to live outside of their own country.

7.2.4. Life story 4: Reginald

Reginald's family was from the north and his father was a mayor (*burgemestre*) of his district. His father was accused for allegedly participating in a coup against the then president, Habyarimana. He spent time in jail and later died in mysterious circumstances when Reginald was nine. Reginald's family, although Hutu, was thus seen as siding with the RPA against the current government. This placed his family in a difficult position during the war as they were seen as the enemy by both sides. After the war, Reginald pursued his schooling in Kigali, and then attended an *Ingando* camp where he received military training and education. During this time he became increasingly aware of injustices in Rwandan society, and like Francois, when he was called to fight in the DRC, chose rather to leave the country. Reginald, too, would like to return to Rwanda were he allowed to speak freely and be himself.

7.3. Themes in the life stories

7.3.1. Ethnic identity

Amartya Sen writes about how we have allegiance to a plurality of identities that together make us who we are. He argues that we constantly 'explicitly or by implication' make choices about which identity we favour over others (2006, 19). In the case of the life stories, all four participants rejected simple identification along ethnic lines. None was comfortable with being labeled either Hutu or Tutsi or as Hutu refugee and Ugandan Tutsi, which are categories into which each could be placed on the basis of their histories and present circumstances. Robert and Fred, both Ugandan Tutsi, expressed their disinterest in their ethnic identification. Robert favoured his allegiance to the East African community whereas Fred emphasised his Rwandan identity. Francois was the least comfortable with his ethnic identity, having been brought up by a Tutsi mother but being labeled Hutu due to his absent father's identity. There was even some doubt whether his father's line was in fact Hutu or had had their identity cards changed to Hutu at the beginning of the First Republic in order to gain favour with the authorities. Reginald was the only participant who seemed to experience pride

in his ethnic identity, identifying confidently with being Hutu, but this identification seemed secondary to what was far more important to him: being a Rwandan, an African and a member of the human race.

For Fred and Robert, ethnic identity played an insignificant role while they were growing up in Uganda. They were made constantly aware of their Rwandan identity, and this was seen as something derogatory and demeaning, but they were not aware of the terms Hutu and Tutsi. Robert's refugee camp in Uganda, as far as he remembers, held both Hutu and Tutsi, but these distinctions meant nothing; everyone just wanted to return to Rwanda and leave the country that was treating them so badly.

Robert described the RPA as being Pan-Africanist, focused on the African continent and a united Rwanda. Their training was not only military but also included Rwandan and African politics and history. Robert says,

“In the RPA, Hutu and Tutsi wasn't spoken about. They dealt with segregation with military discipline and strictness. They wanted to show that Rwandans could live without those, and it was forbidden. You couldn't even speak of being Tutsi. They promoted patriotism and unity”.

When asked if he felt any hatred towards Hutu during the war, he replied, “Not at all. In the military we were mixed and what we were doing was a military operation. I never had a background which gave me a reason to hate anyone”.

None of the participants looked the part of their ethnic group. Reginald joked during the interview about how his limbs and fingers were too long to be a Hutu but his nose too flat to be a Tutsi. Francois similarly described how his neighbours always said he was too tall for a Hutu. Fred, although tall, joked that he was too heavily built to be a Tutsi. Although all the participants were dismissive of appearance as a means of defining ethnic identity, Francois expressed

experiencing a distinct lack of belonging in either ethnic group as a result both of his appearance and his mixed parentage. He says,

“You can even hear it amongst people, you can sit down, and the people you are with think you are Tutsi so they start telling me certain things, then they realise I'm a Hutu and change what they were saying. When I'm with a Hutu they don't tell me anything. They think, they don't know with this guy. You have to fight to convince someone you are a Hutu or a Tutsi. You have to fight to say that no matter what I am doing, I am still a Rwandan”.

He describes how as he was growing up he spent more time with his mother's side of the family, who were Tutsi, but never felt he was one of them. During the interview he expressed the belief that Tutsi have secrets or inside knowledge that Hutu don't have, suggesting this might be intrinsic to being Tutsi. On the other hand, his Hutu friends never fully trusted him because of his close interactions with Tutsi and so never divulged their true thoughts. This has left him in an awkward position, the effects of which he still feels as a refugee today.

Each of the participants seemed to place less value on their ethnic identity than other identifications. Each also insisted that there was nothing that made a person essentially Hutu or Tutsi apart from upbringing and what they had been taught. And yet, Francois' experience as described above brings to attention the myriad of unspoken factors that might give a person access to a particular group or not. These factors are taken for granted, implicit, assumed and are most probably unknown or unrealised by those in the group, but for those forced to remain outside they are very real and felt. During informal interviews, the secretiveness of the Tutsi was often mentioned and there was a sense that there was a hidden, shared knowledge between Tutsi that Hutu would never be able to have access to, making Tutsi essentially untrustworthy and unsafe to anyone outside of the ethnic group. When discussing ethnic stereotypes, Reginald commented that:

“Tutsi are considered to be superior, more collected, more intelligent, more secretive. Hutus are considered to be indifferent, don't care what will

happen tomorrow, concerned only with today; derogative depictions were used, people who are greedy”.

Elsewhere he describes Hutu as being 'transparent', in opposition to Tutsi who are more mysterious. Whether Tutsi experience themselves in this way, or believe themselves to have a secret knowledge denied to other was never expressed to me by a Tutsi. Two comments may bring this into question, though. The first was that several Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi, said to me on several occasions that Rwandans were not to be trusted and were not likely to tell the truth. But this statement was made by people from both ethnic groups and implicated people from both ethnic groups. The second was an informal conversation where a Tutsi man said he would sit at the same table as a Hutu but he would never trust a Hutu. I said that sitting at the same table as a Hutu was a positive step towards reconciliation. Another Tutsi friend who was there pointed out to me that the only reason he would sit at the same table as a Hutu was because Tutsi were expected to show good behaviour and superior manners at all times. Although he would pretend to welcome Hutu into his home and share food with them, it would be without sincerity and with hidden motives. This story is of course anecdotal but it feeds into the belief many Hutu have that the hospitality of a Tutsi, or anything a Tutsi may offer, cannot be fully trusted.

7.3.2. Ethnic stereotypes

From the literature and conversations with Rwandans, it was clear to me that there was a sense of Tutsi superiority and Hutu inferiority. Although Reginald and Francois had many experiences while growing up that confirmed this, growing up in Uganda with families who spoke little of ethnicity meant that Robert and Fred were much less aware of this.

Robert suggests that his first experiences of ethnic stereotyping was when the war started and he heard how Tutsis were classified as animals. After that, the survivors and those who came back from the diaspora where there had been a lot of segregation, especially in Burundi, wanted to glory in the fact that they have

survived. They would strive to show they were superior because they had survived. According to Robert, Rwandan Tutsi suffered a great deal in Burundi and celebrating their ability to survive was a matter of pride.

Francois was much more direct in response to the questions of ethnic stereotypes:

“I don't want to lie now, I'm going to tell you as a Christian, mostly the Tutsi they are manipulative. Secondly, Hutu, they are stupid. I say this because Hutu sometimes don't know what they want ... I don't know how to put this, Hutus have a reaction now and it's over. You will never see a Tutsi being angry now. They keep quiet and you think everything is fine and after a while something happens. Hutu get angry quickly. Tutsi try to be clever, which doesn't mean they are clever but they think they are which adds to their arrogance”.

It is clear that for Francois, who has never found a sense of belonging with either Hutu or Tutsi, each group has distinct characteristics, neither of which he feels a part. He explains these stereotypes in terms of an example:

“A clear example is how one person was killed and everyone picked up machete and started killing other people. It doesn't make sense. But look how Tutsi are killing Hutu now. They are killing them slowly, by not allowing them to study, for example. They think they are clever but ultimately they will fail. The one group uses anger, the other uses [cunning]”.

Reginald admits the existence of these stereotypes but takes them in a far more positive light.

“My argument is that we must be able to display those traits without hurting others, in a way that is accepting of others. In a way that says, “Yes, thank you so much, you are whatever they say you are, strong physically or transparent, content with life, etc. So be it! Take pride in that if you want to keep that. If you want to change that behaviour then do! If you're intelligent, collected, think

ahead, and a natural leader, then what's wrong with that? There's nothing wrong with being Tutsi. As long as it is not used to discriminate against or be superior to another. You don't need to compare yourself with the other...

In all typical definitions of Hutu and Tutsi that I've seen in literature and experienced there are good and bad qualities, things I wouldn't necessarily take on. But there are others I would like to be associated with. I would like to be transparent, content with life, I would like to be settled in my heart without fear of what might happen tomorrow. But at the same time I would like to plan ahead, but without being afraid, I would like to take pride in saying that I have good manners, and that I am a natural leader. If we tell a child you are a natural leader, they will become one, if we tell them the opposite they'll become that”.

Reginald thus suggests an integration of the positive stereotypes of both ethnic identities, as opposed to denying that such stereotypes exist. Yet many Rwandans have not been able, as Reginald has, to overcome the negative implications of what it means to be Hutu and Tutsi, and remain trapped in a cycle of believing themselves to be 'less than' and a victim of the others' clever, secretive cunning, or 'more than' and deserving of leadership and power due to one's apparent superior ability.

7.3.3. Being a refugee

Interestingly, all four participants have experience of being a refugee. Robert and Fred were refugees in Uganda before 1994 and Reginald and Francois have been refugees since the late 1990s. All four emphasise the importance of every person having access to their home country and having the freedom to decide their own future. When asked what it meant for him to be a Rwandan, Fred said the following:

“All in all, I have a home, I belong somewhere. I was in Africa but I didn't belong anywhere. I feel an added value being in my own environment. I

feel I need to protect my own identity as a Rwandan. I wouldn't enjoy seeing any Rwandan out as a refugee”.

Both Fred and Robert could see no reason for anyone to stay outside of Rwanda but Reginald and Francois said it was impossible for them to live in Rwanda at this time. They gave as reasons the injustices, the lack of freedom of speech and the inability to freely be who they are, without apology. This latter theme was identical to that which Fred and Robert experienced living in Uganda. Robert describes an experience at school while playing volleyball. He accidentally knocked into another player who turned to him angrily and said, “I've been hit by a Rwandan!” The way in which this was said implied that being a Rwandan was something dirty and bad. Similarly, Fred describes how at school if children were irritated with him, they would say, *akayirwanda* which is like saying, 'you're tiny or useless', which made him very frustrated, especially as his family was better off in every way (educationally and economically).

These experiences of being seen as something lesser just because of your identity and not because of anything you have done was a repeated theme in Robert and Fred's life stories and the emotions expressed when mentioning specific incidents were frustration, a sense of injustice and an underlying anger. These same emotions were expressed by Reginald and Francois as they described their lives in Rwanda, both before 1994 and after. Reginald told the following childhood story:

“When visiting my friend, the son of the family next door, there was an argument between his friend and his sister as to whether a friend who was visiting them would buy enough bottles of Fanta to include me or not. I was in the room but only my friend knew. As the two children were fighting the visitor turned to the mother and said, “Oh my goodness, your children have turned into Hutus! This is not the behaviour of *imfura*”. (*Imfura* means 'first born' and Tutsi consider themselves as having the position of the first born in Rwandan society). They continued having this conversation and when they discovered I was in the room there was a shock”.

Variations of this kind of story were mentioned to me by a wide variety of Hutus I spoke to formally and informally, and gave them the impression that they were 'less than' not because of anything they had done but merely because of their affiliation to an identity category they didn't even understand at that age. This 'being less than' just because of affiliation with the Hutu category was repeated again after 1994. Francois describes being made to feel guilty or responsible for genocide even though he had no part in it. Both he and Reginald describe how education was freely available for Tutsi children whose parents had died during the war and genocide, but not to Hutu children similarly orphaned. Some Hutus I have been in conversation with privately have described being kicked or spat at by neighbourhood children while others say they don't feel safe to be outside their homes and cannot live a normal, free life. The words of one Hutu were, "This doesn't feel like my country any more. I am not safe here."

The experiences of Reginald and Francois in terms of being a refugee thus hold many similarities to those of Fred and Robert. While the latter two experienced feeling discriminated against because of their identity while being outside of their country, Reginald and Francois experience being discriminated against within their own country. And yet all four long for the same thing, the right to make decisions about their own future, access to education and a career, a family living together freely in their own country, the freedom to be who they are without being made to feel like they are 'less than'. The following section will explore this further in terms of what it means to the participants to be a Rwandan.

7.3.4. Being a Rwandan

For some, their Rwandan identity meant more than for others. Both Fred and Robert expressed relief to be proud of being a Rwandan after their experiences in Uganda. However, Robert believes far more in an East African identity:

"We still have a lot of problems in the region which are coming from the problem of nationality and citizenship. Oppressing people of other nationalities, like oppressing Rwandans in Tanzania and Uganda, is a failure of African leaders and they don't realize that these identity crises

lead to political crises and violence. This is something that needs to be addressed at a regional, policy level. If there had been no reason to leave Uganda I would not have gone to Rwanda. If people had security there would be no need to engage in violence. If there was an East African Community that secured people's futures there would be no need for nationalities".

Robert said during his interview that he would like young people to be given the chance to live their lives identifying themselves according to their nationality, and not suffer the consequences of what their parents, cousins or whoever might have done. He added that all Rwandans should have the chance of growing up as Rwandan.

But this becomes a complex challenge in a country flooded with people who have lived outside of Rwanda for most of their lives. I asked Fred whether there is any conflict in Rwanda because of there being so many people from all over the diaspora. He responded with a joke, "My only fear is that because we don't all know our family lines because we are all coming from different areas and are young we may end up marrying our family members!" On a more serious note he added that groups may have formed according to their backgrounds; those who had lived together in the Congo might still feel an affiliation to one another, as might Rwandans who had lived in Uganda or Tanzania. "You meet someone and start speaking Kinyarwanda and you put in a French word. The moment you put in a French word I know you have a French background". But he emphasizes that your background doesn't make you more or less Rwandan. He adds that there is even a community of Rwandans who studied in Russia.

Speaking of the survivors he mentioned how some may feel jealous of those from the diaspora as they come with big families who weren't affected by genocide. He adds,

"Some might say, if the Rwandans from Uganda had not attacked maybe genocide would not have happened. Such things come up. It doesn't please us at all. We from Uganda may be proud that we started this whole

thing so that everyone could get home, another is not so happy about it: 'When you came, I lost. I lost riches, I lost my families. Now you are here you are useless to me.' You can't bring back the dead. But in a struggle you have to forfeit something. Myself, mother's side they lost five brothers who died in the war".

It is with such difficult realities that Rwanda has to grapple in terms of national identity. Yet both he and Robert remain confident that in time everyone will be able to internalise a new, united identity all can be proud of.

However, this hope seems elusive for Reginald and Francois. A recurring theme in both their interviews was that being Rwandan today seemed to go hand in hand with accepting a certain version of Rwandan history and of what happened during and around 1994. Further, being Rwandan seemed to require being trained for the military and being sent to fight in the DRC. Francois struggled to be proud of being a Rwandan at all as every time he mentioned where he came from he sensed people wondering if he was a killer. Reginald expressed being far more proud of being a Rwandan, but reappropriated what that might mean in a poetic statement:

"Victimhood is a choice. So is endurance, forgiveness and hope. I am proud to be Rwandan, and grateful for all the experiences brought through what horrified the entire world. I believe from Rwanda will come what glorifies our humanity too. I want to experience and be part of that glory. As to the meaning of being Rwandan, it is a living question to which I hope to find an evolving answer as my journey unfolds".

Thus Rwandan identity remains a complex issue which is constantly impacted on by historical and political considerations, as will be explored in the following section.

7.3.5. The impact of history on identity

When asked whether there is actually a difference between Hutu and Tutsi or something that makes a person essentially Hutu or Tutsi, each of the participants began to talk about Rwandan history and the impact it had on ethnic identity. It was clear that each participant struggled with articulating the constructedness of ethnic identity while also acknowledging its prevailing reality in Rwandan society. There was an agreement that physical features were not decisive at all but that other factors, primarily due to upbringing, played a role.

Robert suggested that the economic activities of being either nomadic pastoralists (Tutsi) or cultivators (Hutu) influenced the kinds of songs or cultural activities that developed. People who live a nomadic life have different behaviours based on their lifestyle and life experiences. He says that nomadic people, whether in Rwanda, Tanzania or elsewhere in the area, are similar in that they use similar utensils and similar customs, for example.

Fred's response to the same question was:

“I wonder what you're calling ethnic? This thing is very hard to explain. I might claim I'm Tutsi but when you go back to the colonial times, physical appearance was measured and then you are classified as Tutsi ... You were classified on the basis of your appearance and wealth. If you were Hutu and became rich you could become a Tutsi ... There is a term in Kinyarwanda that says to grow out of Hutuness”.

Fred captures here the complex development of ethnic terminology and identity in Rwanda. He joked during the interview that were the colonialists to return to Rwanda today to classify his family, they would classify some as Hutu and some as Tutsi. He adds that there has been a lot of intermarriage, not only between Hutu and Tutsi but between Rwandans and other east Africans, making identity classification even more complex.

Francois easily dismissed ethnic identity as a construction of Belgium colonialism. He has seen in his own family how easily this construction has been manipulated when he discovered from his grandfather after the genocide that his family had had their ethnic identity changed from Tutsi to Hutu during the 1950s. His continual experience has been of not belonging in either group and it is clear that this leaves him frustrated. Reginald, on the other hand, is the only participant to insist that there was such an identity as being Hutu or being Tutsi prior to colonialism, although their meaning may have been different.

“We have proverbs or sayings in Kinyarwanda that go back to long before colonialism which imply that there were Hutu and Tutsi. Storytellers clearly indicated that there were Hutu, Tutsi and Twa; the Twa always playing a funny role in the stories. But in history (...) Rwanda had a king. The king was neither Hutu nor Tutsi but he did come from the Tutsi identity. There is a saying in Rwanda that were the king to resign his throne he would become a Tutsi again. In the stories we had, if the king was demoted he would be a Tutsi and in the following one he would be Hutu (...) Yes, there were Hutu and Tutsi and people were told who they are. In Rwandan stories and sayings there would be a question, 'How many Hutu do you have?'”

When asked what role colonialism might have played in terms of this, he responded:

“It's not an either/or situation in my mind. There were migrations. But Tutsi were more from the north and Hutu were more from Chad, more Bantu. That story to me makes sense. However, I don't think that there is a Hutu or Tutsi there who can claim to have only Hutu or Tutsi blood”.

This leads Reginald to the conclusion that people need the freedom to choose what they identify themselves with but doesn't see this as a threat to a united Rwandan identity.

Several of the participants point at how politics and the struggle for power have played a significant role in the development of ethnic identity and division. Francois says, speaking from the experience of his family,

“What makes me feel I am a Hutu or Tutsi? Politics! If the Hutus win power, I am 100% a Hutu, if not, I have nothing to do with them - this is the game people are playing. That's maybe my stupidity, I don't see any difference between Hutu and Tutsi except what the stupid Belgians said about our differences. Biologically can you prove anything? My mother is a Tutsi but she is short. What makes people different? Parenting plays a big role, and politics”.

Reginald takes this further in saying that until today, politicians have manipulated ethnic identity to their advantage:

“Everyone wants to describe their history in a way that suits them, that makes them to be the victim. The intention is to justify whatever wrong doing is done to the other. If you read the two versions, they conflict with each other. The former wants to make Hutu the victim of the Tutsi and justify the revolution and the war and the defense of national pride and democracy because of being the majority... The other says those things didn't exist, there was no slavery, there was no such thing as the revolution, things were orchestrated by the colonialists... But both stories break down, as if those things didn't exist Tutsi refugees would not have had to go into exile and the genocide of Tutsi would never have happened”.

Having said this, as they grapple with the difficulty of articulating a constructed yet prevalent ethnic identity, each of the participants would most likely agree with Fred's words:

“I would claim I'm a Tutsi because that's what I've been told but genetically, if I look back a hundred years, am I one? Where do I belong? I don't know. I am Rwandan. That one cannot be denied, whatever I am, I am Rwandan”.

7.3.6. Reconciliation

Where the participants differed the most was with regard to reconciliation. Robert and Fred both defended and supported the current efforts made towards reconciliation by the government and felt Rwanda was making good progress. Francois and Reginald were very critical of the current policies and approaches related to reconciliation and saw this as a primary reason for remaining outside the country.

Robert, like the other participants, says he would like everyone to have a chance to grow up as a Rwandan. I asked him about the government's law against inciting divisionism, which seemed to others I had spoken to as a means of controlling freedom of speech and criticism aimed at the government. He responded,

“To stop all the division one has to be very strict. It's not something you can theorise about...It takes too much to hate someone, to kill someone, to kill your wife, your kids. Anything that can save future generations from a mentality that will lead to that, is worth it”.

He argued that the government needed to step in and protect people from allowing their differences to lead to genocide through 'strict' policy and legislation.

“A strong policy can assist the process of leaving behind differences – until people are ready to talk and think about these things without it inciting violence. The issue is very sensitive, the wounds are very fresh”.

As can be seen here, he believes the strict approach is a temporary measure until the wounds have been healed and there is an atmosphere more conducive to open dialogue.

Although Reginald and Francois had much to say on the injustices they felt were present in Rwandan society today only Fred commented directly on issues of justice related to those who are guilty of genocide.

“They should be punished and they should pay back... If we feel sorry, or say this is a child, it was his father who killed, we shouldn't touch his property as the son will stay poor, I don't think that is the way it should work. We have a justice system and the justice system should do its work. People should be brought to justice. The whole world should understand this was a crime that was performed that should be punished. If they just leave it like that and they don't take measures even the so-called reconciliation will never be there. How can reconciliation be there if some deny genocide happened? They need to admit that the mistake was there. If that mistake is there we punish it. You accept you are wrong, I accept you did this to me, now this is the moment we come together, we reconcile. But if you are left free ... because the so-called human rights organizations are protecting you, I don't see reconciliation happening. If they bring people to justice, people admit they were wrong, we can sit at the same table and say, okay, how will we move forward”.

But it is partly this position that worries Reginald and Francois. Both made mention of what they felt to be an injustice in Rwanda: that the son of an RPF soldier who died is looked after by a government supported fund but the son of a former Rwandan government soldier is held responsible for his father's behaviour. Even though both children were caught up in a war not of their own making, the one is made to suffer for it for the rest of his life and has his future choices limited by this, while the other is favoured and given opportunities for his future. Fred himself mentions the challenge presented here but sees no way around it:

“There are a lot of divisions here that are hard to understand. They [the perpetrators] feel out of place. You find organizations to help children of the survivors to go to school or to have shelter because their houses were destroyed. But that group you are mentioning [the perpetrators] are not considered ... they died in war, they are the ones that were fighting or they are there in the Congo. This child is as vulnerable as the other one, but these are the conditions of politics and wars. Such things are there. Sometimes you feel sorry for that person but what can you do? Not so much. You see the father has property but because of the law that property has been impounded to settle what the father did, but the father is dead

and the child is paying. Or the father is in the bush and the child doesn't want to talk about it. These are the after effects of war. They are there”.

Even though these challenges remain a reality, Fred sees a clear path ahead for reconciliation.

“I think [Rwanda is] moving on because the phases are so clear. One, the justice system is doing their work. We feel they are doing something. The international community is disappointing us, it is not doing what it's supposed to be doing. If you are to bring people to justice let us do it in the quickest possible time and then we forget all about that phase. But they take too long on that. And Rwanda stepped in with the *gacaca* system. Groups of people are judged. Sometimes there are failures of people being competent in justice but there are other levels to rectify that. But whatever the case, it is faster than the Arusha court. People are brought to justice, and after most of the *gacaca* courts are closed, people have been judged and need to pay back by doing physical work ... doing something for the community. Justice is taking its steps, and if that one is going on I see reconciliation as not being very far. We are about to move on which is the way forward. The NURC is trying to do that as the other phases are getting through. With time I believe the other phases will be getting through”.

For Francois, principles of truth and inequality lead him to an alternative viewpoint:

“If someone were to say, “Tutsi did not kill people” but then in five years the truth comes out that they did, what then? But you only want to believe what you already know. Always, we are busy lying. Now if my parents, I know were killed by the RPF, maybe in Rwanda or probably in the DRC [and] it happens that you become my friend and your parents have been killed by Hutu or *interehamwe*, now I have someone to pay for me but you don't have anyone to pay for you for school fees. Just because of what your tribe has done, you are not responsible and yet you have no school fees”.

Another theme that arose was being forced to do military training and fight in the DRC. For both Reginald and Francois, this was not in line with their expectations of a democratic country at peace. When asked why he did not want to stay in Rwanda and rebuild the country, he responded:

“So, rebuilding a country, so I really thought we would be in a country that would be having peace, but my expectations were not met. I was keen to help but the system did not allow it. If you take a high school student and force them to military training, that is not right ... It happened to me three times that I was called from high school for military training but each time I escaped ... The system did not allow me to do what I dreamed to do”.

Further, Francois argued that no one is innocent and this makes punishing people a complex issue. Rather, he argues that only punishing some or unjustly punishing the wrong people can result in yet another crisis requiring justice and reconciliation.

“If you deny as a Hutu that Hutu killed you are either one of those killers or there is something wrong. But also Tutsi are not innocent. The innocent people are those who were killed ... The solution, if one hits you is not to hit back ... But you find that this person is not in jail. Probably, he is innocent. But we don't want to see him because he is Hutu. So we put him in jail because we have the power and the rights to do it. So now the survivor is no longer innocent. We are creating something similar as what was done”.

I asked Francois what would need to be in place for him to return to Rwanda. He said that he wanted to see a government that was not obviously affiliated to any ethnic group. Further, he would want a leadership in place that allowed all Rwandans to feel free and punished those who were guilty, regardless of their ethnicity. “What is happening now is that people with power who have any links to the opposition are being removed, accused of crimes. Or else, people from the street are being jailed without knowing or understanding what they did” and that they should rather be educated and reinstated in society. Reginald adds to this that the problem in Rwanda is that its history has always been one-sided in

support of those in power. The truth about history needs to be revealed, according to him, in order for justice and reconciliation to take place.

When asking what would bring about reconciliation, Robert suggests that practical projects in which people can get involved will assist the process of reconciliation. He argues for activities such as theatre or school events that bring people together. But he suggests the approach needs to be something you can plan, execute and then evaluate the results. I asked him about workshops where people could dialogue and his response was that these would “become too difficult to control. People become traumatized”. He says that this, as with the remembrance days, reminds people of what happened and incites hatred amongst the survivors. He does, however, feel that debate should take place in writing (in the media) as between memorials there is little debate and discussion. When I suggested that many people were afraid to discuss anything genocide related due to the divisionism law, he said they shouldn't be afraid as “You are not arrested for talking. You are arrested for inciting”. I then described the fear of some of my Hutu friends outside of Rwanda.

“The fear is not substantiated. There are very distinct things you can be punished for by law. Through staying outside of Rwanda they have not seen how the country has progressed. I think it has to do with exposure to changes over time (...) They have not gone through the process of the country's changes. They have been targeted by oppositional media with negative stories”.

Yet both Reginald and Francois feel they cannot speak out about the injustice they see. Francois said,

“As a Christian I don't like to see injustice happening. If you're my brother and you're missing the point I will tell you. I won't keep quiet because you are my brother. When I see injustice somewhere I don't tolerate it, I have to say, this must stop (...) Someone you know is innocent is treated unjustly because he is who he is. You can't participate in that system”.

Francois insists that the truth must come out. "What is known in Rwanda is only one side of the story. If both sides of the story are known no one is going to ask question ... Now, someone reads an article about Rwanda and asks if it is true I have to explain that this is half the story but there is more to it too". It is difficult for Francois to endorse the punishment of those guilty of genocide when others just as guilty of heinous crimes walk free just because of their ethnic identity.

When speaking about future generations, Robert suggests that he would not want to tell his children their ethnic identity. They would probably find this out from society but as far as he is concerned, all they need to know is that they are Rwandan. Francois is less optimistic. He says that when he was a child he knew very little about ethnicity but that children today know too much as many of them are taken to the genocide memorial where "he will read on those walls that Hutu killed Tutsi. So his way of thinking will be different from me when I was growing up".

For Reginald and Francois, a major issue is the contradiction they see in the government's position on ethnicity. According to them, on the one hand the government preaches the message that "we are all Rwandan" and has outlawed the use of ethnic categories. On the other, they insist that a genocide of Tutsi took place and that it is Tutsi survivors that need to be looked after by the government. Both advocate accepting and coming to terms with ethnic identity rather than denying or disallowing its existence. As Francois says, "We need to sit down together, without denying you are a Hutu – because I don't agree with the RPF idea of saying we are all Rwandan. No, no, no. We can't deny our identity. If you feel you are a Hutu or a Tutsi, fine, but can you allow each other to stay together". Reginald feels strongly that ethnic identity needs to be dealt with openly:

"How is reconciliation possible if there are not Hutu and Tutsi to reconcile with each other? Otherwise we need to reconcile the RPF with the former army or the current government and the former government... There are two groups that need to be reconciled. People went into exile in the past because they were Tutsi. The RPF accused the former government of genocide against Tutsi so there must be Tutsi. [Ethnic identity] should be an essential part of

people's dignity. Whichever way you choose to tell Rwandan history, you need to know what your history is and take pride in it”.

Reginald believes that a reappropriation of ethnic identity towards something positive and unifying, as opposed to the suppression of ethnic identity, is the way forward.

“My argument is that we must be able to display those [ethnic] traits without hurting others, in a way that is accepting of others ... People say Hutu were in slavery but we are here now. So what? If you take pride in having such a difficult past and making it to where you are now, out of slavery, then that is something to celebrate! Why wouldn't you, rather than feeling victimised. Also, [as regards Tutsi history], so what? In all typical definitions of Hutu and Tutsi that I've seen in literature and experienced there are good and bad qualities, things I wouldn't necessarily take on. But there are others I would like to be associated with”.

Although each of the participants prefers a different path to get there, all four agree that they would like a Rwanda where everyone is free to be Rwandan.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter has outlined themes that emerged from the life stories. All four participants revealed a similar desire for all Rwandans to be free to be themselves in the new Rwanda, but they differed on how to make this a reality. For Robert and Fred, the strict government laws and policies, such as the divisionism law, the protection of survivors, and the execution of justice for genocide related crimes, seemed the best way forward for reconciliation. Such an approach seemed necessary due to the risk of renewed violence. For Reginald and Francois, these laws and policies were seen as the root cause of injustices and an impediment to freedom of speech and the freedom to be themselves.

All four have experience of what it means to be a refugee and what it feels like to be treated badly, not because of having done anything wrong but merely for

belonging to a particular identity classification. This common experience between participants seems to me to be a starting point for dialogue. The shared desire for a country of which all Rwandans can be proud is a vision all four participants may be willing to build on. In the following chapter, this tentative dialogue between the participants through their summaries and dialogue with myself as mediator will be described. Along with this, the Reconciliation Forum, where thirty-five community leaders debated reconciliation and forgiveness, will be analysed. They, along with all those interviewed, would probably agree with Francois' words with which this chapter concludes, "I can't feel like I am on the side of Hutu because I want to be part of Rwandans who want peace".

CHAPTER 8: CRITICAL REFLECTION ON THE DIALOGUES

8.1. Introduction

The previous chapter ended on the positive and hopeful note that the shared experience of having been outside Rwanda and the shared desire for a united Rwanda would be a starting point for reconciliatory dialogue. This chapter will show that although this is partially true, the divisive narratives described in the first four chapters of this thesis pose a challenge to the possibility of reconciliatory dialogue.

As we explore the follow-up interviews, which form a dialogue between the four Rwandans of the previous chapter, this chapter will show how, on the one hand, we have a group of people who see Rwandan society as safe, united and progressive, and on the other, as dangerous, divided and false. Apart from the interviews around the life stories this chapter will also examine the dialogue that arose during a conference on reconciliation that took place in a rural district in Rwanda. Here, thirty-five district leaders who sit on a government initiated Reconciliation Forum, discussed and debated whether reconciliation was taking place in Rwanda or not. Although a genuine desire for open dialogue was expressed by all participants, they had mixed levels of optimism about the progress.

As mentioned before, the issue at hand is not who is right or what the truth is but to look at the impact these divisive ways of seeing reality have on the possibility of reconciliation. This chapter will point to both the challenges that the divisive narratives portray as well as the possible opportunities that came to light in the various dialogues.

8.2. Critical reflection on the life stories

The life story interviews were held between August, 2007 and September, 2008. The follow-up interviews were held between May and September, 2009. This means that there was approximately a year to a year-and-a-half between the initial interviews and the follow-up interviews. This allowed for interesting dialogue around what had changed in the intervening time. Robert and Fred were more realistic and open about some of the challenges in Rwanda. Francois was more cynical of the process of reconciliation in Rwanda and expressed a higher degree of fear than in the initial interview. Reginald was guardedly positive about the development of Rwanda's infrastructure but remained skeptical of the government's motives and the possibility of reconciliation.

From the interviews several themes emerged which have been arranged below as a dialogue between the participants even though they did not speak with one another. However, the positions of each of these themes were presented to each participant in order for them to respond to. The themes include perspective on the country as things have developed over the past ten years including injustice and freedom of speech, forced conscription and *Ingando*, power relations in Rwanda and homecoming and reconciliation.

8.2.1. Perspectives on the Rwandan context

During the follow-up interviews, of the four Rwandan men interviewed, Francois was significantly the most negative about progress and reconciliation in Rwanda. When I described to him the positive changes I had seen in visiting the country over a five year period, he responded that you can't base what you see on the street as an indicator of what is actually going on. He then recounted some of the reasons for his negativity. He began by referring to the growing evidence of RPF crimes during and directly after the genocide. He made mention of evidence emerging at the trials held at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in Arusha that the genocide was in fact not preplanned, which suggests that it is was not a genocide but rather a civil war that took place in 1994. Supporting this allegation he asks why the United Nations did not investigate the

plane crash which incited the killing in April of 1994 directly after the genocide, unless it was to hide something that they knew.

Francois stated that all Rwandans know the truth but are not speaking out about it. The strongest emotion during the interview was a deep sense of fear. Francois saw the government as one that has control over everything and a desire to hold onto power at whatever cost. While speaking, Francois on several occasions warned me to be careful with my research and further to be careful with what I sent through my email accounts or said over the telephone as everything could potentially be tapped.

Mention was made that the government was systematically eradicating educated people that were seen as opponents through accusing them of corruption and then having them jailed, or having them accused of participating in genocide or spreading genocide ideology. He then said that there is a “need for a new revolution like the one in 1959” and suggested this was brewing under the surface. He described a growing anger and resentment due to so many people being silenced as a result of so much injustice. He argued that teachers are forced to take early retirement as schools change their medium of language from French to English. Most French speaking teachers are Hutu and the new English speaking teachers that take their place are Tutsi.

When this perspective was placed before Robert, he proposed an interesting interpretation. He described the enormous pressure on ordinary Rwandans, especially young Hutus. He described how in a very short space of time, Rwanda had transformed itself from being a country operating according to a traditional economic and societal structure to a western one. Development has become Rwanda’s focus together with a very rapid introduction of technology. There is pressure on Rwandans to be wealthy and yet there is a harsh response to corruption. Many people travel and bring with them new ideas and ways of doing things. Due to the government’s vision for progress and development, they have replaced French and the Francophone system, which they believe has brought much damage to Rwanda, with English and new political and developmental relationships with the United States and the United Kingdom.

Robert suggests that these many changes, which have taken place in the short space of ten years, have created a lot of insecurity and pressure for the ordinary Rwandan. Coupled with this, he describes how the vast majority of Tutsi in the country are linked to survivors whereas the vast majority of Hutu in the country are linked to perpetrators. The genocide is a daily topic of conversation that everyone is confronted with constantly. Although Robert believes it important to talk about what happened he believes this also makes it difficult for people to move on, especially for young Hutus who have to work through many complex and difficult emotions.

In the context of a rapidly changing society, and the burden of living in a society in which a million people were killed, Robert says it is not hard to imagine why what he calls 'negative feedback loops' may develop, which allow for everything that the government does to be interpreted along the lines of conspiracy and control. These negative feedback loops are intensified, he suggests, by the government's aggressive hunting down of high ranking genocidal leaders all over the world. These leaders are tapped into networks in the diaspora. Those in the diaspora may see that high ranking officials have their phones or email accounts tapped and witness their arrests, and assume this is the government's treatment of all Rwandans. But Robert thinks it unlikely that the government would have the resources or interest in following the lives of most Rwandans in the diaspora, particularly young Rwandans who were not old enough to participate in the genocide in 1994.

When presented with Robert's version of the Rwandan context, Reginald said that "fantastic things have happened in Rwanda" with regards to development and progress and that "credit must go to where it is due". However, he remains skeptical of the government's motives. He argues that if Robert's version of events in Rwanda were true then he cannot understand why criticism of the government was not being dealt with on a public platform. If the Francophone system was being replaced with an English system for the good of the Rwandan people, why were there not public platforms for people to debate and discuss this? "The consequences [of government policy] are not being addressed in the public arena," argued Reginald. He suggested that the government has adopted a good strategy of developing the country and insisting on "one version of history

long enough until it is true” but that he does not trust the motives behind this as being for the good of all Rwandans. He is also skeptical of the move from an economic system dependent on agriculture, which places power in the hand of every farmer, to a service-based economy which is controlled by a few powerful people.

On the question of individuals in the diaspora being followed by the government, he says that, as unlikely as it seems, he was surprised when one of his refugee friends was contacted on his cell phone by the Rwandan embassy in his host country. Officially, refugees should not be contacted or acknowledged by their countries of origin and in the case he cited, his friend had never given his contact details to the embassy. These stories incite fear and suspicion.

Francois, more cynically than Reginald, feels that Robert’s theory of a negative feedback loop is only a guise to hide what the government is really up to, although exactly what that might be remains unclear. During the interview he handed me a document signed by a woman who alleges that her husband was assassinated by the Rwandan government in June, 2009. This allegation can be found on several websites which suggest that the author’s husband, a Tutsi with a high ranking position in the Rwandan army, was hired by the government to help make people the government deemed to be a threat ‘disappear’. The author’s husband became progressively uncomfortable with this job and began to protest. One night, in June 2009, gunmen entered her home and shot her husband while she and her children managed to escape. Following websites such as these can instill a sense of fear and conspiracy, particularly if they are supported by alleged witness accounts which are then spread through the diaspora. These allegations are difficult to verify but have a powerful effect on those following them.

8.2.2. Injustice and freedom of speech

Apart from fear of the government, Francois also highlighted the injustices that he feels need to be taken seriously before reconciliation can take place. He says,

“I can’t reconcile with you until you accept what you have done. The RPF needs to say what they did. People were orphaned. How can we ignore

that? ... I have friends who have family members killed by the RPF and they can't say anything about it. How can there then be reconciliation?"

Francois suggests that a way forward would be to have an external mediator. He identified three groups, namely, Hutu extremists, Tutsi extremists and moderates in the middle. The Hutu extremists blame everything on the RPF. The Tutsi extremists blame everything on the *genocidaires*. It's hard to find people in the middle. I suggested that President Kagame may be in the middle in that he releases prisoners and tries to reintegrate people back into society but Francois responded by asking how many Hutu students are studying on government scholarships abroad compared to Tutsi students? He added that jobs are reserved for Tutsi. Hutus might hire Hutus as they fear the Tutsi may be spies but Tutsi will hire Tutsi. He argued that the president is making diplomatic decisions to protect his position of power.

Yet another fear of Francois is the lack of freedom of speech. He says that not only do people keep quiet about the 'truth that everyone knows' but that there is no room for public debate. In response to this, Fred suggests that the Rwandan government is doing the best they can on limited resources. One of the major challenges is the competence of journalists. Investigative journalism has a long way to go in Rwanda and journalists may be shut down not because they are exposing things but because they are printing rumours and gossip rather than carefully and thoroughly investigating issues and allegations. Fred adds that there are newspapers, such as *Umeseso*, which are critical of the government and widely read on the street without being under threat.

Robert further describes how the government's National Unity and Reconciliation Commission (NURC) is working hard to bring public debate into communities, encouraging people to talk about controversial and difficult topics together in public spaces. He adds that NURC's work is probably not moving fast enough to counter the powerful negative feedback loops that spread by word of mouth but that they are trying, through forums and *Ingando*, to reach as many people as they can.

Where the focus of NURC's efforts were on the reasons for genocide and what happened, Robert suggests that now they are moving towards more positive stories, including rewarding people who did good and heroic deeds during genocide. These awards are an acknowledgement that not everyone was collectively guilty during genocide but that there were also positive things that happened that can form the foundations for a new vision for the country.

Reginald repeats that the need for public debate is urgent. Even if there were public debates on critical issues, he argues that Rwandans have a "particular way to tell their story". He suggests that there is an unspoken understanding between Rwandans that only certain topics can be addressed and critical issues are addressed in particular acceptable ways. People are scared, and however difficult it may be to articulate why, "the bottom line is that they are". One of the things that cannot be publically debated, for example, is the government's version of the genocide story.

Both Francois and Reginald feel that the problem of freedom of speech is exacerbated by the lack of political opposition. National elections take place in 2010, but Francois is doubtful that they will mean anything in a one-party state. He says that the reconciliation process in Rwanda is like putting a bandage on a sore muscle instead of massaging and healing the muscle. It is all about creating an appearance of development and progress to impress donors when under the surface there are issues that are not being addressed.

When I described the improved circumstances of Hutu friends in Kigali, Francois responded by saying that in Kigali people generally don't know each other and people from all over the country and the diaspora live side by side. In the city, people have access to resources such as lawyers and can protect their property and livelihood. But in the rural areas, everyone knows each other well and has lived together for generations. People live alongside those who killed their family members. There is no access to the legal system or other resources and it is difficult to protect yourself against others who may accuse you of genocide or spreading genocide ideology.

On the question of genocide ideology, I mentioned to Robert that this creates a lot of fear within the country as well as a feeling that everyone is part of a spy network. I told him of a friend of mine who admitted that were I to mention the name of a Hutu friend who spoke against the government, they would feel compelled to report him to the government. Robert responded that the ordinary Rwandan wants to be a good citizen but are not always aware of what that involves. He doubted that the government would have the resources or the interest in following up every individual Hutu who might say something negative in a private conversation. They may be interested in following up teachers or people in public positions who were trying to pass on genocidal ideologies to others. He referred again to the pressure many Rwandans are under to maintain a high standard of living with competition for jobs and resources and that being a model citizen is something to strive for and may lead people to an exaggerated compliance to laws in a way that the government did not intend.

8.2.3. Forced conscription and *Ingando*

Interestingly, in the initial interviews both Francois and Reginald had mentioned that one of the reasons they had left Rwanda was because, after the *Ingando* training, they would be forced to fight in the DRC. Fred and Robert responded to this saying they had never heard of forced conscription in Rwanda. Robert, being of a similar age to Francois and Reginald, had never been called to fight. When I mentioned this to Reginald, he said that there is no longer forced conscription but there was in 1998 and 1999. "I don't need to debate this one. I narrowly escaped conscription to the army," Reginald states simply.

Both Robert and Fred were supportive of the *Ingando* camps. Fred said it was part of tertiary school training and used the example of Israel where in a country that faces war, it is useful for its young people to have some military training. He experienced something similar while growing up in Uganda. He describes the purposes as educative and to 'sensitize' people. Robert adds the reason of 'demystifying' the military, in sharing military knowledge and training with all Rwandans.

8.2.4. Power relations

Alongside the injustices that Francois sees in Rwanda, he argues that all the power lies in the hands of the former RPF and Rwandans from Uganda. Both Robert and Fred, being from Uganda, admit that this is true. Robert says that on entering Rwanda, the country was devastated, with Hutu and those Tutsi who survived all fleeing Kigali in fear and confusion. As a result, the RPF had to set up administrative systems from scratch, drawing their resources largely from a military staff. As the country started rebuilding itself, it was difficult to then remove the RPF and Ugandan people from the high positions they held, especially, as Robert points out, when the military works according to rank and experience. It would be very difficult to demote or remove people of high rank and experience in order to make room for non-Ugandans of lesser ranks. Both Robert and Fred feel this needs to change and that it will change in time, but for now it remains a reality that much of Rwandan economic and military power does indeed lie in the hands of Ugandans.

Alongside this, Fred reacted with some offense to the allegations that Ugandans were given handouts as he felt that everything he has he worked for. When he came into the country he had nothing but has built up a life for himself. He feels that some others from the diaspora, like Tanzania and Burundi, may come to Rwanda expecting to be given jobs and homes on a platter and are not prepared to put in the hard work that others have had to do.

8.2.5. Homecoming and reconciliation

During his interview, Fred repeated that those that are abroad need to 'come home'. He says that only if they are in Rwanda can they begin to work through some of the issues that remain in the reconciliation process. Robert says that it is not easy for young Hutu but that they need to be part of the process. But Francois insists, "I don't feel okay to go home. They can't accuse me of anything" but he cites again the injustice and people being put in jail even when they are innocent. "I don't know what will happen if I speak out over there."

On asking Francois if he would consider being part of a focus group, his response was that there would be no chance. "I could not expose myself. It would not be safe. It is not even safe talking to you. I still have family in Rwanda." Fred, on the other hand, could not understand why open dialogue between himself and Rwandan refugees in other countries would not be possible and found it hard to imagine that others would feel unsafe to be speak freely.

Reginald, however, said that it is just not true that he is free to voice his opinions in Rwanda. "You can't stand in Kigali and say the RPF killed people". He describes how many Rwandans in the north have lost family members to the RPF but that you never hear from them. "Do you think their pain has healed?" he asks. "If there is no fear in Rwanda, why are we not hearing their stories?"

Fred found it difficult to understand why someone would choose to be a refugee and remain away from home unless the person was in fact guilty or benefiting from being a refugee. When I mentioned that these Hutu men were too young to have been involved in genocide, he suggested that there must be economic gain for them in staying outside. He described how several Hutus he knew had returned to Rwanda, and through the legal system had reclaimed their properties. He added that Rwanda needs all the educated people from the outside to come back to help rebuild things and kept reiterating that those outside must "come home, feel free". Until they feel they are free to speak out, however, Reginald and Francois have no desire to return home.

Reginald suggests that with the way things are going the chances of violence happening are very high. He says the current government is sabotaging itself and that the cost of the truth coming out will be very high. He describes the approach of the current government as confrontational, a case of accepting their way or nothing else. He sees this as a significant block to reconciliation taking place.

On the topic of reconciliation, Francois says that reconciliation doesn't need to happen between strangers but between "me and the people I am angry with. With strangers it will be like an academic debate. It needs to be between the government and opposition leaders". He adds, "The government wants to solve

issues militantly but that's not going to work. Reconciliation needs to happen from the top.”

Fred feels that there is some progress being made in terms of reconciliation. He says that the government started with justice and is now moving on with things like community work. He thinks it's a good idea to use those in prison to rebuild the country. He can't tolerate people who have killed and are now comfortably off, but says their children are welcome to be free in Rwanda. He adds that the standards are not always high because of a lack of resource, but that they are doing the best they can under the circumstances.

What is evident from Francois' interview is the high level of fear. There was fear that I was a government spy and fear that other Rwandan refugees may be plants by the Rwandan government to secure information about other refugees. There was a sense that Francois could not trust anyone, even being outside of his country. This same fear was not shared by Robert and Fred, who seemed completely confident of all ordinary Rwandans who wanted to contribute to the development of the country. Fred even said that he would like to buy flight tickets for people who are outside the country just to come and have a look at how things have changed and then to decide if they want to stay or go.

Interestingly, as these interviews were taking place, during mid-October, 2009, news agencies reported that four hundred Rwandans had fled to Burundi to seek refuge there. The reasons for fleeing were as cited as being 'fear of persecution in Rwanda'. "One said he was acquitted before Rwanda's community-based gacaca courts in 2006 on charges of having burned the house of a Tutsi during the 1994 genocide. In September, though, he was summoned to respond to the same charges, was convicted, and sentenced to 30 years in prison. He fled to Burundi" (Human Rights Watch, 2009). Alongside this were allegations by some Rwandans that "their neighbors had been taken from their homes in the middle of the night and had not been seen again" (Human Rights Watch, 2009).

These reports give some credence to Francois' fears and add fuel to the 'negative feedback loop' which pervades so much of undercurrents of Rwandan society. Where Rwandans may want to believe in the governments' vision, and in the

confidence of Robert and Fred that things are moving forward, other stories suggest something quite different. Reginald says, “Development is fantastic and is working, but is it working as it should be? It works for the IMF, the international community, the governments’ image, the AU and so on, but is it working for the Rwandan people?”

The following section will report on and analyse the dialogue that took place during a NURC Reconciliation Forum seminar. This is significant in its own right but particularly because of the light it sheds on the dialogue between the four young Rwandan men. Where the dialogue between the interviewees was largely divisive, the dialogue amongst members of the Forum, although still full of tensions and challenges, gives more reason for optimism.

8.3. Reconciliation conference

In June, 2009, I participated in a seminar for thirty-five community leaders who form the NURC-initiated Reconciliation Forum. Districts throughout Rwanda have formed these forums, where religious, agricultural, economic and political leaders meet together to discuss problems in their communities, specifically around reconciliation processes. This fairly new initiative is also an opportunity for NURC to pass along government policy and educate communities on the government’s stand on various reconciliation related matters. For some, these forums are an important step in the reconciliation process, encouraging communities towards dialogue and public debate, whereas others see them as yet another way the government is trying to control communities by monitoring what leaders say and think and feed them the official line. During the seminar, however, the level of open dialogue and debate was surprising in the light of so many warnings to me to be careful in the way this research was conducted and so much explicit fear amongst those within and outside the country in terms of speaking out.

The purpose of the seminar, which was organised by Shalom, Educating for Peace, a young NGO bringing peace education to local communities, was to dialogue around reconciliation and forgiveness. Specifically, Shalom wanted to challenge the idea that reconciliation was the same as ‘cohabitation’, given that so many Rwandans have said that they don’t need reconciliation; they already

manage to live side by side. Three talks were given, one by Shalom's director, Jean de Dieu Basabose, on the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation, one by Penine Uwimbaba, a member of Shalom, on leadership that supports sustainable reconciliation and one by myself on the role of storytelling in reconciliation. After these talks and a shared lunch, there were several hours within which members of the Forum could ask questions and discuss the content of the talks. Apart from the rich dialogue which took place, further insights could be drawn from the feedback forms participants completed after the seminar. Three broad themes emerged. The first was around the process of reconciliation, the second was around the need for open dialogue and truth, and the third was the need for practical interventions, such as poverty reduction, that would support the reconciliation process.

8.3.1. Perspectives on reconciliation

While one participant expressed that it was a waste of time to discuss reconciliation because people were already reconciled in Rwanda, another expressed how difficult and painful the reconciliation process is. This captures well the kinds of comments heard amongst Rwandans generally, with some feeling reconciliation has already happened in that Rwandans are living side by side and getting on with their lives, while others feel the process has hardly started as there is still so much mistrust and unforgiveness in people's hearts. This brings to light the importance of clarifying what one means by reconciliation before embarking on efforts to bring about reconciliation.

In the context of storytelling, I spoke about how negative things in our past stories can sometimes continue in our present and future stories and that it is difficult to leave these behind. One participant mentioned that in Rwanda's past story there was an approach to leadership that was authoritarian and aggressive. He said that this story has been carried over and that the current governments approach to the national reconciliation process was similarly done in an authoritative and aggressive way. Others laughed about this and the conversation that developed from there expressed both an appreciation for the government's efforts to bring about reconciliation as well as critique that it was done in this authoritative way.

Related to this, one participant commented that perpetrators are required by law to show remorse and that they are required to ask forgiveness from the government, within the *gacaca* process, rather than from the victim. They felt this side-stepped the central issue in reconciling people, which is for the perpetrator and victim to come face to face, and not the perpetrator with a legal system. This echoes what Francois said about reconciliation needing to take place between himself and those who had hurt him. Robert also reiterated distrust in the *gacaca* process because the remorse expressed by some perpetrators was not regarded as genuine.

There was a suggestion made during the discussion that perpetrators and victims should sit in one room, face to face, thrashing things out. My presentation was an attempt to show that it is not always easy to say who the perpetrator and who the victim is. To those at the Forum, however, it was clear that these were two demarcated groups without any doubt as to who fell into which group.

On evaluation forms, respondents were asked what they had learnt from the seminar. A few mentioned that although much work has been done in the area of reconciliation, there are still many challenges ahead. Some mentioned that the seminar had revived in them a desire to participate in reconciliation processes and highlighted the necessity for their participation in order for them to live in peaceful communities. Mention was made of the need for both offender and victim to play a role. Several referred to what Jean de Dieu Basabose had said about victims forgiving their perpetrator before the offender asks for pardon for the sake of the victim's own healing process. Another referred to Basabose's presentation which highlighted the need for the offender to also forgive themselves.

On evaluation forms, respondents were asked what they recommended various groups would do, including the district authorities, NURC and Shalom, Educating for Peace, and other NGO's working in the area. One comment suggested that NURC needed to "recognize that reconciliation is a voluntary process and should not be forced". Although participants expressed appreciation for what the government is trying to do, there was a sense that a rushed process that is driven from the top down might hinder the reconciliation process rather than help it.

8.3.2. Open dialogue and truth

There was discussion around why the stories we tell about the past differ so much and the challenge this holds for teaching history at schools. I spoke of the need to create a new story for the future together but that this would require acknowledging the diversity of old stories. However, there was a sense that just knowing the 'true' story would make things simpler and that some people's stories were more valid and counted more than those of others.

A related comment in the feedback forms was that there was a need for "establishing a dialogue around Rwandan history in order to read together the history and avoid divergences and different antagonistic tendencies". This may also reflect the government position, which suggests that all Rwandans need to align themselves to one understanding of history in order to move forward. However, it also holds potential in that 'reading together the history' is the beginning of understanding one another's differences and may allow for open dialogue.

When respondents were asked what the obstacles and challenges were to the process of reconciliation, the first comment was the 'divergence' of Rwandan history. Again, it is evident that the divisive stories regarding Rwanda's past are a central issue for many Rwandans. Secondly, it was said that there was a "lack of a platform where people can sit and speak truth to each other in their community, at grassroots level". Repeated comments from participants during the discussion and through the feedback forms reiterated the message that there was a desire for more open dialogue in communities. On feedback forms, respondents were asked what needed to happen to strengthen the Reconciliation Forum. The responses included the need for more such forums, with greater time for discussion "in order to allow participants to openly express their feelings and thoughts". This was interesting in the light of previous conversations with Rwandans that they do not feel safe to openly express their opinions. This Forum, made up of a diverse group of Hutus and Tutsis in a semi-rural setting, openly expressed the desire for more open debate in public spaces.

One response distinguished the objective of reconciliation from the process being used. “Many people disguise their feelings and thoughts on the way the reconciliation process is undertaken: Some people seem to appreciate what is done whereas they are not convinced and satisfied with the process”. This highlights a crucial point for the reconciliation process, that although members of this Forum express the desire to debate and dialogue openly there is nevertheless an awareness that many people are still too afraid to express what they really believe. One respondent merely wrote, “Silence, fear and suspicion”. Added to this were the responses that genocidal and divisionist ideology still persisted amongst some people and that many of the offenders who ask for pardon are not sincerely remorseful. These issues exacerbate trust in the reconciliation process and the fear people have to speak out freely.

When asked what the Forum could do to overcome some of these challenges, interestingly, again, mention was made of organizing opportunities where dialogue around Rwandan history could take place. It was also suggested that dialogue need to take place between and with victims to discuss redress. Further, there were suggestions around more efforts to equip the community and allow for more opportunities for dialogue at various levels. In terms of recommendations to the district authorities there was a general suggestion to “educate leaders and citizens to speak the truth to each other”. NURC was encouraged to organize workshops on the village level (*umudugudu*), and not just the district level. NURC was also asked to “create dialogue spaces where victims and offenders could meet and speak truth with each other and build strong foundations for sustainable reconciliation”.

8.3.3. Practical interventions

Several mentions were made of the need to be equipped to resolve conflicts and having resources to educate their communities in reconciliation and peace. Further, it was recognised that members of the Forum themselves have wounds from which they need healing and some members asked for trauma counseling and support. One respondent mentioned the need for a workshop on the role of economic development and poverty reduction in the process of reconciliation.

The last set of responses referred to the lack of educational resources, poverty, the absence of a monitoring and evaluation system in terms of reconciliation projects and misconceptions around what reconciliation actually is.

The responses from the Reconciliation Forum show that there is a growing desire amongst Rwandans for space for open dialogue and for a more truthful and honest level of engagement. Where in the past, many Rwandans may have felt that the way to survive was to say only what was acceptable by someone in authority, here there was a sense that people wanted a higher level of transparency and openness. There was an acknowledgement of the fear, mistrust and suspicion that still exists, and repeated mentions were made of the challenge of a divisive narrative of history. The sense from this discussion is that some of the fears of the young Hutu men interviewed are echoed, but some of the openness of the Tutsi men was also present. It could be said that the Reconciliation Forum was a realistic reflection of both the challenges present in terms of reconciliation but also the potential and the hope where people have a strong desire to build sustainable peace and reconciliation.

We now return to the dialogue between the four young Rwandans with new insights and new emphases, particularly around the distinction between insisting on one official narrative that all Rwandans should accept and having many narratives that are mediated by higher levels of tolerance.

8.4. Recontextualizing the narratives

The follow-up interviews with the four Rwandan men, where the 'dialogue' took place, brought to light the divisive narratives still active in Rwanda society today. Francois spoke of the fact that genocide may never have happened and that instead there was a civil war. Further, he placed emphasis on the judicial process in Arusha, seeing *gacaca* as an attempt at eradicating government opposition. He feels the crimes committed by the RPF need to be taken in the same light as the genocide. He speaks of another revolution like the one in 1959 needing to take place. He sees the Hutu majority in Rwanda as being significantly oppressed and

silenced by a small group of Ugandan Tutsi who are going to extreme lengths to maintain power in the country. The government is seen as a dangerous, dictatorial regime that needs to be overthrown. Under these circumstances, Francois sees no reconciliation taking place.

On the other side, Robert and Fred speak of a country that is the midst of progress and development. After decades of bad leadership and a horrifying genocide, the country was rescued by the RPF who have returned order and have rebuilt the country to what it is today. They pay little regard to the ICTR in Arusha and believe *gacaca*, with its weaknesses and limitations, is nevertheless playing a significant role in the reconciliation process. Although they admit that Rwanda is tightly run, they believe this is gradually changing as the country begins to work through its trauma, and believe any strict controls are there to help the country as it comes to terms with some terrible realities. They believe the RPF's crimes don't compare to that of the genocide and cannot be considered in the same light. They see a country that is slowly becoming more open, with increasing degrees of freedom of speech. They feel reconciliation is taking place although there is still a lot of work that needs to be done. Although they are critical of the government, they believe it is doing the best it can under very challenging circumstances.

Alongside these narratives are also the narratives of the survivors and Tutsi from countries other than Uganda. As mentioned, some survivors and Tutsi from Burundi, Tanzania and the DRC feel they have been sidelined and may have a harder line than the Ugandans. Some survivors feel the perpetrators of genocide are being dealt with too 'softly' and want a society that benefits them more overtly. Some Tutsi from the diaspora even support the return of the monarchy and an overt return to Tutsi power in the country.

Developing new narratives in this context poses a challenge, especially if it feels like a single new narrative is being enforced from the top down on all Rwandans. Johan Pottier is one researcher who has been particularly critical of the governments' attempt to create a new narrative. He argues that the political doctrine of the RPF is the dominant voice in Rwanda, and has 'the monopoly on knowledge construction' (2002, 202). He argues that 'depictions of reality have come to be led by political visions and ideas, not by empirical studies' (2002, 203).

Part of the way this new narrative has been developed, he suggests, is by simplifying reality and using 'feelings of guilt and ineptitude' on the part of the international community (2002, 202). Following the genocide, there was a vacuum of research and information with regards to Rwanda, much of the available research being grounded in European race ideologies from the 1900s. Into this vacuum, the RPF carefully constructed a new narrative that the international community and all Rwandans would need to accept.

Chi Mgbako argues that the *Ingando* solidarity camps are where the RPF ideology is most overtly being passed on. He speaks of the attempt by the government to erase ethnic identity for political purposes; that instead of teaching tolerance for difference, difference is being 'obliterated' (2005, 218). Further, he describes how *Ingando* camps are the only place where history is currently being taught in Rwanda, with it having been removed from the school syllabus. But the history that is being taught is a pro-RPF version which sidelines all other possibilities (2005, 219).

The problem with this new narrative is that it does not take into account the other subtle and complex narratives continuing to find a voice, however quietly, in and outside Rwanda. As those at the Reconciliation Forum said, the government's approach to reconciliation is as authoritative as the kind of leadership style existent in Rwanda for the past few thousand years. Further, fear, suspicion and a hesitancy to speak one's mind has resulted in many narratives not finding voice. Not allowing for critical engagement with issues of identity and history, argues Mgbako, leads to a 'resentment' and he fears people will 'mouth government rhetoric, but not necessarily reorient themselves' (2005, 19).

Yet, in the context of a country recovering from genocide, where the majority of the country is either a perpetrator of extreme violence or a survivor of extreme violence, is a strong and tight form of leadership not necessary? Many would argue that were freedom of speech to exemplify Rwandan society, genocide ideology would spread and new violence would erupt. It is argued that were people not controlled by the divisionist law, not exposed to *Ingando* camps, and not consistently fed a new government-approved narrative by the country's media,

those in authority and through policy and law, the country would not be able to move beyond destructive, divisive narratives.

This presents us with two possible responses to the divisive narratives that pervade Rwandan society. The one is to create a new, unified, simplified narrative that can be passed on to all Rwandans, from the top down, until everyone accepts it and it becomes internalized and forms part of a new national Rwandan identity. The other is to allow for dialogue and debate to take place where each person brings to the table their diverse narratives, as dangerous and destructive as they may be, and allow for multiple new narratives to emerge that can stand side by side to form a plural, hybrid national identity that can encompass the tensions and contradictions existent in Rwanda.

The answer is not simply the latter. In a society under extreme stress and pressure, following absurdly high levels of violence, it may not be a simple task to encourage open dialogue and trust that it will lead to something healing and good in a society where many are still in denial of the crimes they have committed, still believe in the very ideology that led them to participate in genocide, are still entrenched in understandings of identity founded in ethnicity, still carry wounds and unforgiveness, and are still dominated by trauma, fear and horror at all that has gone before. Alongside this, add the stress of the continued presence of *genocidaires* on the borders of Rwanda, with constant, confused and confusing violence breaking out between the Rwandan army and an unknown force on the border. And again, alongside this add the pressure of a rapidly progressing society which is introducing technology, a higher standard of living, English as a first language and a western economic and political system into the deal. We are speaking here of a country which is in the most painful stages of transformation. Simply encouraging greater freedom, the input of opposition politics, an open media and a plurality of identities and narratives may not be a realistic way forward. These are some of the challenges that the interviews, follow-up interviews and feedback from the Reconciliation Forum bring to light. Although Pottier's critique is important to keep in mind, the reality of Rwanda today begs for a very sensitive intervention.

At the heart of Pottier's critique is the fact that the new Rwandan identity and narrative is being created by what he describes as 'a subordinate minority which after protracted struggle overcame the relations of domination which had kept it in exile' (2002, 204). The question is whether such a minority, namely the Ugandan Tutsi who formed the RPF, can legitimately rewrite and pass on this new narrative on behalf of the rest of Rwanda, however good and upright their intentions might be. Previous attempts at rewriting the Rwandan narrative do not bode well. In addition to this, there is a sense of disconnection not only between the Hutu majority and the Ugandan-dominated Tutsi who are rewriting the narrative, but between this group and all other groups, including survivors and Tutsi from other countries. There seems to be a half-formulated question of what gives these Ugandan Tutsi the right to decide for everyone how Rwanda will move forward. And the common answer is that they have no choice; the country was devastated, someone had to take charge, and now they are doing a good job of it. However, as much as the country may be progressing well, and as much as the new narrative may be a positive one, it is not a shared one and it is doubtful that it can forcefully be internalized or made into the national identity and narrative without the explicit participation of more of the population over a period of time.

In the following chapter we will begin to explore the concept of healing and how it takes place. We will investigate the relationship between healing and reconciliation and what would need to be in place to facilitate a process of healing and reconciliation. Some of the issues brought to light in this chapter will be considered with regards to healing and reconciliation theories.

CHAPTER 9: HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

“It was an image from hell: row upon row of corpses, hundreds and hundreds of them stacked up like firewood ... How many years – how many generations – would it take for Rwanda to recover from such horror? How long for our wounded hearts to heal, for our hardened hearts to soften?” (Ilibagiza, 2006, 179).

However much research and theorizing may have been done on the topic of healing and how it happens, at some level it remains a miracle. Many would assume that it is human nature to want revenge on the one who has hurt us. Yet again and again, as can be seen in the Rwandan context, people reach out with forgiveness, compassion and a desire for healing both for themselves and for their broader society.

This chapter will bring us back to our premise and our central questions. Our premise is that our narratives bring coherence to our lives, and that it is through our narratives that we make sense of the world around us. But our narratives, especially in terms of how we view history and identity can pit us against one another. However, through critically engaging with our narratives, in dialogue with one another, there is the potential for emancipation, for transcending ‘my’ narrative and embracing a shared narrative. This shared narrative would not need to be a single narrative, but would include many different narratives standing alongside one another. In this process of sharing narratives, this chapter will argue that healing and reconciliation begin to take place.

This chapter will first explore the relationship between healing and reconciliation, looking at how they are defined, and various elements of and approaches to them. Using Lederach’s model of truth, justice, mercy and peace, it will explore healing in terms of these four elements. Through this, reconciliation efforts in Rwanda will be explored, as well as the work of NURC and the process of *gacaca*. A narrative approach to healing and reconciliation will be discussed, through a comparison with the narrative approach used in South Africa through their Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The role of stories and dialogue in the

narrative approach and the kind of context needed for this approach to take place will be explored. Chapter ten will describe what a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation in the Rwandan context might look like.

9.1. The relationship between healing and reconciliation

Staub et al. describe the relationship between healing and reconciliation as cyclical; as healing begins, reconciliation becomes possible and as reconciliation begins, security and trust are fostered which facilitate further healing (2003, 288). They say, “Healing is essential both to improve the quality of life of wounded people and to make new violence less likely” (2003, 289). They emphasise that healing needs to take place both for the victim and for the perpetrator as both are wounded (2003, 288).

The term ‘reconciliation’ is used to support a wide variety of agendas although its actual meaning often remains elusive. Reconciliation is a priority of the Rwandan government and yet, as Arthur Molenaar points out, it is difficult to know what exactly the government means by this term (2005, 65). During conversations with Rwandans it was often said, “We have reconciliation. Reconciliation is not our problem. We live together, we eat together, we are reconciled”. This would be followed by suggestions of what their problem *is* and this would normally include justice, forgiveness, truth and trust, as was reflected in the feedback and discussion from the Reconciliation Forum.

A minimalist definition offered by Louis Kriesberg states that “Reconciliation refers to the process by which parties that have experienced an oppressive relationship or a destructive conflict with each other move to attain or to restore a relationship that they believe to be minimally acceptable” (2001, 48). Kriesberg is writing in the context of preventing further violence, but more than this is desired when we speak of *healing* and reconciliation. Rwandans may well be living together and eating together, a relationship they may believe to be ‘minimally acceptable’, but a devastated nation is looking for more than ‘minimally acceptable’ relationships and the healing of individuals and communities seems paramount.

Staub et al. describe reconciliation as “mutual acceptance by members of groups previously in conflict with each other” (2003, 288). This already takes the definition a step further, bringing in terms such as mutuality and acceptance. They believe that reconciliation involves a “changed psychological orientation toward the other”.

“Reconciliation means that victims and perpetrators do not see the past as defining the future, as simply a continuation of the past. It means that they come to accept each other and to see the humanity of one another and the possibility of a constructive relationship” (2003, 288).

But more than even this, Lederach insists that reconciliation is the rebuilding of relationship. He rightly states that people may be living as neighbours “and yet are locked into long-standing cycles of hostile interaction”, animosity, fear and stereotyping (1997, 23). “Reconciliation is not pursued by seeking innovative ways to disengage or minimize the conflicting groups’ affiliations, but instead is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship” (1997, 26). Restoring relationships is what Mark Hay sees as central to reconciliation along with the ‘recovery of the dignity and humanity of every person’, both victim and perpetrator (1999, 12). This kind of reconciliation leads to healing.

As mentioned above, Rwandans would often mention that such things as justice, truth, peace and forgiveness are some of the factors lacking in Rwandan society. Lederach argues that these are all integral elements of reconciliation. He has a four-part model of reconciliation which includes peace, truth, justice and mercy (1997, 28). He argues that these elements, although seemingly contradictory, cannot operate independently from one another. Truth without justice would be an offence to the victims. Justice without truth might result in historical revisionism which would open the way for new conflicts. Mercy, which is sometimes translated as forgiveness, would be meaningless without acknowledging truth and justice, resulting in impunity for perpetrators. And peace is an essential ingredient for the other elements to become a reality (Lederach, 1997, 29; Molenaar, 2005, 35; Nolte-Schamm, 2005, 25). In the Rwandan context, there has been a high emphasis on justice due to the fear that perpetrators would be released with impunity, as has often been the case in Rwanda’s history. However, opponents of

the government would say that there is justice but no truth and that this is indeed resulting in revisionism and a less than complete justice, with only one group of perpetrators being targeted.

The following sections will explore reconciliation through truth, justice, mercy and peace. This kind of reconciliation has the potential to foster deep healing in individuals and communities. Section 9.2 will look at the role of history and memory in healing, as well as how truth is told and whose truth is heard. Section 9.3 will explore justice in Rwanda, looking at the *gacaca* system and consider the implications of various approaches to justice. Section 9.4 will describe a model of forgiveness and discuss some of the complexities in a forgiveness process. Section 9.5 will consider peace in terms the Rwandan approach of promoting national unity through oneness. It will discuss alternative approaches to national identity as a means of creating unity and peace. Section 9.6 will introduce a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation.

9.2. Healing through truth

Adami and Hunt, in the context of the ICTR, describe the cathartic effect speaking the truth may have: “For those who remain, for those who lived through the ultimate evil, for those who despaired of seeing the world react, the ICTR becomes a tremendous place to speak. There people can give voice to their suffering, ritualise it, objectify it, reopen the wound to better let it out, let it heal, let it scar over” (2005, 112). Once the truth is spoken and recorded it becomes a testimony in the collective memory of a nation, and of the world, and it is ‘fixed in history’ (2005, 113). In the discussion on South Africa’s TRC, in section 9.6, it will become clear that speaking out the truth in and of itself is not necessarily healing. Yet, saying what happened and bringing events of the past out into the open is a significant part of the healing process. Truth encompasses various elements, such as how we speak of history, how we remember the past collectively, and what is said about the past in a judicial context. These will be discussed in the following section, focusing on the work of NURC.

A significant role that NURC purports to play is that of developing a shared understanding of Rwanda’s past, the reasons for conflict and the way forward in

the future. A representative from NURC stressed the importance of a 'same' understanding and 'same' thinking, arguing that when everyone is thinking in the same way, there will be no more division, and thus unity and reconciliation (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). On asking the NURC representative whether there was room for diverse views concerning history his answer was yes and no. On the one hand, they are working to create public spaces, through debate, dialogue, workshops and the like, for ideas to be challenged and formed by a diversity of people. On the other, NURC remains a government-sponsored organization, and the government maintains its controversial law against ethnic division, which limits what may and may not be said in terms of identity and history.

Alongside this, the NURC representative mentioned the complexity of Rwandan society, where one's public view might well contradict one's private views. Or, as one interviewee explained, one's public identity often takes precedence over one's private identity, and having the appearance of having the 'right' view publicly may well be more important in Rwandan society than standing up for a divergent private view (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007). As Reginald was quoted as saying in section 8.2.2, Rwandans seem to have an unspoken understanding of which topics can and can't be discussed, and what the acceptable way of discussing these is.

Staub, Pearlman and Miller would agree with NURC in the necessity of providing information to communities with regards to the origins of genocide and developing a shared history (2003, 289). "Understanding genocide helps people move beyond the belief held by many people in Rwanda that what they experienced was incomprehensible evil. It helps them to see genocide, however horrible, as a human process. It helps them to see their common humanity with others who have suffered mass violence" (2003, 290). However, they feel that this shared history needs to be acceptable to both sides in order for reconciliation to take place (2003, 290).

Staub, et al. argue that conflicting views about history lead to the persistence of blame, mistrust, and antagonism (2003, 290). Particularly when groups live together, creating a history that is acceptable to both sides may be central to

reconciliation. The challenge is in creating an understanding that is *acceptable to both sides*. This seems crucial in building a shared understanding, rather than a *same* understanding. A shared understanding suggests acknowledging and taking into account a diversity of views and perspectives and piecing this together into a version everyone can share. A shared understanding also allows for a dynamic interaction between different groups over time.

Both identity and our understanding of history are constantly in flux, constantly being rethought and renegotiated. It is this fluid interaction with history and identity that is needed to allow reconciliation the space to become a reality. Similarly, Adam and Adam argue that there needs to be room for various versions of the truth rather than a unified, official version. "Only a pluralist interpretation of history may at best achieve a shared truth, or at worst, reinforce divided memories. History as an ongoing argument is still preferable to the myth-making of official collective memory" (2000, 37). A critique against the Rwandan government is that only an 'official' version of the past is considered.

Part of the process of developing a shared understanding of what happened and what needs to happen is through healing memories. In Rwanda, every April is a month of remembrance. Traumatic images of the horror of genocide are displayed publicly throughout the country. People are reminded of the death and mayhem that overwhelmed the country for 100 days. The purpose behind this is to say, 'never again'. Yet, Cyprian Fisiy argues that in the Rwandan context social memory has been manipulated for the purposes of holding onto power throughout Rwandan history and that it is difficult to separate the many layers of truth and memory, even when it comes to remembering what happened during the genocide (1998, 20).

One response to this might be giving victims and perpetrators, or victims from both sides of the conflict, the space and context in which to speak out their memories. Hay makes mention of the importance of giving victims the space to mourn and grieve their suffering. He highlights how trauma leads to the loss of a sense of self, a loss of human dignity, a loss of meaning, and a loss of trust (1999, 122). In this context, victims need to be provided with a context of safety to experience healing from their trauma. A part of this, for Hay, includes what he

calls a 'conversion' from victim to survivor. He sees this as a fundamental shift from brokenness and dehumanization to a restored human dignity. Similarly, perpetrators have been dehumanized by their own actions and need their humanity restored. This process happens as shared rituals, such as remembering April, 1994, take place. But they need to be shared rituals where everyone's stories are heard and truths are shared. Victims of the genocide as well as of the civil war would need the space to mourn and experience healing of memories.

In terms of the process of healing through truth, Villa-Vicencio writes that storytelling assists us in the process of accepting and celebrating our differences, enables us to understand each other well enough to co-exist, and build a common nation "in diversity and difference" (1995, 105). How the past and the nature of the conflict is perceived and remembered has a significant effect on the likelihood of conflicting parties reconciling. It is necessary for everyone's stories to be heard and told, and not only for one set of stories to be heard, as is often the case in Rwanda. As Reginald said in section 8.2.5, the stories of Rwandans in the north who have lost family members to the RPF during the war have not been told. "Do you think their pain has healed?" he asks.

The process of *gacaca* is helping to allow the story of what happened to be heard. Bronkhorst writes, "The dead must be counted and buried, the victims' stories must be recorded, told and retold until the whole truth is out. Reconciliation between opposing classes and groups can only be realized once the facts, the background, motives and emotions have been recognized and admitted by both sides" (in Hay, 1999, 117). *Gacaca* has helped to bring the facts of the genocide out into the open, at least with regards to the actions of the *genocidaires* against Tutsi and moderate Hutu in the attempt to eradicate an ethnic group. In terms of embodying truth and justice in a way that all Rwandans can accept, though, it has probably fallen well short. Someone like Francois, one of the young men interviewed, might argue that only a part of the truth has been told.

Graybill argues that "whereas the South African TRC required all perpetrators of human rights abuses on both sides—the government and the resistance movements—to apply for amnesty, the *gacaca* system will only judge the perpetrators of the genocide" (2004, 1224). The Rwandan government has said

that cases that involve RPF soldiers who committed crimes need to be taken to the military jurisdiction, a legal process separate from genocide crimes. When asked about this, the representative from ASF said that most Rwandans find the military judiciary intimidating or inaccessible and that they had recommended to the government that an accessible system needed to be put in place so that Rwandans can feel sufficiently safe to report these crimes (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

Villa-Vicencio has argued in the South African context, that for a culture of human rights to exist human rights violations on all sides of the conflict need to be investigated and acknowledged. Even were the crimes committed for the purpose of liberation, they need to come into the light for a culture of human rights to be established (2000, 29). Similarly, Graybill argues that considering that crimes by the RPF resulted in possibly 100 000 civilian casualties, it will affect the reconciliation process if it seems that only one side is receiving justice. “Exclusively judging Hutu acts, while ignoring RPF violations, may be one reason for the drop in willingness to participate [in *gacaca*], as Hutus view this as patently unjust,” writes Graybill (2004, 1224).

In a report for the Institute for Social Security, Stephanie Wolters argues that “anyone who might choose to speak openly about the problems associated with the *gacaca* process would be accused of ‘divisionism’” and that this leaves little room for the kind of national dialogue such a process needs (2005, 15). Added to this is the fact that participation in *gacaca* is mandatory by law and anyone who does not testify may be imprisoned for up to six months (Wolters, 2005, 7). As a result of these kinds of strictures some of the Hutu diaspora view *gacaca* as a government tool to exact revenge against the population, and view it as victor’s justice (Wolters, 2005, 15).

This section has discussed the role of truth and memory in healing, saying that although the truth in itself is not always cathartic and healing, it is nevertheless an important part of the healing process. It has suggested that although NURC is creating important public spaces for debate, these spaces are limited due to government policy and the tendency towards ‘double-speak’ in Rwandan society. It has mentioned the significance of rituals to remember what happened, such as

the April memorials but suggested that these memorials need to incorporate the story of victims across the political divide, as well as the stories of perpetrators. It has considered the role of *gacaca* in allowing the story of what happened to be told, critiquing it for only allowing one side of the story to be heard. The issue of truth remains complex and will be explored further in relation to the TRC in section 9.6.1.

9.3. Healing through justice

This section will examine the issue of justice, starting with Mamdani's differentiation between victor's justice and survivor's justice. It will then consider the difference between a retributive and a restorative style of justice, arguing that Rwanda's *gacaca* system incorporates some of both. It will also look at whether people should be individually or collectively responsible for what has happened. Judith Zur, writing in the context of Guatemala, where after extreme violence the entire country continued in complete denial of what happened, writes that impunity has a significant negative psychological effect on healing processes (1994, 14). She writes that not only is it necessary to find a language to be able to talk about what happened collectively, but that those who were responsible need to be identified and named. This section will argue that impunity will not aid in healing in Rwanda, but that the way justice is meted out needs to be carefully considered so as not to lead to renewed violence.

Mamdani suggests there are two forms of justice. He characterises the justice present in Rwanda as 'victor's justice' with an overwhelming sense of moral responsibility for the very survival of all remaining Tutsi, globally. Postgenocide power is committed to removing any trace of conditions that could possibly lead to a repeat of genocide, and this is done through violent methods, where necessary. He describes the founding ideology of post-genocide Rwanda as being the memory of genocide and the moral compulsion never to let it happen again (2002, 271). This justifies the pursuit of *genocidaires* and the possibility of labelling any opposition to the government as *genocidaire*.

“Arrests can be made on the basis of denunciation, not investigation ... The moral certainty about preventing another genocide imparts a moral

justification to the pursuit of power with impunity ... The price of victors justice is that the victor must keep holding onto his victory; thus a continued civil war or a political divorce. As there has been no divorce between Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda we must assume that there will be another round of civil war” (2002, 272).

But far more productive than this would be survivor’s justice. Mamdani describes how victory provides power and thus alternatives to the victor: “He has the choice of reaching out to the vanquished and transcending earlier opposition by the two and form a united community of survivors of civil war” (2002, 272). Marcia Hartwell similarly discusses how after a violent conflict the power lies in the hand of the victor and it is their decision how justice and reconciliation is going to unfold (2004). In the South African context, Desmond Tutu discusses how revenge would have been the easy route to take after Apartheid, but that the tempting victors justice was surrendered for the sake of creating a shared South African future built on the foundations of democracy, equality and freedom for all (1999, 23).

Although Rwanda should not necessarily have followed South Africa’s route of justice, it nevertheless needs to consider whether the route it has chosen will lead to healing. Justice is often seen as being either restorative or retributive. Retributive justice focuses on punishment and is normally based on a hierarchical approach to justice. Justice is in the hands of the authority and meted out by those in authority to the perpetrator. Restorative justice, on the other hand, is between victim and perpetrator. Jim Consedine describes it as follows:

“Restorative justice is a philosophy that embraces a wide range of human emotions, including healing, mediation, compassion, mercy, reconciliation as well as sanction where appropriate. It also embraces a world view that says we are all interconnected, and that what we do, be it for good or evil, has an impact on others. Restorative justice offers a process whereby those affected by criminal behaviour, be they victims, offenders, the families involved, or the wider community, all have a part in resolving the issues that flow from the offending” (1999, 183).

The focus is not vengeance but healing for both victim and offender. In the case of Rwanda, in response to the justice crises following genocide, the government had to put a far reaching system in place that could try hundreds of thousands of people in a short space of time. The leader of the Constitutional Committee during the time when *gacaca* was implemented said,

“Rwanda is a poor country. The human rights in our prisons are nothing to brag about. The prisoners are suffering, but what is the alternative? We cannot let them out, but we cannot really keep them in now either. To follow the Western trial process would take far too long [a] time and therefore be a violation of the human rights [sic] itself. We had to do something” (in Morrill, 2004).

The origins of *gacaca* were discussed in section 5.1.2. Constance Morrill looks at whether *gacaca* is retributive or restorative in its approach by comparing traditional *gacaca* with the way it functions today. In the traditional *gacaca* system, Morrill describes how resolving disputes was not “compartmentalized into separate phases of pre-adjudication, pre-trial, adjudication, and sentencing, as is the practice in the classical judicial system. Instead, conflicts within the community were not fragmented, but approached holistically, which was seen to facilitate reconciliation” (2004). Any reconciliation process would involve the offender and victims’ entire family or clan, thus the repairing of the relationship being a collective affair.

In the *gacaca* process adopted in Rwanda today, the whole community is involved, but offenders stand alone before their accusers. At the *gacaca* trial I attended in January, 2007, some seventy or eighty community members gathered with little benches and blankets along the side of a main road. Tables and chairs had been set up before them where a row of judges sat. The offenders would come before this table of judges and the community and defend their case. Unlike in the traditional model, here the offender carries the burden of what they have done alone. Further, the community was invited to ask questions or make comments on what the offender had said. Although the community participation was clearly high on the part of the victims, the offender seemed to have little support, and if the community decided they were guilty they would have no lawyer

(as in a western model) or family members (as in a traditional model) to stand up in their defence. An Amnesty International report states that the accused should by law have access to legal representation.

“Amnesty International believes that the *gacaca* jurisdictions would not respect the principle of "equality of arms" - an essential criterion of a fair hearing which ensures that both parties have a procedurally equal position during the trial and are in an equal position to make their case. In response to this criticism, the government has denied that the prosecution would have an unfair advantage, as it would not participate in the *gacaca* trials. However, cases would clearly be judged on the basis of case-files prepared and passed on by the prosecution. It would be extremely difficult for defendants without the assistance of a lawyer to counter in an effective manner the accusations already contained in these case-files. Furthermore, those presiding over the *gacaca* tribunals, having little or no legal training, are unlikely to challenge the information in the official case-file or the very basis for the case-file” (2006).

Further, their guilt and punishment would be decided on by the judges rather than the community collectively. So rather than it being a negotiated process between an offender and their family and a victim and their family, in this case it is a legal process where an individual takes individual responsibility with the input of the community in terms of clarifying what actually happened.

This would make *gacaca* more of a retributive than restorative approach. However, a fully restorative justice process may be argued to take too long and, as the representative from ASF suggested, such a process would be difficult to monitor. How would one ensure that victims and their families did not mete out revenge on offenders, who often had no family to stand with them, their families being either dead or refugees in the DRC? Thus the current *gacaca* system where communities were involved but certain standard western legal system practices were incorporated seemed the best alternative.

Hartwell argues that the need for revenge on the part of victims after violent conflict is normal and even, perhaps, a necessary part of the healing process. She

suggests that any reconciliation process needs to undergo periods of revenge, lack of remorse and an inability to forgive, amongst other things, but that these do not need to be viewed negatively (2006). She describes that immediately after conflict justice is closely related to fairness, both from the perspective of the victims who want their perpetrators to suffer as much as they did, as well as from the perspective of those who perceive themselves to have 'lost'. In terms of the victim, Hartwell suggests that trials and truth commissions often fall short of the kind of action victims are looking for, as has indeed been the case in Rwanda. Hartwell lists four ways in which justice can be seen to be fair. Firstly, there need to be opportunities for all those involved to have a voice in stating their case and making suggestions. Secondly, there needs to be a trust in the neutrality of the authorities and the forum through which justice is meted out. Thirdly, the motives of those in authority need to be trusted. Lastly, all parties need to feel they are treated with dignity and respect (2006).

In the case of Rwanda, the issue of fairness has played a significant role. On the part of survivors of genocide, there has been frustration with regards the light sentencing of perpetrators, as well as sick and elderly perpetrators being released by the president at various times over the past few years. Added to this, there was a feeling directly after genocide that more aid was going towards those people who had fled to the DRC (and were seen by many to be guilty of genocide) than towards survivors of genocide within the country. On the part of perpetrators, as has been reiterated throughout this thesis, many feel voiceless and mistrust the motives of the current government and the way it is carrying out justice. The danger of feeling unfairly treated, according to Hartwell, is that it is easy to trigger a victim-mentality (2006). Perpetrators feel they are victimized and victims feel they are being revictimised. So although the desire for revenge is normal, in a society recovering from violent conflict that wants to create a new way of relating to one another, retributive justice may be unhelpful in the healing process.

Coupled with the debate between a retributive and a restorative system is whether guilt is collective or individual. Rhiannon Lloyd runs a reconciliation program which encourages individuals to apologise on behalf of their group. For example, at one of her workshops, a Hutu will stand up and ask for collective forgiveness for the crimes committed by Hutus, and then a Tutsi will stand up and ask for forgiveness

on behalf of all Tutsi. Lastly (or many times at the beginning), Lloyd herself will stand up and ask for forgiveness on behalf of Europeans and the international community. There is then a ceremony of forgiving one another and acknowledging shared humanity. This is successful in that it highlights the roles of all involved in causing harm, but a danger is that an entire group is seen as collectively responsible (Lloyd, 1998).

Mamdani warns against the pitfall of seeing a particular group collectively as victimised or as collectively guilty as it has the danger that the collective group of victims self-righteously and unrestrainedly demands justice. He recommends instead that all Rwandans be seen as 'survivors of an era gone by' and that individuals take responsibility for particular crimes, on both sides of the political spectrum (1997, 25). Lemarchand writes, "Tutsi elite [tend] to substitute collective guilt for individual responsibility, and to affix the label 'génocidaire' to the Hutu community as a group" (1998, 8). He accurately states that the refugees in the DRC after the genocide were collectively criminalised, and that certain Tutsi survivors applied 'a logic of guilt by association: to be a Hutu was to be presumed a killer', even those who risked their lives to save Tutsi (Lemarchand, 1998, 8). Lemarchand suggests that 'lumping together the perpetrators of genocide with innocent civilians' creates the very conditions that may influence some Hutu to resort to renewed violence (1998, 8).

Because genocide was executed by a large portion of the population, Mark Drumbl suggests that it is easy to forget that individuals chose to become perpetrators (2002, 11). During his research in Rwandan prisons, Drumbl found that the vast majority of perpetrators did not see themselves as having done anything wrong (2002, 16). "Most see themselves as prisoners of war, simply ending up on the losing side" (Drumbl, 2002, 16). Drumbl found that many perpetrators would conflate war with genocide, whereas he states that war implies a mutuality whereas genocide implies innocent victims and unjustified perpetrators (2002, 16). As long as perpetrators felt they were fighting a justifiable war, they would not be able to take responsibility for their crimes, which largely involved violence against unarmed women and children. This would mean that were violence to break out again, many Rwandans might not see the difference

between fighting a military war (between trained soldiers) and attacking innocent civilians. It is for this reason that Drumbl argues for individual responsibility.

A phrase often heard in Rwandan society when discussing justice is that of a 'culture of impunity'. With this it is said that in Rwanda, historically, people have not been held accountable for what they have done. This has given people the impression that in Rwanda, you can get away with anything, especially if it is politically motivated. Drumbl suggests that with a collective restorative justice model individual perpetrators would not need to take personal responsibility for their actions (2002, 16). Graybill describes how the Rwandan government was skeptical of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission which adopted a system of amnesty because of the history of impunity (2004, 1121). Further, it was feared that survivors would take justice into their own hands. There needed to be an immediate and tangible sense that justice had taken place and that perpetrators were punished, so that Rwandan society could move on.

Several of the NGO leaders I interviewed stressed how *gacaca* was imperative in breaking the 'culture of impunity' that existed after the violence in 1959, the 1970s and the 1990s. *Gacaca*, according to many of those interviewed, is contributing to the important task of holding individuals accountable for their violent crimes and allows victims to see justice is done. A representative of ASF, when asked whether *gacaca* was contributing to reconciliation, immediately responded, "Justice is being done." At a later stage she added that one cannot legalise reconciliation. *Gacaca* may create a space where reconciliation has the potential of taking place but it is up to individuals to make use of this opportunity (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

But does it create this space? There was a high expectation that *gacaca* would bring about healing and reconciliation. Molenaar writes how "at its inception, it was hoped that through the very act of participation in *gacaca*, a degree of truth-telling, confession, forgiveness and thus reconciliation would take place". Molenaar quotes the Mayor of a district in Rwanda as an example of official discourse regarding *gacaca* when it was first introduced: "Rwanda has great confidence in *gacaca* because it will solve our problems and bring about reconciliation. It is you, the population, who has to do it. It is you who must participate. In the first place,

you must come here and tell the truth about what happened” (2005, 51). Graybill describes that a survey done showed high percentages of Rwandans wanting to participate in the process. And yet, as it progressed, those participating became more skeptical.

When *gacaca* started, some last remaining survivors in rural areas of the country were killed by perpetrators who did not want to be identified. Then there were retributive killings of those perpetrators (Graybill, 2004, 1224). Apart from this, survivor groups have complained that *gacaca* is too lenient on perpetrators (Wolters, 2005, 16). Further, because perpetrators receive a reduction in sentence on confession, survivors experience perpetrator confessions as being insincere (*African Rights*, 2000, 98). Many perpetrators thought that merely by testifying and confessing they would contribute to reconciliation but survivors were resentful of this process as it felt it made light of their suffering (2000, 99).

This section has described the importance of bringing an end to ‘the culture of impunity’ in Rwanda, and having individuals take responsibility for their actions rather than emphasizing collective identities which may perpetuate ethnic division. It has also emphasized the need for fairness in a justice process, where the acts of violence committed by all those involved are dealt with, both as a result of genocide and as a result of civil war. It was also suggested that it is important that perpetrators understand the difference between inflicting harm on innocent people and engaging in military combat. *Gacaca* was explored in terms of its retributive and restorative qualities and it was critiqued for being more retributive than restorative. However, the difficult circumstances in which it was implemented and its positive contribution to the process of justice were also mentioned. Healing through justice remains one of the most difficult challenges to the reconciliation process and we are left with more questions than answers.

9.4. Healing through forgiveness

Although healing occurs most obviously in a process of forgiveness, it is also the most challenging of all the elements of a healing and reconciliation process as it seems that the natural response from a victim is the desire for revenge. Yet the stories coming out of Rwanda describe again and again the miracle of victims

forgiving perpetrators and thereby bringing healing to themselves, the perpetrator and their broader society. Making use of Harwell's discussion of forgiveness, this section will explore how forgiveness takes place.

Apology and forgiveness is difficult after violent conflict, suggests Hartwell, because in many cases the perpetrators may be dead or absent (2006). Hartwell stresses that a process of forgiveness needs to be engaged in by victims regardless of perpetrators expressing remorse, for healing to take place. In an informal interview, a Tutsi survivor stressed to me how she learnt that she needed to forgive her perpetrator even though he was not sorry, for her own sake. "I will never be free if I do not forgive", she said (Personal Interview, Kigali, January, 2007). In addition to this, as mentioned earlier, perpetrators also need to forgive themselves and their fellow perpetrators.

Hartwell uses Enright's model, which includes six stages of justice and forgiveness development, to explain the stages people tend to go through after violent conflict. According to this model, the kind of justice one desires is coupled with the progress of one's ability to forgive. In the beginning stages, one may find it impossible to forgive, and desire revenge, whereas in the final stage, one is able to forgive without needing anything in return. Here are the six stages:

- Stage one: 'Heteronomous morality' says that justice should be decided by the one in authority, leaving the outcome in the hands of others. Here, forgiveness is revengeful: I can forgive someone who wrongs me only if I can punish him to a similar degree to my own pain." (Enright et al, 1992, 104-6).
- Stage two: 'Individualism' defines justice in terms of reciprocity; if you help me, I must help you. With this stage, there is conditional or restitutorial forgiveness: "If I get back what was taken away from me, then I can forgive. Or, if I feel guilty about withholding forgiveness, then I can forgive to relieve my guilt." This depends on the explicit action on the part of the perpetrator to show remorse and apologise.
- Stage three: 'Mutual interpersonal expectations', where group consensus and group pressure decides what is right and wrong. Forgiveness in this stage is 'expectational forgiveness'; there is pressure from others to forgive and people may forgive because they believe it to be expected. In stage four, 'social

system and conscience' justice, societal laws and the need for an orderly society guide justice.

- Stage four: 'lawful expectational forgiveness' where one may forgive because ones religion or government demands it.
- Stage five: 'social contract' justice', acknowledges that people hold a variety of opinions and that one should uphold the values and rules of one's group. Forgiveness here is in order to maintain social harmony.

Stages three and four both depend on external pressure in terms of forgiveness, even though it would not be dependent on an apology or reciprocal action. Stage five is not as driven by external pressure but nor is it a completely internal decision one comes to.

- Stage six: forgiveness as "an unconditional act of mercy and a complete abandonment of revenge" (2006). At this stage forgiveness happens because of the recognition of every human being as a human being and out of a place of love.

This would relate to the concept of *ubuntu*, which suggests that in order for me to be fully human I need to recognize the humanity of another. Here, Enright suggests that the act of forgiveness is not to control the other, but to release the other, and arguably, also oneself. This version of forgiveness acknowledges the presence of an injustice while releasing the hurt of the act. "While the offended realise they have been treated unfairly, and have no duty to show compassion, they decide to go beyond seeking a "fair solution", tied to a conditional justice of retribution or reparation, to reach for a compassionate one. (Enright et al, 1992, 104-6) This last stage is seen as a final resolution and answer to the offence and it will not be revisited again by either the individual or group involved" (Hartwell, 2006).

During any post-conflict situation, all these levels of forgiveness would be happening simultaneously, to varying degrees, amongst different people and communities. Some Rwandans I have spoken to suggest that the word for forgiveness, *kubabarira*, and its understanding in Rwandan, means to completely forget what was done without the perpetrator taking any responsibility. For this

reason, many have said to me they will not forgive as people will then not need to be accountable. However, Michel Kayitaba suggests that the word *kubabarira* finds resonance with the Rwandan word *urira* which means 'to cry'. During the MOUCECORE workshops he suggests that forgiving is to cry with one another at our lost humanity. Victims cry for their perpetrators that they could have done such inhumane things. Perpetrators cry for their own inhumane actions. Crying together leads to healing and reconciliation. This process would need to include acknowledging the inhumane act that was committed and would also involve remorse.

Kayitaba stresses, however, that many perpetrators are not ready to show remorse because of the difficulty of coming face to face with what they have done. He encourages *victims* to begin the 'crying' or mourning process. Victims need to mourn the broken humanity of their perpetrators and their own brokenness. As perpetrators see the mourning of the victim, there is the hope that they will begin to experience remorse. But this is not a given and, as Enright's model suggests, a truly freeing forgiveness does not depend on remorse, apology or restitution.

As desirable as Kayitaba's 'crying with one another' is, in a highly politicized environment shortly after violent conflict, most people will be at the earlier stages of justice and forgiveness which include the need for revenge and restitution. It is in this context that the Rwandan government has had to act, with hundreds of thousands of perpetrators in prison and victims demanding what they perceive to be fair treatment, and *gacaca* was a response to this. But where *gacaca* falls short is that no system can force perpetrators to a place of remorse, nor can it force victims to forgive. Churches and reconciliation organizations can create environments where this process might take place, but it is the action of individuals who rise above their hatred and revenge who make healing through mercy a reality.

Rwandan musician, Jean-Paul Samputu, describes this reality in his own life in a book on forgiveness. He tells the story of how he was on a music tour outside of the country when the genocide took place. When he returned his parents had been killed. After a long time of searching he discovered that the killer had been his close childhood friend, Vincent. For the next nine years, he gave in to drugs

and alcohol as the bitterness and hatred overcame him. He went through a divorce and spent time in prison. Through a religious conversion he managed to piece his life back together, but he didn't experience true freedom until he came to a place where he was able to forgive Vincent. When asked what led him to the place of forgiveness, his answer was that until he forgave his friend, he too was a killer. In his heart, he longed for his friend to be dead. He didn't want to become a killer himself and instead chose the path of forgiveness. He relayed the message of his forgiveness to Vincent, who was in prison. "After Vincent accepted my forgiveness, he was able to repent and forgive himself" (2009, 170). This story illustrates powerfully how when a victim is able to forgive a perpetrator, not only is he himself freed, but the perpetrator is able to begin to forgive themselves. Through mercy, through forgiveness, healing takes place.

9.5. Healing through peace

It is sometimes thought that if the citizens of a country live in unity, then there will be peace. In both Rwanda and South Africa, the governments have called themselves the governments of national unity. Yet, how to create a sense of national unity in a country previously violently divided remains under debate. In Rwanda, the route that has been taken is to strive for a sense of oneness through eliminating ethnic difference and insisting on a single shared identity. Further, it is believed that unity will be achieved through having one understanding of history and the way into the future. This section will discuss how effective this approach is to national unity and peace. Before this, it will look at the dynamics of identifying people as perpetrators and victims and the impact this has on sustainable peace.

9.5.1. Victims and perpetrators

As has been apparent throughout this thesis, the issue of identity stands central to any efforts of healing and reconciliation. In chapter five the multiplicity of identities in Rwanda were described, from old case load refugees to new case-load refugees, between northerners and southerners, between those who were formerly in Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania or elsewhere and of course between Hutu and Tutsi. Amidst all of this is the government's attempt to unite all Rwandans under one identity through national policies and laws.

Many have written about how identity has been manipulated throughout Rwandan history until today, as was mentioned in chapter two and three. Much of this manipulation has been around who is a victim and who is a perpetrator.

Identifying people as perpetrator or victim has immense political consequences and remains a sore point in Rwandan society. Some would say the Hutu were the victim of the Tutsi monarchy during the pre-colonial and colonial period. Others would say the Tutsi were the victim of the Hutu during the two republics. Although prior to the violence of the 1990s, Rwandans may well have lived side by side in harmony, the moment the propaganda campaign began wielding its hate speech and conflict started rising, victim-perpetrator identities started to form. In a study of justice and identity, Hartwell describes how during peace, identities tend to be fluid, but during conflict they become frozen: "you are simply not whatever or whoever your enemy is" (2006). Further, during conflict, three central identities dominate, namely, victim, perpetrator and observer. In the case of Rwanda, as perhaps in all situations of conflict, who is in which role is not always clear.

Although Tutsi, who were being slaughtered at the hands of genocidal killers during ethnic cleansing, were perhaps the most obvious victims, many Hutu nevertheless viewed themselves historically as victims of Tutsi subjugation. This victimhood, and the fear of being re-victimised by the Ugandan Tutsi infiltrating the country was a significant motivator for many Hutu to participate in the killing. While the genocide was taking place, there was nevertheless also a war between the Rwandan army and the RPF, and the RPF was attacking the country, acting against the Arusha Accords. It has also been suggested that both during and after the genocide, the RPF killed civilians who were not armed. This would make the RPF to be perpetrators as well.

Directly after conflict, Hartwell argues that political identities are formed around perceptions of winning and losing, depending upon who is getting the most external assistance, humanitarian aid, financial reconstruction assistance, and international military protection (2006). As the RPF took control of Rwanda, the genocide came to a halt, and millions of Hutu began to flee. However, it was not only Hutu who were fleeing. In her autobiography, Beatrice Umutesi describes how everyone started fleeing for fear of what new violence the new situation would bring, including many Tutsi (2000). When some two million of the fleeing

refugees flooded refugee camps in neighbouring countries, the world saw them as the immediate victims; victims of cholera, dysentery and starvation. Humanitarian aid organizations began providing millions of dollars worth of aid. Little attention and aid was given to the millions of displaced and suffering people within Rwanda. But the RPF intervened quickly to show the world that the refugees were in fact perpetrators and not victims.

Pottier would argue that the RPF would on the one hand talk about the 'social construction of ethnicity' or 'the mistake of ethnicity' and at the same time speak with 'assertive, essentialist' terms regarding identity: "outsiders as well as insiders readily resort to 'the Hutu' or 'the Tutsi'. The former are 'perpetrators' of genocide, or in the case of those who died in 1994, 'victims of politicicide'; the latter are 'survivors' or 'victims of genocide'" (2001, 130). Hartwell writes that "Perceptions of unbalanced access to political power and privilege contribute to the shaping of a 'victim' identity... This is how former dominant groups begin perceiving themselves as victims and can become a danger to sustainable peace" (2006). She describes how easily this can develop, as political leaders use the victim identity to mobilize people to fight, manipulating real and perceived slights against their group as justification for revenge. They then construct a one-sided version of current and recent events that aid the creation of a new generation of perpetrators (2006).

This clearly occurred during the genocide to incite people to fight. It has continued to occur after genocide, first in the refugee camps, and then in the prisons, where hundreds of thousands of accused genocide perpetrators have been awaiting trial. Pottier argues that the international aid effort 'construed the Rwandan Hutu refugees as a collectivity, which made the notion of collective guilt [for genocide] – and hence disposal – more acceptable' (2001, 131). Every year in April, when the genocide is remembered, the emphasis is on the innocent Tutsi victims who were mercilessly slaughtered by the Hutu perpetrators as they were manipulated by their political leaders. Hutu opponents, on the other hand, would bring attention to the victimization of Hutu, not only historically, but since 1994 as well. There are stories of RPF massacres of women and children, which some, particularly Hutu refugees, have labeled 'counter-genocide'. There are stories of continued harassment of Hutu in Rwanda. Filip Reijntjens would go so far as to say that the

very thing genocidal leaders feared, namely that the infiltrating Tutsi wanted to take and hold of power for themselves, has in fact happened (1999, 6). Thus many Hutu may feel they have become the new victim.

Mamdani writes, that “Every round of perpetrators has justified the use of violence as the only effective guarantee against being victimised yet again. For the unreconciled victim of yesterday’s violence, the struggle continues. The continuing tragedy of Rwanda is that each round of violence gives yet another set of victims-turned-perpetrators” (2002, 268). He argues that colonialism in Africa led to two types of ‘genocide impulses’: the genocide of the native by the settler (coloniser) and the genocide of the settler by the native. Mamdani further argues that where the first violence, of settler to native, was ‘obviously despicable’, the second could be described as self-defense, or even an affirmation of the natives identity (2002, 10). In the case of Rwanda, as mentioned above, the Tutsi took on the role of colonialist settler and the Hutu of subjugated native. Thus many Hutu saw themselves not as senseless killers but as natives of a country that had been overrun by outsiders. As Mamdani writes, “For the Hutu who killed, the Tutsi was a settler, not a neighbour” (2002, 10). This, together with the strong inferiority-superiority complex, led to a strong victim mentality on the part of the Hutu. Simultaneously, Tutsi felt victimised both within the country, by ethnic-policies and outside of the country and by the fact that hundreds of thousands of refugees were denied return to Rwanda. Thus both felt they were victims defending themselves against a feared and hated perpetrator.

As Hartwell and Lemarchand have warned, if we continue to operate according to winning and losing, victim and perpetrator, the conditions are being created that will incite some to rebel and ultimately kill. Both sides are correct in perceiving themselves as having been, at some point victimised, but both sides have also at some point been the perpetrator. Although the Rwandan government is attempting to transcend ethnic identity, the victim-perpetrator identities remain rife and continue to threaten peace in the country.

9.5.2. Eliminating ethnicity

Alongside the victim-perpetrator dynamic is that of what to do with the ethnic divisions which have played such a divisive role in Rwanda. The dominant rhetoric of the current government concerning identity is that of national unity in national identity. In an interview with a representative from NURC it was mentioned how education campaigns teach people, “You are no longer Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, you are all Rwandan. You are not from Chad, Hutu; you are not from Ethiopia, Tutsi; you are not from the forest, Twa. Even taking into consideration migrations, for each one of you your heritage is Rwanda” (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

Michael Dorf writes about the Rwandan government’s policy to ‘eliminate’ ethnic identity using re-education camps and the law of divisionism. Although the basis of the divisionism law is ‘the fomenting of ethnic violence’, Dorf says that its critics “charge that it can also be used as a means by which the party in power stamps out even legitimate opposition” (2004, 2). Dorf suggests that these means are more extreme than one would normally find in a democracy but that they may be successful in the same way as Nazi re-education programs were arguably successful after World War II, and that the ethnic identities in Rwanda are ‘artificial’ to begin with. “If ethnic division can thus be created by government policy, perhaps it can be destroyed the same way” (Dorf, 2004). He later asks whether identities really can be erased and whether people don’t have the right to identify with others in their own group. His answer to this question is that distinct identities need only to be preserved if there is some value in preserving them. If they are tied to religion, language or culture it would make sense to preserve them, but in the Rwandan case they are not (2004, 5).

One of the central questions discussed during interviews was that of sameness and difference. In the South African context, Desmond Tutu introduced the concept of unity in diversity; the rainbow nation which allows for all colours and creeds to express their diverse ways of being while still being incorporated into the national identity. Rwanda has taken a different route, that of emphasizing the constructed nature of ethnic identity, and from here, denying its existence. The Rwandan creed is that “we are all Rwandans; there is no Hutu, Tutsi or Twa”.

The danger of the government's stance of national unity is perhaps that it not only tries to ignore the reality of ethnicity but further disallows any privileging of disadvantaged groups. A case in point in the Rwanda context is that of the Twa. The Twa are an ethnic group that have been severely stigmatized and abused throughout Rwandan history and remain a group that all other Rwandans look down on. The NURC representative spoke of the Twa as being seen as 'dirty, stupid people that lived in trees'. He also admitted that the policy of 'no ethnicity' meant that it was impossible for the Twa to assert their rights as a disadvantaged ethnic group. Although it is the commonly held belief that the Twa are short, pygmy-type people, nevertheless they are now, according to official rhetoric, no longer a distinct group but like all other people in the country, 'Rwandan'. Although the Rwandan constitution allows for the protection of all citizens rights, and equal opportunity, the Twa remain behind in education and in general society. Until today, it remains difficult for the Twa to integrate in society due to deep prejudices and stereotypes. And yet the 'no ethnicity' policy renders them without a collective identity from which to act and assert their equal rights in Rwandan society.

Rather more skeptically, Pottier would go so far as to argue that the government has a distinct political agenda behind eliminating categories to their advantage. Both Englund and Nyamnjoh discuss how in many cases in Africa, a multi-party democracy becomes an opportunity for a dominant group to legitimately channel all cultural and ethnic identities into the dominant way of thinking and being under the guise of citizenship and national unity. Even pluralistic governments 'continue to have major difficulties in envisaging diversity within their polities, particularly if that diversity takes on ethnic markers' (2004, 9). Marianne Andersen looks at the discrepancy between Kenyan political rhetoric of national unity which fails to make itself known in practice. She writes, "The ideology of equality based on common civic citizenship can be understood as a rhetorical device for the legitimization of existing hierarchies and forms of political power" (2004, 128). And further, "The ideology of equality in dignity and rights, when articulated only or mostly at the level of rhetoric, provides a practical tool for the suppression of identities not following the existing subject categories" (2004, 128).

In the case of Rwanda, it has already been made apparent that the history and politics associated with being Hutu and being Tutsi, and the relationship between these two ethnic groups cannot simply be undone by a governmental campaign that insists those identities no longer exist. Although everyone would agree that Rwanda needs to be moving towards unity, the question is whether eliminating ethnicity is the way to go. When questioned about this, Antoine Rutayisere, then director of African Evangelical Enterprise, argued for a separation of present state and future hope. The present state may be one of incorrectly experiencing a constructed ethnic identity; the future hope would be of a Rwanda without ethnic categories. Currently, he says, Rwanda is in a transitional generation, between artificial ethnic identities and a future state where these no longer exist. Rwandans cannot ignore what they are now but they can change the future (Personal interview, Kigali, January, 2007).

9.5.4. Nationalism and national identity

A prominent factor in identity politics and securing sustainable peace in Rwanda is that of nationalism and national identity. Jenkins defines nationalism as “the expression and organization of political claims to territory and self-determination” as a nation” (2003, 124). It was nationalistic instincts that led hundreds of thousands of Rwandans who were enforced to live in neighbouring countries, to take up arms and violently reclaim their right to ‘territory and self-determination’. In the interview with Robert, who was a refugee in Uganda, it was apparent that the primary reason he wanted to return to Rwanda was exactly this: self-determination, as an individual. In Uganda, he had no rights, no access to education or employment. In his own country, he believed he would have access to these things.

Jenkins differentiates between nationalism and national identity in that nationalism is a ‘public ideology of identification with the state’ whereas national identity refers to ‘an implicit sense of being a kind of person, or living the kind of life appropriate to membership in that state’ (2003, 160). Those refugees living in Uganda and Tanzania, for example, had a very strong sense of their national identity, of being Rwandan, even in these foreign countries. And this identity became violent when

it was translated into political claims of territory and self-determinism. Similarly, those within the country turned to violence when it seemed their claim to territory and self-determinism was under threat.

In Rwanda, there is a tension between the old ways of doing things and new ways, between modern and traditional, western and African, and individual and community-based ways of being. Nyamnjoh elaborates on these divides, using the case of Botswana as an example, arguing that it is often assumed that liberal, western style democracy, based on such concepts as the nation state, citizenship (and loyalty to the nation-state) and the autonomous individual is the best form of governance and thus adopted by African states (2004, 33). Englund elaborates on this saying,

“...post-colonial governments in Africa have great difficulties in acknowledging and accommodating difference. A rhetoric of unity dominated discourse during the first decades of independence. Nation building was the altar at which ethnic and linguistic diversity was to be sacrificed” (2004, 9).

Influenced by modernization ideology, African regimes ‘ruthlessly suppressed’ difference. “Ethnicity, for example, was a remnant of a ‘tribal’ past that had no future in a modern nation-state” (2004, 9). However, he also makes clear that rather than uniting a nation through ‘the inculcation of national identity’, often one-party states would emerge that were ‘highly selective in their choice of national symbols and political allies, feeding covert dissent’ (2004, 9). This has strong resonance with the reality in Rwanda today. Robert described in his follow-up interview how Rwanda has undergone a significant shift from the old way of doing things to a more western way of operating. This has been necessary to participate in a global economy, but politically and socially the cost has been high.

NURC is actively educating Rwandans with regards to democracy and citizenship. Yet the uncritical acceptance of these concepts without integrating them into the African context can have dire consequences, according to Nyamnjoh. He is wary of simply describing African societies as being all that western societies are not, and warns against caricatured, idealized, or romanticized concepts of community

and togetherness. But also, he speaks of how African society is held together by integral and complex relationships and hierarchies that act as checks and balances to power and allow interdependent individuals to gain from and contribute to a community in such a way as to ensure its survival (2004, 35).

By emphasizing national identity, the nation-state, citizenship, democracy and the like, the danger is of losing other aspects fundamental to a harmonic Rwandan society. Robert emphasized in an earlier interview that it is the interdependent community relationships that have allowed for at least some forms of reconciliation to take place and have forced people to draw together; not because they are citizens of one nation with a shared national identity, but because their very survival depends on the intricate interdependency of their community. And in Rwanda, every community constitutes Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, survivor, victim and perpetrator, old case-load refugee and new.

Claude Ake, in *The Feasibility of Democracy in Africa* (2000), discusses how a communal sense of personhood (as opposed understanding personhood in terms of the autonomous individual) asks for the purpose of the good of all.

“People participate not because they are individuals whose interests need to be asserted, but because they are part of an interconnected whole ... Participation is based not on the assumption of individuality but on the social nature of human beings and is as much a matter of taking part as of ... sharing the burdens and rewards of community membership. It is also more than the occasional opportunity to choose, affirm or dissent, in that it requires active involvement in the process of decision-making and community life in general” (2000, 184).

This kind of unity is based deeply in communal and cultural values that resonate deeply in Rwandan society, particularly the Rwanda outside of Kigali.

Jenkins suggests a way forward in terms of the tension between national identity, personal autonomy and a sense of community when he distinguishes between nominal and virtual identity (2004, 166). Nominal identity refers to that which is titled (eg: Hutu, Tutsi, Rwandan, etc) and virtual identity refers to that which is

lived. He argues that these overlap but aren't always the same thing. The nominal is less likely to change than the virtual, which remains dynamic. By freezing identity categories in terms of the nominal, the natural processes of virtual identity are hampered and disallowed to morph into something new. The following section will discuss narrative approaches to healing and reconciliation which allow identity categories to remain more fluid.

9.6. Introducing a narrative approach to healing

A narrative approach to healing and reconciliation focuses on issues of identity and history, and how we speak of these individually, communally and nationally. It focuses on the stories we tell as a central point for personal healing and for engaging the other with empathy and compassion. Our narratives can become restrictive and unhelpful or they can open up channels for healing and reconciliation. This section will briefly examine South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to see the strengths and weaknesses of a narrative approach to reconciliation and healing. It will then consider other narrative approaches that have been used internationally and in Rwanda, such as the Healing of Memories, the Alternative to Violence program, the Sociotherapy project and others. It will look at how sharing stories impact on healing processes. It will consider the kind of context needed for a narrative approach to develop. And finally, it will describe some narrative healing events that might be helpful in the Rwandan context.

9.6.1. South Africa's TRC

South Africa's TRC is relevant to consider in the context of a narrative model of reconciliation for several reasons. One is that the TRC was primarily narrative in its approach. Another is that the debate around the role of history, and of personal narratives in dialogue with broader socio-political narratives played a significant role. Yet another is that the TRC brought to the fore the question of what should take precedence in the fine balance between peace, justice, truth and mercy in bringing about reconciliation. The following section will consider the TRC in terms of these four elements of reconciliation.

During South Africa's Apartheid, 18 000 people were killed, 80 000 opponents of Apartheid detained, with 6000 of these being tortured. Structural violence was present in every area of society, with policies and laws that led to the systematic dehumanizing of millions of people on the basis of their race. The TRC was established to investigate human rights abuses committed between 1960 and 1994, and offer amnesty to individuals in exchange for their full disclosure about their past acts. According to Graybill, "its mandate was to give as complete a picture as possible of the violations that took place during the period, focusing on gross human rights violations defined as 'killing, abduction, torture, or severe ill treatment'" (2004, 1117). 7000 people applied for amnesty and about 16% of these were granted amnesty. Only a tenth of the 20 000 people wanting to testify at the TRC were heard (Graybill, 2004, 1117). But the TRC hearings were not intended as a means of trying everyone involved in Apartheid, but rather as an opportunity for all South Africans to hear the complexity of the stories of what happened. Nolte-Schamm writes that preference was given to those whose stories included particular trauma or those whose stories had never been heard (1999, 40).

The TRC proceedings culminated in a five hundred page volume which describes thousands of stories. In the report, the slippery issue of truth and history is discussed at some length. The approach was to adopt four understandings of truth: factual or forensic truth, personal or narrative truth, social or 'dialogue' truth, and healing or restorative truth. Colin Bundy critiques the report, saying that on the one hand it argues that the past is a 'a site of contending constructions and perspectives, a realm of subjective, partial truths', truths that may only emerge in time, and are dynamic, changing and multiple. On the other hand, it argues that this report is the final, factual truth of our past, and that 'we should accept that truth has emerged' (2000, 14). Bundy argues that the report makes no effort to negotiate the discrepancies between the forensic data and the many contradicting narratives of people. In terms of Stewart and Stratherns' assertion that history is the 'narrative of the interaction of narratives', this unresolved tension could perhaps be argued to be necessarily a part of any narrative of history.

Villa-Vicencio argues that the stories that emerge in testimony are incomplete, as memory is incomplete. He prosaically calls for a listening to the incompleteness,

the silences, the body language, and the complexity of emotions that accompany telling narratives of the past. The important issue, for Villa-Vicencio, is not that one complete, coherent truth is told, but that new insight is gained into what happened, along with “an empathetic understanding of how a particular event is viewed by ones adversaries” (2000, 27). The crux is not getting to the truth, but having people on opposing sides begin to see each others’ truths with an empathy and understanding that will allow for healing to begin to take place. Nevertheless, this does not mean that what happened does not matter. Villa-Vicencio stresses that violations of human rights on all sides must be investigated and acknowledged in order to create a culture of human rights in the present (2000, 29).

Creating a culture of human rights was also a driving force behind choosing amnesty as the route of justice. Some of the reasons for this included the fact that those who might have been regarded as perpetrators were also the ones to carry the country forward in terms of the economy. Further, as Tutu describes in his book, *No Future without Forgiveness*, a retributive response may have resulted in renewed violence (1999, 23). But more than this, Tutu describes how the desire to live out the precepts of the Constitution and have the reconciliation process be a shared one between all South Africans were fundamental in deciding for a truth-telling with amnesty route.

He quotes Judge Ismail Mahomed, who was deputy president of the Constitutional Court at the time, as saying,

“For a successfully negotiated transition, the terms of the transition required not only the agreement of those victimised by abuse but also those threatened by transition to a ‘democratic society based on freedom and equality’. If the Constitution kept alive the prospect of continuous retaliation and revenge, the agreement of those threatened by its implementation might never have been forthcoming” (1999, 22).

Those ‘threatened by transition’ needed to be incorporated in the process of transitioning in order not to become the new victims and renew violence. Because

the participation of those 'threatened by transition' was sufficiently high, the possibility of renewed violence was relatively low.

The Nuremberg trial option was considered, but it was immediately clear that this process would take too long and be too costly to be practically possible. Further, such drawn out trials would be "too disruptive of a fragile peace and stability" (1999, 23). Tutu writes, "We have had to balance the requirements of justice, accountability, stability, peace, and reconciliation" (1999, 23). And he goes on to say that had South Africa chosen a retributive path, it would have destroyed the country. "Our country had to decide very carefully where it would spend its limited resources to the best possible advantage" (1999, 23). The TRC seemed to respond to this requirement. On the official TRC website it is stated that "the conflict during this period resulted in violence and human rights abuses from all sides. No section of society escaped these abuses." Because of this, the clear distinction between perpetrator and victim was blurred. Any person who had committed any act of violence was seen as a perpetrator needing amnesty, regardless of their political affiliation.

Although the route of amnesty seemed at the time the best way for reconciliation and healing to take place in South Africa, in retrospect, many feel it was unhelpful for the victims of Apartheid. Hamber et al. describe their study with twenty women who survived political violence during Apartheid and testified at the TRC. These women had thought that they were testifying in order for the perpetrators to receive punishment.

"The respondent's main sentiment was that the perpetrators should face jail time. There were a few respondents who asked for other forms of punishment such as the perpetrators being forced to meet the victims, or being forced to tell the truth, but even these requests were coupled with calls for traditional retributive justice such as incarceration or compensation. It is clear that for these respondents, the TRC's limited system of justice (public accountability as the price for truth) did not suffice for these respondents. The most striking commonality between all of the responses is that of the twenty, not one of those interviewed is in any way supportive of the amnesty process" (Hamber et al. 2000, 38).

Hamber et al. write that although the TRC may have had a role to play in the national process of healing, and that telling their stories may have been cathartic for some, “it does not seem to have helped many of the victims cope with their tragedies in a convincing manner, or help them deal with the ongoing personal and social difficulties created by their victimization” (2000, 39). Although at the time of testifying, many survivors felt relieved at the opportunity to be heard by the nation, months afterwards Hamber et al. found them frustrated and confused by the process. Hamber et al. suggest the possibility that those that testified felt like ‘pawns’ in a national healing process, where their suffering was used to help the nation but they themselves benefited from it very little.

“It is difficult to assess the truth for justice trade in a context where, for the majority, truth about their case was not forthcoming. Yet even for the few victims who we interviewed who got the truth, truth was not always enough. They still wanted the perpetrators to be punished in some way. For them, truth and possible reconciliation did not equate with justice. The question arises: did telling one's story and hearing the truth compound the psychic burden of revenge, or did the truth alleviate some of the anger? Can truth alone lead to reconciliation on an individual level? We speculate, that those we interviewed, would say no” (2000, 41).

This is a powerful statement about the limitations of a truth-telling amnesty process. A narrative approach to healing and reconciliation would need to consider how justice is to be incorporated in such a way that the victims of injustice are satisfied. At a later stage, Hamber et al. suggest that financial compensation or a sense that the perpetrator fully understands what they have done and are prepared to make restitution may help in the process of healing where retributive justice is absent (2000, 42). It may be worth noting here that only those who applied for amnesty and were prepared to tell the truth were given amnesty. Those who did not apply were tried by the usual judicial system. But according to Hamber et al. the TRC did not give enough room to the legitimate anger that survivors felt.

As seriously as we need to take survivors' anger and pain, a retributive approach to justice may be impractical. In the South African context, Tutu argues that all South Africans had to continue living alongside one another and could not afford to alienate the perpetrators as this had the danger of leading to renewed violence (2000, 23). But a retributive approach is also limited in aiding the process of healing and reconciliation. A driving force behind South Africa's choice for a TRC was the desire to live out the precepts of the Constitution in the very way justice and reconciliation were engaged with (Tutu, 2000, 21). Leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Desmond Tutu wanted to build a country on the principles of forgiveness and reconciliation, amongst others. Forgiveness played a central role in the TRC proceedings, drawing its meaning both from Christianity which is practiced by the majority of South Africans as well as from the African concept of *ubuntu*. Graybill writes that in South Africa's interim constitution was written: "There is a need for understanding but not for revenge, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for *ubuntu* but not for victimization'. *Ubuntu* derives from the Xhosa expression 'Umuntu ngumuntu ngabanye bantu' (People are people through other people)" (2004, 1118). She quotes an example of a testimony at a TRC hearing that embodies this concept:

"One of those supporting amnesty was Cynthia Ngeweu, mother of Christopher Piet (one of the Giguletu 7 who was assassinated), who explained her understanding of *ubuntu*: 'This thing called reconciliation...if I am understanding it correctly...if it means the perpetrator, the man who has killed Christopher Piet, if it means he becomes human again, this man. So that I, so that all of us, get our humanity back...then I agree, then I support it all'" (2004, 1119).

Tutu held that all South Africans had been hurt by Apartheid and needed to be forgiven and healed, regardless of whether they were perpetrators or victims. "In one way or another, as a supporter, a perpetrator, a victim, or one who opposed the ghastly system, something happened to our humanity. All of us South Africans are less whole than we would have been without apartheid" (Tutu 1999, 154). He called on people to forgive regardless of whether remorse was shown, in the belief that forgiveness is pivotal if a nation is not to fall into an endless cycle of revenge (1999, 265).

Although this led to very moving and transforming experiences during the TRC hearings, the critique has been that white South Africans did not show enough remorse, and that the structural violence meted out by the apartheid system was not sufficiently acknowledged. Ntsimane writes that during the TRC hearings not enough contrition was shown by perpetrators, and that the atmosphere of the hearing led victims to feel forced to forgive. Ntsimane suggests that it may have been better had the victims, and not the TRC commissioner, been the one to decide whether perpetrators received amnesty (2000, 40). Graybill also argues that it was rare for victims to meet perpetrators face-to-face and engage in a process of forgiveness (2004, 1119). In this way, reconciliation and forgiveness have the danger of becoming abstract. As Francois said in his interview, in section 7.3.6, reconciliation needs to happen between the one who has been hurt and the one who has hurt them. Yet this is often not possible, and Tutu stresses in his book that there is no alternative, that there will be no future for South Africa or other nations in the process of recovering from a violent past, than through forgiveness regardless of whether the perpetrators show remorse (2004, 280).

Graybill concludes her critical discussion of the TRC hearings with the words of the chancellor of Rhodes university, “notwithstanding the complex divisions and differences of various sorts, levels, and intensities, [it] is decidedly not an unreconciled nation in the sense of being threatened by imminent disintegration and internecine conflict” (2004, 1119). Through the process of the TRC, amongst other things, South Africans across the political divide, who had access to large amounts of arms, have put down their weapons and have embraced peace. Amidst continual racial and political tensions, there has nevertheless been an ongoing effort made to abate violence and work towards a united nation. The route South Africa has chosen for nation building is unity through diversity.

Desmond Tutu coined the term ‘the rainbow nation’ shortly after the first democratic elections in 1994, to capture the idea of unity in the midst of many language, culture and race groups. Baines describes how sporting events and the media have participated in building this image, from the South African Broadcasting Association’s ‘*Simunye-we are one*’ slogan to the Castle Lager

slogan of 'one beer, one nation' (1998). Baines argues that although nationalism has the danger of becoming exclusivist and tends to emphasize a political affiliation over affiliation to a community, multi-level nationalism that incorporates national and communal identities creates a public national culture which a diversity of people can identify with without losing their own cultural affiliations (1998). However, he argues that the ANC's rhetoric has leaned towards being Africanist, even though it still insists on non-racialism. "The ANC's apparent ambivalence towards non-racialism is apparent in its varied definitions of nationhood. It is both inclusive and qualified" (Baines, 1998). There is a fear that black empowerment and the accompanying policies of affirmative action and BEE will result in what some inaccurately name 'reverse-Apartheid'. From a completely different angle, there are those that fear identities becoming lost in the 'rainbow nation'. Interestingly, the Afrikaner nation has reidentified themselves as a minority group in the new South Africa, an identity that gives a different kind of political leverage (Baines, 1998). Baines' discussion shows the complexity of multiculturalism and that, as important as unity in diversity is in order to sustain peace, it is a difficult path to forge.

This section has described the TRC in terms of the four elements of healing and reconciliation: truth, justice, mercy and peace. The TRC has been critiqued for focusing on national, symbolic reconciliation with an emphasis on forgiveness and mercy at the expense of victims' needs for justice and compensation. The most powerful impact of the TRC, though, would perhaps be exactly what a narrative approach to reconciliation endeavours to achieve, namely, to be challenged and changed through hearing the stories of others. Nolte-Schamm describes how the well-known South African journalist, Antjie Krog, "through being exposed to, and allowing herself to be challenged by, the collective memories of groups other than her own, was able to start critiquing her own story; her own story was 'stretched'" (2000, 41). This is the key contribution that a narrative approach makes to reconciliation and healing; through the sharing of narratives, our own narrative is challenged so that new narratives can begin to emerge.

9.6.2. What is the role of narrative in healing?

This thesis has argued that critically engaging our own and others' narratives can lead to emancipation. But how does sharing narratives lead to healing? During an interview with a genocide survivor, her comment was that she had no desire to talk about what happened or share her story. "Talking and sharing emotions with outsiders is a western way of doing things", she said. And she quoted a Rwandan proverb which says that a family's problems should remain within the confines of a family's home (Personal interview, Pretoria, March, 2005). Yet for individuals and a nation to find healing, sharing the story of what happened seems to be of significant importance. It is not only that the act of sharing is cathartic, but that through sharing we begin to create shared narratives. It is within these shared narratives that we begin to experience healing and reconciliation.

This is only possible, according to Anthony Balcomb, if we share our stories in a particular way. A shared story begins to emerge through listening (2000, 54). And not just listening to stories, but identifying with them and entering into them in such a way that one's own story is challenged or even shattered (2000, 56). What was hoped for with the four young men who shared their life stories was that by being confronted by another's story their own stories would be challenged. However, the setting wasn't right for deep listening. Kayitaba from MOUCECORE shared several instances, though, during their carefully structured reconciliation workshops, where hearing the story of another has resulted in a shattering of one's own story.

This is particularly the case when one has painted the other as the enemy, the perpetrator or simply the one who is completely other to me. When one is deeply embedded in a stereotyped understanding of the other, then it can be challenging or shattering to hear the others' story. In the case of Rwanda, many survivors would perhaps be shattered by the stories of Hutus who were violently forced to become perpetrators and who then underwent harrowing experiences while fleeing the RPF. Some extremist Hutu might have their stories shattered if they were to hear of the simple and humble lives lived by many Tutsi on the hills, where they had no concept of a sense of superiority or any desire to take over power in the country. When we hear the story of the other and allow it to challenge us, something significant begins to take place.

Balcomb suggests that a crises takes place when our stories are shattered, and the ideas or stereotypes we had are brought into question. But the resolution of such a crises allows for the construction of new narratives (2000, 57). He writes that we need to identify which narratives are important to a community, which narratives aren't important, and "which stories are looking old and haggard and are ready to die" (2000, 60). In the case of Rwanda, part of the work of NURC could be to listen to the community as they tell their narratives, rather than having the Rwandan government tell communities which narratives they *should* be telling. It may be surprising and even shattering to begin to hear what stories emerge. It may lead to crises, but after the crises, space may be created for new, shared narratives to emerge.

9.6.3. The context needed for a narrative approach

A narrative approach to healing and reconciliation requires a context that is particularly open and safe. This kind of context needs to be created by the leadership of a country if a nation is to engage in a healing process. It can also be fostered to a lesser degree by organizations, churches or communities. Many reconciliation organizations in the country have created the kinds of spaces where a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation has taken place. However, the process of healing and reconciliation in Rwanda would be greatly helped if, on a national level, there was a sense of security, supportive government policy and laws, freedom of speech and open and honest dialogue.

Although many policies have been put in place by the government to support reconciliation, there are others that leave people feeling fearful and insecure. Certain government programs, such as those initiated by NURC strongly support reconciliation on a grass roots level. But laws such as these on ethnic divisionism law create fear and uncertainty. Some would argue that Rwanda is currently being governed in much same way as the monarchy governed prior to colonialism, which was also carried over into the two republics. In chapter two it was described that Kayibanda ruled Rwanda like a *mwami* with a remote, authoritarian and secretive leadership. Hard work and virtue were valued and people were encouraged not to ask too many questions or meddle in politics. Much of the

same atmosphere is felt today, with a similar authoritative leadership style, as was discussed by the Reconciliation Forum mentioned in section 8.3. For Rwandans who mind their own business and work hard, life in Rwanda is pleasant and productive. But those who ask questions or are politically minded claim that they find themselves side-lined socially and in terms of employment, as Reginald described in his interview in chapter 7.

As a result, as was mentioned before, 'double-speak' is a common phenomenon in Rwandan society. According to several people interviewed, they hold one view in private and another in public. Fred, in his interview, described it as being like a woman who has been repeatedly abused by a string of men. After such an experience, it will be difficult for her to trust again. Similarly, in Rwanda, many people feel they have been betrayed by people they believe they trusted; neighbours, people they knew and had always lived with, and even family, became killers. The trust factor is thus high on the agenda with regards to any attempt to encourage people to talk to one another.

The editor of the controversial Rwandan newspaper, *Umuwugizi*, insists that there is little freedom of speech in Rwanda (Personal interview, Kigali, June, 2008). He almost paid for this with his life when he was beaten up by people allegedly acting on behalf of a politician he mentioned in one of his articles. The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) intervened on his behalf and continues to support independent newspapers such as this one and *Umuseso*. The lack of free speech was confirmed by Reginald, Francois and others informally interviewed, Hutus in particular, who spoke of being afraid to speak out and criticize the government or its policies.

Premature efforts at reconciliation are doomed, argues Charles Mironko, if some of the underlying wounds have not been addressed. He says that "what survivors and perpetrators need is a forum for frank dialogue which will lead to a truthful rapprochement". He recommends extended periods of dialogue where survivors can begin to make sense of what happened and why, and perpetrators can begin to understand the feelings of survivors (2004, 50). Villa-Vicencio speaks of a period of 'reconvivencia' which describes a period of getting to know one another, confronting each others' worst fears and developing an empathetic understanding

of one another (2000, 27; Nolte-Schamm, 2005). Drumtra recommends that authorities should seek “opportunities to acknowledge the existence of sensitive ethnic problems in an open and constructive manner. The government can more effectively defuse the ethnicity issue by helping society discuss it, rather than by denying its existence” (1998).

9.6.4. Other narrative approaches to healing

Various narrative approaches to healing and reconciliation have been used by NGOs and churches internationally and in Rwanda. This section will discuss a number of these, including projects that focus on the healing of memories, the Sociotherapy program, the use of ritual and the role of memorials. Exploring these approaches will give insight into the significant role that a narrative approach can play in healing and reconciliation after violent conflict.

The Institute for the Healing of Memories was started by Fr Michael Lapsley during the TRC hearings in order to give more people the opportunity to give voice to their experiences. Where the TRC only allowed a small number of people to share their story, Lapsley’s workshops were intended to reach a broader audience, allowing more South African to take part in the healing and reconciliation process. The website describes the objectives of the Institute as follows:

“On an individual level, participation in a Healing of Memories workshop provides an experiential way to overcome feelings of anger, hatred, prejudice and guilt and create a more positive meaning for suffering. It can therefore be considered as one step on the journey to psychological, emotional and spiritual healing and wholeness. On a communal, national or international level, the workshops reveal how the nation’s history and resultant socio-political environment have shaped personal emotions and views. These processes lead to a growing empathy with the experience of others and have the potential to lead to reconciliation, forgiveness, and a transformation of the relationships between people of different ethnic groups, races, cultures, religions, and nations”.

This relates closely with the discussions throughout this thesis around creating an awareness of the role socio-political narratives have played in personal narratives. Understanding this role and hearing the stories of others has a powerful impact in the healing process. The workshops allow people to explore their personal histories and hear the stories of others.

Another organization that does this is the Khulumani support group who facilitate healing of memory workshops. Their information brief says that the “narrative approach to healing is concerned with people participating together in suffering and through the process becoming part of the ability to bring about transformation through the re-interpretation of their life stories through meaningful relationships”. They say that sharing our stories leads to a deepening of trust as we begin to understand and know one another.

The Sociotherapy project that was implemented in Byumba, Rwanda, similarly emphasizes sharing stories as a way of building trust. This project, implemented by Cora Dekker who previously worked with traumatized refugees in the Netherlands, is a kind of group therapy where participants meet together to share their daily life experience (Richters et al. 2005, 13). Richters et al. write that this approach focuses less on memories of the past than events happening here-and-now, although the past and present socio-cultural context is taken into account (2005, 14). Participants, normally both Hutu and Tutsi, victim and perpetrator, meet together on a regular basis and talk about how they together can negotiate their daily experiences. This is particularly pertinent in a context where interdependence is a crucial part of how communities operate. In a personal communication with Dekker, it was clear that sociotherapy makes no claims of forgiveness or reconciliation but does foster a safe environment for togetherness which may well lead to healing and reconciliation (Email, 01/02/2007).

Richters et al. describe their skepticism of the potential of *gacaca* and the TRC to foster long term reconciliation and healing as this needs to take place in the context of people’s daily lives (2005, 4). Through the sociotherapy approach, new narratives are created through engaging differently with daily life. Richters et al. quote an ex-prisoner as saying that in the sociotherapy group he was ‘treated as a full person of value’ while another said that the group helped him ‘decolonise’ his

thoughts, finding freedom from old ways of thinking (2008, 12). Although this method differs distinctly from the healing of memories approach, it can again be seen that a narrative approach to healing, in its various forms, has a powerful role to play in healing and reconciliation.

Apart from workshops that heal memories or dialogue that builds trust, Hay suggests that rituals can be helpful in the process of healing. Rituals create spaces in which new narratives can emerge. He writes, "Reconciliation will not simply happen; there are steps and rituals that are necessary to foster reconciliation" (1998, 113). Ntsimane critiques the TRC for not having considered traditional African ways of reconciliation and mentions a Zulu ritual for reconciliation between disputing brothers, called *ukuthelelana amanzi* (2000, 22). In response to this critique, Nolte-schamm has developed a ritual which takes both Christian theology and African traditional practice into consideration. The question is whether such rituals would be helpful in the Rwandan context. In Rwanda, the predominant religion is Christianity, and most particularly Catholicism. The RPF leadership originating from Uganda brought with them a scepticism for western religion. Yet in many rural parts of Rwanda, traditional religions are still practiced, often interwoven with Christianity. This remains largely unresearched and unrecorded. The primary traditional religious groups seem to be the Nyabingi sect and the Ryangombe sect. Interestingly, members of the Nyabingi sect are mentioned in a panel at the Genocide Museum in Kigali for their heroism in saving lives regardless of ethnic affinity.

In section 3.4.3, Taylor's description of cultural narratives that led to a particular kind of violence was mentioned. Taylor argued that there were narratives of purification and of blockage and flow that were expressed through particularly perverse sexual violence, throwing bodies into cisterns and rivers, the many roadblocks and the severing of tendons. Although these violent narratives have not been mentioned by many other researchers, it may be relevant to consider these in terms of how this related to traditional religions and the possibility of healing rituals. According to King, the worship of the ancestor Ryangombe played a powerfully unifying role in Rwanda in the past, bringing together Hutu, Tutsi and Twa (2006, 94). Nyabingi was a woman healer and her role was seen to bring an end to oppression and injustice, according to Dashu (2006). However, these sects

now exist in secret and members may find themselves penalized for participation in these sects by their church communities.

Research into traditional religion and ritual falls outside of the scope of this thesis, but further research is recommended into traditional religious narratives that may open the way to healing rituals. Ilibagiza writes that “Rwandans are intensely private and secretive people who keep their emotions to themselves” (2006, 98). In a society where therapeutic sharing and talking about emotions may not come naturally, rituals that draw from deeply embedded traditional religious worldviews may be helpful in the process of healing. Coupled with this, both King and Dashu mention that traditional practices include theatre and dance. Shalom, Educating for Peace, is a Rwandan NGO that uses theatre and dance to communicate the message of forgiveness and reconciliation. More research needs to be done into the role these approaches can play.

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that healing remains a miracle. We can speak of forgiveness and reconciliation, but for people who have experienced unimaginable horror, it is no easy task. In the autobiographical account of her ordeal during genocide, Immaculée Ilibagiza describes the intense internal struggle she underwent to come to a place of healing. While hiding in a tiny bathroom with seven other Tutsi women, she would hear the blood curdling cries of the *Interehamwe* (2006, 90). More horrifying than the images of flashing machetes and bodies hacked to pieces was the overpowering sense of the presence of evil. Even were it to be possible to blame the overriding political system for people’s madness in a general sense, how is it possible to see those young men who were once your neighbours and friends, who became killers and rapists, as human beings again? Yet her decision to forgive came from the realization that if she did not, she would become as inhumane as them.

“The people that had hurt my family had hurt themselves even more, and they deserved my pity. There is no doubt that they had to be punished for their crimes against humanity and against God. But I prayed for compassion as well. I asked God for the forgiveness that would end the cycle of hatred” (2006, 197).

The following chapter will bring together the issues of history and identity in terms of a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation in Rwanda. This approach will take into account the complex reality of the Rwandan situation as well as the ideals of Lederach's model of reconciliation, which involves people rediscovering and embracing each other as 'humans-in-relationship'.

CHAPTER 10: A NARRATIVE APPROACH TO HEALING AND RECONCILIATION

This chapter will draw together various theories with the analyses of the Rwandan context to suggest a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation. This approach will recommend a national narrative of history and identity that will be inclusive, plural and emancipatory, encompassing the complex narratives of the past and the multiple identities present in Rwanda today. But it will also consider how individuals and communities can be humans-in-relationship, sharing their identities and histories, allowing new narratives to emerge amongst themselves, regardless of whether national narratives change or not. What is pivotal is for individuals and communities to become aware of the impact national historical narratives have had on their lives, but also to realize that these do not have to be deterministic in terms of the way our narratives unfold.

It will begin by summarizing the challenges in the narratives of history in Rwanda so far, assessing these in terms of Strathern and Stewarts' theory of the 'narrative of the interaction of narratives'. It will look at the issues of truth and memory in terms of retelling the narratives of history. It will then summarize the challenges in the narratives of identity, assessing these in terms of Jenkins social anthropological model of ethnicity, as well as Mamdani and Englund's theories of identity. It will critique the attempt in Rwanda to eliminate identity, showing the dangers of such an approach. It will briefly look at the role nationalism has played in Rwandan identity. It will then make recommendations for a way forward to forging new stories which, in line with Rosenwald and Ochberg's theory, will be emancipatory. This narrative approach to reconciliation will draw from narrative theory bringing it together with Lederach's four elements of reconciliation. It will include MOUCECORE's leader, Michel Kayitaba's call for us to 'cry together' and Volf's concept of embrace. This will hopefully bring to light an approach relevant in the Rwandan context that can inform sustainable reconciliation work in Rwanda in the future.

10.1. Creating new narratives of history

Throughout this thesis, it has been reiterated that much of the conflict in Rwanda is based on divisive narratives of history. In chapter two, two distinctly different stories for the unfolding of Rwandan history, from pre-history until the genocide were described. The Tutsi-ideologue narrative described a peaceful integration between the Tutsi arriving from somewhere north with the Hutu and Twa already inhabiting the land we now call Rwanda. This narrative spoke of a benevolent monarchy who, through complex societal systems, worked together with Hutu and Tutsi leadership to ensure a well-functioning society. The arrival of the colonialists disturbed this system and resulted in ethnic division leading eventually to genocide. The genocide was the result of a carefully planned program to eradicate all Tutsi once and for all. The Hutu-ideologue narrative describes a series of wars and manipulative practices by the Tutsi who invaded the land Rwanda, resulting in the enslavement of the Hutu by a Tutsi minority ruled by a cruel monarchy with the help of colonialists until the Belgians assist the Hutu in a rightful revolutionary overthrow of the monarchy so that the Hutu majority could democratically rule the country. During the two republics, Rwanda was peaceful and harmonious and all was well until the Ugandan Rwandans started stirring up trouble when they wanted to unjustly return to a country where they were no longer welcome. The genocide was in fact a civil war, predicated by the Ugandan Tutsi to take power in Rwanda again, as the Tutsi had prior to 1994.

These are the two narratives that have run through this thesis in various forms. It has been described how these narratives supported ethnic stereotyping and a pervasive mistrust between ethnic groups. At various stages in Rwanda history, these narratives have been used by politicians and military leaders to manipulate the population and have led to extreme acts of violence. The worst of these was the genocide, but others include the various incidents of violence in 1959 and the 1970s against Tutsi and in the 1990s between Tutsi and Hutu along the borders of Uganda in the build-up to genocide. It has also laid the foundation for continued violence in the DRC since 1994 until today.

These divisive narratives continue to influence Rwandan society as it grapples with the reconciliation process. As the interviews with the four young men and the

seminar with the Reconciliation Forum highlighted, these narratives still lie deep within the mindsets of Rwandans today. It has been argued that the Rwandan governments' response to this has been to try to create a new, uniting narrative of history that all Rwandans will adopt. But as Johan Pottier, Kenneth Harrow and others have argued, there is the danger that this new narrative is merely one more construction with a political agenda that will ultimately lead to renewed violence. As with previous narratives of history, they have been fed to the population from the top down, often playing on deeply embedded fears.

It is clear that neither narrative holds the true or complete story. The Tutsi-ideologue narrative describes Rwanda prior to the arrival of the colonialists as peaceful and harmonious, but evidence shows that there were continued wars and fighting between the monarchy and Hutu groups in the north well into the colonial period. The Hutu-ideologue narrative would have us believe that Rwanda was peaceful and harmonious during the two republics, but evidence shows that there was consistent discrimination against Tutsi and that the country was sinking into poverty as the population were controlled and manipulated by self-serving dictators.

The truth probably lies somewhere in between these two narratives or as Stewart and Strathern suggest, in the interaction between these narratives. As was mentioned in section 1.4, Stewart and Strathern see history as existing in 'the interplay between people based on [the interaction of narratives] and in the changes of narrative over time' (2002, 17). They suggest that "In encounters between people both sides construct narratives of meanings, and they use these to interpret each other, to come to terms, resist, dominate, collaborate, and so on. These competing narratives are continually tested in events and are reinforced, shattered or remade. As much misunderstanding is involved as understanding, and struggles emerge on the basis of these misfits or 'disjunctures' as well as because of conflicting interests and values" (2002, 16). In the Rwandan context, these constantly changing narratives, depicting conflicting interests and values, is clearly evident. Rwandan history has been consciously reconstructed so many times that Kenneth Harrow describes it as fantasies that turned people into 'less than human' and that Rwandans have become "immune to the proposition of

intersubjectivity and shared histories”, preventing any possibility of “energetic relations with others” (2005, 17).

In the interaction between narratives, intersubjectivity, energetic relations and shared histories *can* emerge. But as long as there is an insistence on one narrative over and above others, rigid, divisive ways of relating become inevitable. Instead, Stewart and Strathern suggest that narratives of history need to emerge dialectically, in dialogue with one another. ‘Meanings’, they say, need to be ‘constantly subject to negotiation’ (2002, 17). The so-called mythico-histories of Rwanda, which stereotype and pit ethnic groups against each other, are described as grounds for lethal conflict.

“Often, both sides see themselves as victims and the other side as the oppressors; or each sees themselves as a minority faced by a majority ... Questions of meaning are therefore paramount, but the meanings themselves are contested as a part of the overall contest for legitimacy that both lead to and surround acts of violence. Conversely, when narratives of events are more closely in agreement, the possibilities for settlements are greater. Negotiations between opposing sides in fact often involve a struggle to come to a reasonable level of agreement on the history of events themselves prior to seeking a settlement” (2002 17).

The struggle to come to a ‘reasonable level of agreement on the history of events’ seems a significant part of the process of reconciliation. Without this struggle, only one side of the narrative is presented and those whose voices are not heard become resentful and may eventually insist on having their voice heard through violence.

Stewart and Strathern further argue that narratives of the past do not only describe the past but also reflect what is happening in society in the present and what is envisioned about the future, making it difficult to differentiate between “history as it is scripted and history as it is enacted because scripting takes place continuously alongside experience, and looks both backwards and forward” (2002, 17, 18). The stories we tell of the past are influenced by the motives we have for what we have done and are doing in the present and plan to do in the

future. Thus our narratives of history are never value or agenda free, leading Herbert and Kanya Adam to argue that “history as an ongoing argument is still preferable to the myth-making of official collective memory” (2000, 37).

Part of the process of developing a shared understanding of what happened and what needs to happen is through remembering. As was mentioned in section 9.2, every April is a month of remembrance in Rwanda where the nation is reminded of what happened during the genocide. Villa-Vicencio describes how the sharing of memories is a tenuous process. “It is incomplete. Its very incompleteness is what cries out to be heard. There is also the testimony of silence. There is body language. There is fear, anger and confusion. There is the struggle between telling what happened and explaining it away. It takes time to unpack, understand and do justice to testimony” (2000, 23). This kind of process cannot take place from the top down, with a single narrative imposed on a nation. It takes time and a lot of pain and struggle to slowly emerge.

10.2. Creating new narratives of identity

Chapters two and three described the development of ethnic identity in Rwanda. The ethnic stereotypes that played such a significant role during genocide were still evident as having influence as emerged during the interviews with the four men and the informal interviews with Rwandans between 2005 and 2009. It was shown how Tutsi were seen to be tall and thin, secretive and cunning, physically weak but making up for this with cleverness and wit. Hutu were seen to be shorter and of broader build, slow and stupid, physically strong and hard working but incapable of taking initiative. These stereotypes further led to the belief that Tutsi women were alluring and desirable, which led to inconsistent practices amongst *genocidaires* who both believed in the need to eradicate Tutsi but were also often married to or had mistresses who were Tutsi.

In response to this ethnic stereotyping and division, the Rwandan government has introduced the policy of a united Rwandan identity, arguing that ethnic identity was constructed by the colonialists for their political agenda and that Rwandans need to leave that behind, embracing a new, shared, Rwandan identity. However, this

has been easier said than done, with ethnicity being a deeply embedded and internalized part of people's individual and collective identities. This was explored in terms of Richard Jenkins' social anthropological model of ethnic identity in section 1.5, which highlights that identity is indeed constructed but that this construction is 'extremely resistant to change' because it is so fundamental to ones' personal integrity (2003, 47).

Apart from ethnic stereotypes, another identity related issue that was brought to light was that of perpetrator and victim. Particularly in the light of the refugee exodus to the DRC, it was argued that all Hutu were labeled collectively guilty and *genocidaire*. Until today, many Hutu feel themselves to be labeled collectively guilty, and Tutsi, such as was apparent in the interview with Fred, often feel that all Hutu who were in the country in 1994 are indeed to some extent guilty. But perpetrator-victim dynamics have a far reaching history in the Rwandan context, with various parties painting themselves as either victim or perpetrator in order to solicit sympathy or justify violence. This was the case in 1959, when the alleged oppression of the Hutu led to them justifying the violent overthrow of the Tutsi leadership. In 1970, the fear of being oppressed again was used as a justification for renewed violence against Tutsi. In the 1990s, the plight of the Tutsi refugees in countries bordering Rwanda and the refusal of the republics to allow those refugees to return home, was justification for the violence of the RPF against the government at the time. The violence in the DRC after the genocide was justified along the same lines; the Tutsi did not want to be victims of the *genocidaires* again. Today, debate continues as to whether only the *genocidaires* are perpetrators that need to be tried at ICTR and *gacaca* or that the perpetrators of crimes against humanity from the RPF side should also be considered. Some would argue that everyone in Rwanda is a victim of political manipulation whereas others feel this disallows for individual responsibility and accountability.

In the midst of all of this is a multiplicity of identities, as Rwandans from various countries and with various experiences come together. There are the survivors of genocide, the perpetrators of genocide, the old case load refugees (Tutsi returning from the diaspora) and new case-load refugees (Hutu who have become refugees after genocide). The old case load refugees, or Tutsi from the diaspora, include Tutsi from Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, the DRC and further abroad, each

bringing with them their unique blends of culture, language and identity. There is also the north-south divide which some would argue is even more divisive than the ethnic divide. Those living in Kigali, who have the greatest level of decision making power, are also distinct from those living in the rural areas who are often disconnected from a rapidly changing Rwandan society. The pre-colonial lineages and clans may also play a role amongst some Rwandans and these ancient relations may transcend ethnicity.

Considering all of this, Rosenwald and Ochberg argue that there are ways of understanding the self and of telling one's own narrative that are either helpful and lead to emancipation or harmful and create blockages for self or others. A key is to help individuals and communities enlarge their narratives, allowing for more possibilities and alternatives. The fewer alternatives there are in a narrative, the more stunting they will be. A very narrow and confining narrative will lead to constrained identity development, both on an individual as well as collective level. In the case of Rwanda, it would seem that many Rwandans feel confined within the single narrative put forward by the government, which disallows for possibilities to develop that would lead to richness and growth. They speak of multiple, mutating stories which are evidence of the formation of the narrators' identities and their relationship with society (1992, 8). These stories are not necessarily consistent, but they are dynamic and indicative of a continual dialogue between an individual and their society.

They argue that the narrator cannot merely create any story but that they are constrained by the 'productions and constructions of others'. There needs to be coordination between our stories and that of those around us, although not all the stories have to be in unison. "But even in the difference a harmony must be audible; the ensemble of voices must add up to a workable whole" (1992, 9). In the Rwandan context, there is such discordance between the narratives that it becomes difficult for individuals and groups to become part of the harmony of the narratives. Instead, some feel their voices are marginalised and silenced, leading to a building resentment. When they can find no place for their own narrative within the framework of the official narrative, they can no longer feel themselves to be part of the vision of the official narrative. Thus, the official narrative moves forward, leaving behind large portions of the population who find no resonance

with it. Even were it to be the case that the narratives of these silenced voices were in fact the result of previous political indoctrinations, they need to be worked through by the narrators until they themselves can see the need to shift their narratives to something more helpful. But this is a painful and difficult process that takes time.

Rosenwald and Ochberg speak of a continual struggle between the need for our autonomous interpretations of reality and societal expectations. There is a struggle between our own 'liberative insights' and 'cultural and intrapsychic resistance' (1992, 14). The stories we have heard as children and have deeply internalised grapple with the stories of our own experience of reality. These internal stories grapple with the stories others tell us. In conversation with Francois, this struggle was almost tangible, as he grappled with deeply embedded stereotypes and fears. The narratives he had grown up with strongly influenced his own experiences of reality. Robert's description of the negative feedback loop describes the way embedded narratives inform the way current events are read and understood. Everything becomes confirmation of what we already believe about reality. It is difficult in these circumstances to begin believing new narratives which give an alternative reading on present day events. In the Rwandan context, many people have become distrustful of all narratives, even those from their own ethnic group or from their own childhoods, making it difficult to know what to hold onto, creating a vacuum in which fear and paranoia can run rampant.

Part of embracing narratives for emancipation involves realising our entrapment in cultural norms and our own role as actors in and narrators of our narratives. Beyond awareness is also the realization that one can change ones' discourse. "Changing cultural values and discourse may open new paths for self-understanding and action. We see this whenever subjects can appropriate new vocabulary to caption – and thus capture – an old but previously elusive species of suffering" (Ochberg and Rosenwald, 1992, 15). This takes tremendous courage as it means letting go the narratives that define who we are and describe reality for us and choosing a new way of seeing and experiencing the past, present and future. In a context where there is a very strong official discourse, and a long history of politically manipulated narratives, it is difficult to trust a new, emancipatory discourse for oneself. Cynicism, doubt, fear and paranoia colour

many of the Rwandan narratives. To move beyond this and choose a discourse that is empowering and liberating, and yet not blind to the reality of one's context is a challenge beyond the reach of many people.

10.3. A contextualized history and relational identity

In this section, a way forward in terms of the broad socio-political narratives of history and identity that impact ordinary people will be explored. It will be suggested, along with Mamdani, that Rwandan history needs to be contextualized in order to move towards a more dialectical form. It will also argue for an understanding of identity that is relational rather than divisive, following the arguments of Englund. From here, we will look at the ways in which individuals and communities can foster reconciliation through a narrative approach in spite of socio-political narratives.

In his concluding chapter, Mamdani recommends that the way forward is contextualizing the Rwandan situation in terms of its historical context. He suggests several ways of doing this in terms of the historical narratives that were described in chapter two. For example, he suggests that instead of insisting that Tutsi domination began from when Tutsi first arrived in Rwanda, as the Hutu ideologue narrative suggests, or that Tutsi domination is a result only of colonialism, as the Tutsi ideologue narrative suggests, tracing the origins of Tutsi Power firstly to King Rwabugiri's reforms at the turn of the century (which resulted in the degradation of Hutu and the beginning of Tutsi privilege) and secondly to colonial reforms which racialised Tutsi identity and hardened Tutsi privilege. This would undercut both the Hutu and Tutsi versions (2002, 269). He also suggests that the 1959 revolution be recognised for its historical legitimacy and its historical limitations. It is historically legitimate in that it marked the end of Tutsi privilege and limited in that it locked Hutu and Tutsi in the 'claustrophobia of intimate differences, blind to bigger possibilities' (2002, 270). This perspective of history is in line with Stewart and Strathern's interplay between historical narratives, giving room to both Hutu and Tutsi versions of the past.

Mamdani further suggests contextualizing the genocide in terms of the civil war. He argues that genocide should not be merged with civil war so that it ceases to exist analytically, but neither should it be severed completely from civil war so that the killings would be have no motive (2002, 268). The genocide needs to be seen as the outcome of defeat in civil war, thus as political violence, an outcome of power struggle between Hutu and Tutsi elites, thereby recognising Hutu and Tutsi as political identities and that the primary problem in Rwanda is one of political power (2002, 268).

This kind of interplay between differing versions of historical narratives can help Rwandans see that shared narratives of the past can give richer and deeper meanings to the story of what happened, and mediate a more inclusive way of dialoguing about the past. When considering the request from members of the Reconciliation Forum to dialogue about the past in order to write a version of history that can be taught in schools, Mamdani's contextualizations are helpful in finding where and how that dialogue could begin to take place. Instead of insisting on one version that excludes the majority of Rwandans and supports divisive political power positions, the 'narrative of the interaction of narratives' can allow for new, shared spaces to be created. Seeing that the roots of harmful identity definitions lie in a combination of factors, from the action of certain kings through to the policies of colonialists, can bring an interesting dimension to a school history curriculum. Understanding that the roots of conflict are complex and multi-dimensional rather than having a straightforward, narrow explanation can be helpful in developing critical engagement with the past and the present.

This is not only relevant in terms our understanding of history but also in terms of how we define our identity. Englund argues for complex, multiple identities rather than simple, narrowly defined identities. He argues that in many post-colonial African states, a common feature is that each person accommodates multiple identities (2004, 9). In Rwanda this is certainly the case. A person may find their identity in being both Ugandan and Rwandan, or East African as well as with their ethnic group.

In Western identity politics, there is an insistence that every person needs to be rooted in a particular culture, but Englund suggests that in post-colonial societies

(as well as postmodern societies in the west) there is an emergence of a 'relational aesthetic of recognition'. He argues that every community is a network of complex relations. Thus, rather than recognizing or acknowledging distinct communities of differences, one would acknowledge the relations that unite those groups, and to acknowledge these relations not only as something that is inserted between communities after they emerge, but as intrinsic to the very emergence of the communities (Englund, 2004, 14).

This alternative relational approach to identity is extremely significant in the Rwandan context. In a preliminary interview with Robert, he spoke of how the key to reconciliation lay in the mandatory relations that existed between all Rwandans for the very purpose of survival. He stressed, as many other Rwandans have done as well, how at the heart of Rwandan survival, particularly in rural Rwanda, lay an integral interdependence between neighbours and people living on the same hill. Rwandans could not afford not to reconcile on the most superficial level because of their need to cooperate in order to go about their daily lives.

Englund suggests a shift in emphasis from identity categories (either individual or group) to the relations between categories, between communities, between individuals and between groups; that more important than the discrete groups is the fluid movement between them. He argues that the danger of seeing groups as discrete (separate units from one another) is that it can easily be manipulated to 'foster intolerance, hatred and violence'. "Other groups and communities are unreservedly alien, cut off from the fabric of a moral society or, if not spontaneously keeping their distance, severed by force" (2004, 11). African leaders can then justify suppressing difference (for example, through suppressing minority or disadvantaged groups) in the name of national unity.

Englund suggests making relationships and connections the starting point of the politics of recognition. But this is difficult in a context where identity politics means having a specific, discrete identity and where every person is rooted in a particular culture (2004, 12). He argues that an alternative to discrete individuals, groups and communities pursuing their own agendas might involve looking at contemporary African ways of being such as "cosmopolitan citizenship, multiple post-colonial identities and cosmological ideas about the person and the self"

(2004, 13). During the interviews with the four young men, two spoke of their East African identities. Many Rwandans hold passports of neighbouring African countries or have lived considerable periods of time in neighbouring countries. Englund would argue that the complex network of relationships between identities, within a person and between people, are intrinsic to the living out of identities in the post-colonial African context (2004, 14).

There are two avenues a relational aesthetic of recognition could take, according to Englund. One could either emphasise a common citizenship or nationality in which everyone finds a sense of unity or one could emphasise the 'interconnectedness that transcends national identities; a transnational understanding of identity' (2004, 15). Perhaps there is room for both. In terms of a narrative approach to reconciliation, it may be helpful for individuals and communities to recognize that 'interconnectedness that transcends national identity' and that transcends ethnic identity. Being liberated from the confines of a particular identity narrative can allow for the multiple possibilities that emerge from a relational understanding of identity and identity definitions.

This section has argued for contextualizing the past in order to allow the 'narrative of the interaction of narratives' to emerge. It has also argued for a relational understanding of identity. Both tend towards complexifying history and identity and moving away from a single, narrow understanding so as to allow for shared understandings to emerge.

10.4. A narrative approach to reconciliation

On the broad socio-political level, this thesis has argued for a contextualization of Rwandan history through multiple narratives interacting. It has argued for an identity that transcends static divisive categories through an emphasis on the relational. Relational identities and interactive histories lead to a broadening of possibilities or alternatives in individual and communal narratives as they interact with national narratives. A single narrative can become narrow, stunting and divisive. A narrative filled with different alternatives is healing and emancipatory and creates the kind of space that is conducive to reconciliation.

This is what may be needed on a national level. But Miroslav Volf argues that 'rather than reflecting on the kind of society we ought to create in order to accommodate individual or communal heterogeneity' we need to look at '*what kind of selves* we need to be in order to live in harmony with others' (1996, 21). We may not be able to change the socio-political conditions that we interact with, but we can change *how* we interact with these broader systems and how we can live out new narratives that liberate us and bring reconciliation between ourselves and others.

One important way that this can happen is through what MOUCECORE's director Michel Kayitaba described. He spoke of the word for forgiveness, *kubabarira*, as coming from the word *urira* which means 'to cry'. As was described in section 9.4 Kayitaba encourages perpetrators and victims, or all those hurt by the events of the past, to cry together for their shared loss of humanity. Crying together for the way all Rwandans have been manipulated by politics and power play, crying together for the way ethnic stereotypes have divided a nation, crying together for the blood that has been shed is a powerful part of sharing narratives. Through NURC activities there is room for debate around pertinent issues, which is important, but beyond debate, there is a need to share pain and wounds together. Part of the process towards crying together may be being angry at one another and expressing the bitterness and grief in ones narrative. A narrative approach to reconciliation would need to include sharing the deeper emotions embedded in our narratives in order for these to be heard and acknowledged by the other.

Both Hay and Lederach in section 9.1 describe reconciliation as essentially about restored relationship and restored dignity. As we share our narratives and have them heard and acknowledged as legitimate narratives in the Rwandan context, we enter into the process of being restored as human beings in valid relationship to others with the dignity that comes from being human beings in relationship. As long as our narratives are dismissed as being false versions of reality, we feel unacknowledged as human beings in relationship to others and become alienated from others. A narrative approach to reconciliation would need to acknowledge the legitimacy of every person's narrative.

In section 1.5, Jenkins' social model of ethnic identity was described, where he argued that although ethnic differences may not be inherent, they are deeply embedded in our self and other concepts. Sandra Wallman, in the same section, was quoted as saying that ethnicity happens at the boundary of 'us', in contact or confrontation with 'them'. Wallman and Jenkins see the boundary's between groups as pivotal to identity politics. According to this, key to group identity is identity boundaries; boundaries that are constantly defined and redefined in terms of 'the other'. It is in the act of defending ones identity boundary that violence can occur. This is especially the case when those in power define others against their will. But these boundaries change as peoples understandings of themselves or the other change. Wallman writes that ethnicity is thus "transactional, shifting and essentially impermanent" and ethnic boundaries are always two-sided (2003, 20). This allows for the possibility of boundaries to be renegotiated.

Popular writer Henri Nouwen says that "much violence is based on the misconception that our lives are our own property to be defended rather than a gift to be shared". A narrative approach to reconciliation suggests that in the sharing of our narratives we begin to renegotiate the boundaries between groups. Libby and Len Traubman, who facilitate dialogue between Israeli's and Palestinians, say that "an enemy is one whose story we have not heard". As we begin to share our narratives we shift our understandings of self and other, thereby shifting the boundaries between 'them' and 'us' until, perhaps, we can come to a point of a shared identity beyond the boundary.

This section has argued that a narrative approach to healing and reconciliation takes into account the impact that the broader socio-political narrative has had on our personal and interpersonal narratives, often bringing division in its insistence on a single, narrow narrative. On the level of individuals and communities, we need to acknowledge this but then choose how we will live within the confines of that narrative in order to be in harmony with others. It has been suggested that a narrative approach to reconciliation would involve sharing our narratives, crying together about the deep emotions held within our narratives and acknowledging the legitimacy of each others' narratives. It further suggested that through sharing narratives, we would change the way we perceive ourselves and others, thereby changing the boundary that exists between identity categories.

10.5. Final thoughts

Mamdani suggests that there are three possible ways forward in terms of identity; separate political communities (a Hutuland and Tutsiland), a larger union with bipolar political identities, or forging a political identity that transcends ethnicity (2002, 265). The third option would clearly be the preferred one but the question remains how this should be achieved. This thesis has described at various levels how narratives of history and identity have been manipulated for political purposes. Mamdani suggests that the only way to break the 'stranglehold' of Tutsi Power and Hutu Power is by 'breaking stranglehold on history writing and making' (2002, 265). The stranglehold on narratives needs to be broken.

But beyond this, individuals and communities can begin to live out new narrative possibilities through an awareness of the impact of broader socio-political narratives on their lives, choosing to live out the shared richness of dialectical histories and relational identities. Once we begin to realize that who we are has been formed and developed for particular reasons and in response to specific contexts, we can begin to see the possibility of an identity beyond where we are now.

Beatrice Umutesi describes a powerful alternative in her autobiographical account of being part of the mass exodus out of Rwanda after the genocide. Again and again in her account Umutesi emphasizes how it was never just Tutsi or just Hutu escaping or surviving one harrowing situation after another, but that it was always a mixture of people, not standing for one ethnic category or another, but standing together as survivors.

The leader of the NGO PHARP related the following story that occurred during one of their workshops that illustrates the idea of a shared identity as survivors: A Tutsi widow shared her suffering as a result of genocide at great length. Breaking into her story, a Hutu widow then stood up angrily and started shouting at her, asking her if she thought she was the only one who had suffered and arguing that her suffering had been no worse than that of many Hutus. The Tutsi widow was

humbled by this and apologized, resulting in an awareness that they shared the same suffering. We could take this even further and consider the chilling statement made by a Rwandan that in Rwanda 'everyone has blood on their hands'.

A narrative approach to reconciliation says that history is dialogical, identity relational and that the narrative of every Rwandan is significant in terms of creating new narratives all Rwandans can share. As John Lederach writes,

“Relationship is the basis of both the conflict and its long-term solution ... Reconciliation is not pursued by seeking innovative ways to disengage or minimize the conflicting groups’ affiliations, but instead is built on mechanisms that engage the sides of a conflict with each other as humans-in-relationship ... Engagement assumes encounter, not only knowing but acknowledging others’ stories, telling and listening, and validating stories of the past ... Similarly, reconciliation is based on the envisioning of a shared future (1997, 25-27).

Appendix A

Life Story Interview Questions

1. Share your story from when you were born until today, describing where you grew up, your family history, your education and significant life events.
2. When did you become aware of your ethnicity and the existence of ethnic groups in Rwanda?
3. How aware were you, when growing up, of what was happening socially and politically in Rwanda (and in the country in which you lived) and what impact did it have on you and your understanding of your identity?
4. How were you impacted by the events in Rwanda in 1994?
5. Is reconciliation happening in Rwanda today and what would need to be in place for reconciliation to become a reality?
6. What does being a Rwandan mean to you?

Formal Interview Questions

1. How would you describe the reconciliation process in Rwanda so far?
2. Is it effective and what do you think the outcome of this process might be?
3. What role does understanding Rwandan history have in this process?
4. Is Rwanda being forced to accept a politicised version of Rwandan history?
5. What are your thoughts about the Rwandan governments' policy of 'we are all Rwandan'? Is it helpful in the reconciliation process?
6. What is your understanding of identity in Rwanda?
7. Is there an openness for dialogue in Rwanda?
8. What do you think is the way forward in terms of reconciliation?

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