

# “Healing Rwanda’s Genocide Trauma”: A Re-construction of Painful Oral Historical Narratives

Radoli Lydia Ouma

*Daystar University, Kenya, lradoli@daystar.ac.ke*

**ABSTRACT:** April to June every year, Rwandans commemorate the 1994 genocide. Extensive oral historical narratives are brought to life. Under the Aegis Trust for the prevention of genocide and crimes against humanity, stories are re-enacted and shared. Narratives of memories are seen as instruments to heal historical trauma. Rwanda has since moved from ravages of the genocide to political and economic stability. Although, Rwanda records a history of ethnic killings and near genocide from 1950s, it is the 1994 genocide that rocked its fabric of peace. Des Forges (2007) argues the genocide was not an outburst of uncontrolled rage of ethnic hatred, but a discontent to historical grievances and widening economic disparities between the Hutu elites and Rwandan poor. To suppress dissent, state and militia extremists planned and orchestrated the genocide. After the genocide, an International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up to try suspects. It was supplemented with Gacaca courts - a modified traditional conflict resolution system. In this paper, I aim to analyse oral history as a qualitative methodology. The narratives archived on video recount how Rwandans heal the genocide trauma through remembering. According to Moyer (1993) oral history involves a systematic gathering of testimonies of people who have experienced a significant event. It is not based on non-factual information, rather on verifiable facts that can be analyzed and placed in accurate historical contexts. This paper will adapt an oral historical narrative analysis of video testimonies from the Aegis Trust.

**KEYWORDS:** oral history, narrative analysis, Rwandan genocide memories, trauma healing

## Introduction

Rwanda, a former Germany (1899 -1918) and Belgium (1919-1962) colony, has in the past two decades tried to move from ravages of 1994 genocide, to political and economic stability. Rwanda has a population of about 11million people, with three ethnic groups Hutus, Tutsis and Twas. The Twas are a small indigenous group that resides in the forest landscapes and seldom participates in social and political activities. However, Tutsis and Hutus have had a historical power struggle. A quest to challenge this power imbalance, would result into historical ethnic acrimony. Sambira (2016) in her UN Radio Feature on *Intore*, a documentary about using culture to heal historic wounds, describes the genocide as a period of systematic slaughter. Rwandans, mostly Tutsis, were hacked with machetes and clobbered to death. The media in Rwanda was at the heist in the perpetration of ethnic conflicts. The Rwanda Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM) used diminutive labels to evoke hatred against the Tutsis who were called “cockroaches”. Listeners were urged every morning to rise and pickup tools to work- ‘destroy the cockroaches’ (Radoli 2011, 16). Similar abuse of media in fomenting ethnic hatred were witnessed in the Balkans, where hatred and violence was accepted as a tool of war (Thompson 1994, 7). During the genocide, approximately 1 million Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed (Republic of Rwanda 2008). Although Rwanda records a history of ethnic killings and near genocide from 1950s, it is the 1994 genocide that rocked its fabric of peace.

Des Forges (2007) argues the genocide was not an outburst of uncontrolled rage of ethnic hatred, but a discontent to historical grievances and widening economic disparities between the Hutu elites and Rwandan poor. To suppress dissent, the genocide was planned and orchestrated by state and extremist militia organs, triggered after a plane carrying President Juvénal Habyarimana was shot down on 6<sup>th</sup> April, 1994. At the onset of the genocide, Diaspora based Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) and the Hutu led government were embroiled in a bitter political stalemate. According to the Republic of Rwanda (2008) records, peace was loosely sustained in the Arusha accord brokered between RPF, the Rwandan government and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

However, 100 days of massacre heralded a complete breakdown to the peace accord and ushered uncontrollable anarchy and mayhem. In months after the genocide, the UN's International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) was set up to try category one (1) of suspects mostly, planners and instigators of the genocide. It was supplemented with Gacaca courts - a modified traditional conflict resolution system. Persons of integrity locally, known as *Inyangamugabo* presided over the traditional community courts. The traditional judicial system was adapted to find lasting solutions to persistent ethnic conflicts. Recantation of the crime was also done orally, thereby not only acknowledging the offence, but providing a moment to record historical narratives captured in the press and government transcripts. The courts were administered in the open air under trees. Community members sat on the grass (*gacaca*) to listen to the proceedings and bear witness. Hollie, Gasanabo and Uggen (2014, 346) have demonstrated the ability of the Gacaca traditional courts, to try and sanction genocide perpetrators. They argue, Gacaca a modified traditional conflict resolution system, made a historic milestone in the administration of justice and reconciliation in Rwanda, despite evident challenges. In 2008, the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) reported that Gacaca courts saw unimagined reconciliation at play. Perpetrators put in categories two (2) and four (4) testified. They were sentenced to community service, reconciled with the people they had aggrieved and re-entered the community fold (Republic of Rwanda 2008). Different actors and instigators were identified for their role in the escalation of killings. These included: politicians, militias groups - *the interehamwe*, business people and the church.

A recent arrest of the most wanted genocide suspected Felicien Kabuga in Paris on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2020, indicates the extent to which perpetrators took to escape justice. Kabuga had been on the run for 25 years, he is seen as a key genocide instigator (Aljazeera 2020). On the other hand, the church in Rwanda came under sharp criticism for its complicity in the genocide. Rwanda has an almost equal number of Christian Protestants and Catholics, however the Catholic church has been in the spotlight for complacent in crimes against humanity. According to ICTR (2005) charges, Fr. Athanase Seromba ordered his church to be bulldozed, while 2000 Tutsis sheltered inside. Another Catholic priest Fr. Wenceslas Munyeshyaka, helped draw up lists of people to be killed and raped young women. In the charges, Archbishop Vincent Nsengiyumva, presiding the ruling party committee, was accused of implementing discriminate policies against the Tutsis.

In the genocide, close to 10,000 Tutsis - including priests, monks and nuns - were murdered in churches (Longman 2007). The then Organisation of African Unity (OAU), presently African Union (AU) commissioned report that castigated the church in Rwanda for "indispensable support" to the Hutu regime. The union blamed the church for playing a "conspicuously scandalous role" and for failing to take a moral stand against the genocide (Guardian 2017). As a result, many Catholics joined Pentecostal churches after the genocide. In 2016, Rwandan Catholic Bishops issued an apology citing the church's role in the genocide. On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017, in a state audience with Rwanda's President Paul Kagame at the Vatican, Pope Francis apologized on behalf of the Catholic Church in Rwanda. He noted; "the failings of that period, had unfortunately disfigured the face of the church". The Pope urged for a 'purification of memory' and promotion of hope and renewed trust, in search for future of peace" (Guardian 2017). However, post-genocide Rwanda has gone through peace-building, reconciliation and restoration process, but its democratic space remains skeptical to critical voices and curtails press freedom. It is the same clarion call on the "purification of memory" that the Aegis Trust undertakes to capture oral historical narratives, as facets of healing. Through documenting and archiving memories of victims and perpetrators, young Rwandans learn about their identity. The oral historical narrative is a story of leaving a tragic past and loss of culture to restore a social fabric.

## Literature Review

Memory healing is a psycho-social approach in situations where nations and populations have experienced historical traumatic events. Karl Valentin - a German comedian - is known for his famous statement: "*Es wurde schon alles gesagt, nur noch nicht von jedem*" - 'everything has

already been said, just not yet by everyone' (Astrid 2011, 4). Valentin's comic vision encapsulates the breadth of memory studies to which we can draw an understanding of trauma healing. There are various versions of accounts of events of trauma, but individuals experience pain and healing differently. The cultural and psychological make-up of individuals determine reactions and processing of pain. In the African contexts, pain is rarely psycho-analyzed but stories and memories are passed through oral narratives. An old person in the community is considered as a reservoir of community traditions and cultures. Through oral narratives, history is transferred to younger generations. The narratives build personal stories rather than merely confirming that the conflict events happened. In the same sense, if elders in the community pass on, history may be lost.

Therefore, in the Rwandan context, those who experienced violence and conflict form good sources of stories. The narratives are recorded and archived for future references and lessons. There is criticism centred on memory studies for focusing too much on historical injustices. However, this paper points out that in using historical narratives to heal past trauma, things left unsaid ought to be said candidly to appease wounds seared through traumatic experiences. In this study, the use of video and oral recordings of witness accounts and oral narratives passed from generations to generations provide an antidote for trauma healing. In enacting memories, a cultural infusion of stories through transcripts and recordings serve as a storage of knowledge and history for future generations. According to Fr. Michael Lapsley of the Institute of Healing of Memories (IOHM 2009) in South Africa, when human beings experience horrific events, they naturally harbour feelings of bitterness, hatred and a desire to revenge. Through memory healing, individuals get a chance to detoxify and extract out the poison. The institute has worked in diverse contexts with combatants and civilians, in post and present conflict situations. Areas of memory healing are not uniquely tied to violence, but also deal with contexts of HIV and AIDS, refugees, prisoners, victims of war and in this study genocide. The institute also identifies work on memory healing in South Africa, Zimbabwe, Uganda, the US, Northern Ireland, Fiji, Australia, Germany and the UK (IHOM 2009). In Rwanda, the Aegis Trust mirrors similar works. The aim of memory and remembrance is to address emotional, psychological and spiritual wounds communities and nations incurred after a period of war, repressive regime, violation of human rights and other emotionally tragic events (IHOM 2009). The institute recognizes that emotional wounds can be harboured for a long time interfering with individual's psychological and spiritual development. In turn, the risk of a spiral of violence following suppressed prejudices, anger and hatred among groups that have experienced violence. On the other hand Smith (2014), identifies both physical and psychological effects of trauma such as domestic violence, suicide, hopelessness and post-traumatic stress disorders. This necessitates practical solutions that collectively use cultural and clinical approaches. Oral history serves as a social narrative changing perceptions of Rwandans and the world beyond the memory of a genocide. Through memory healing, the social fabric of communities is mended. It is the Rwandan new dawn. During the annual genocide memorials, perpetrators and victims share stories of trauma and forge a quest towards peace.

According to Eric Kabera, a renowned Rwandan film producer by 1994, nearly half a million Rwandans were refugees in the neighbouring countries. Kabera uses cultural performances and film as a source of healing. He illustrates that today, because of the changes that have taken place, Rwandans who has fled in search for refuge in the neighbouring countries, are returnees regaining a lost identity (Sambira 2016). Rwanda, 26 years after the genocide, is considered as one of Africa's sustainable developing country. Its capital city Kigali is the cleanest in the region and has adapted an eco-friendly system. It is therefore significant to underscore remembrance in annual memorials, as one way narratives instill positive attitudes among once feuding communities.

In the article '*Travelling Memory*' Astrid Erll (2011) espouses that people handle time by linking the past to the future and present, all functioning around concepts of memory and forgetting. The argument underpins the idea that hard issues like power, politics, economy,

globalization are a result of soft issues and form cultural factors cemented in memory. In Rwanda, the genocide could be analyzed in social, political and economic nuances. Two ethnic communities feuding for power and political positions resorted to ethnic cleansing, as a means to an end. Although the whole trans-cultural studies can be traced to the 1920s, the branch of 'new memory' studies is recent (1980s to 1990s) and gives a fresh breath to the traditional approaches to cultural studies i.e., Anthropology, Ethnology and even Sociology. The key emphasis that gives value to trauma healing through memory is the idea that aspects of "remembering and forgetting" as Astrid (2011) argues can be looked through the lens of social sciences. In particular, the point that all studies related to this area take place in a social cultural contexts, but may transverse through human memory to media representations.

On other hand, Pierre Nora's influential approach on memory binds core aspects of the social sphere like ethnicity, nationality, nation state offering a thought frame for each concept. Nora looked at the recreation of cultural memory as synonymous to 'national remembrance'. In this re-carnation, the sites-of-memory approach becomes a symbol of new meanings placed on passed experiences. However, at the same time, forming a national memory. Nora avers, "memory is constantly on our lips, because it no longer exists. Or rather it no longer exists in the midst of life" (Winter 1997, 2). His premise is that memory exists in everyday life. Although society may banish memory, the social need for memory has resulted into substitutes. He argues that in this case memories are collected and recorded in catalogue of traces of the original memory. "The trace negates the sacred but retains its aura" (Nora 1996, 9). He argues.

In my view, the study of memory and remembrance can branch into a variety of themes. Yet, Nora's reflections were poised on the French cultural history with nuances of a dying language and population. Perhaps, an anxiety of an early cultural memory loss. Significantly, he raised the importance of family stories in re-enacting French war memories of the 1914 to 1918. In a similar reflective position, I see the story of the Rwandan genocide as a nation's reclaiming its authenticity in telling its own story. Most significant, the integration of media formats as tools in the telling of memory stories. As a young journalist in Rwanda, together with my Rwandan colleagues offering translations from Kinyarwanda to English, we trailed the valleys and hills every April to collect such narratives. As such, the recording of memory in media formats offers a practical solution to Nora's early concerns of extinguishing the original or sacred memory.

## **Methods and Materials**

Oral history is a qualitative methodology that recounts narratives of experiences of groups of people under a study. The method provides rich descriptions of events and activities that form the life of people. The narratives gathered inform cultural responses to social problems. According to Moyer (1993) oral history involves a systematic gathering of testimonies of people who have experienced a significant event under study. It is not based on non-factual information, rather on verifiable facts that can be analyzed and placed in accurate historical contexts. In this paper, the oral historical narratives were retrieved from a video recording of personal interviews with survivors, victims, peace and memory healing educators. The interview transcripts provide a rich corpus of experiences and personal tragedies. It is a path to find solutions to long standing disputes.

The research methodology for historical narratives is embedded in qualitative research methods that follows aspects of discourse analysis. Wilson (2007, 21) applied historical research and narrative inquiry to create chronicles and narratives of library about the Idaho state library. The qualitative methodology of narrative analysis recreates discourse as a talk process. A way of saying things to create a social reality or to explain and interpret social contexts. Highly rooted in the work of Foucault (1972-1977), discourse has been interpreted as an articulation of knowledge and power, of the visible and the expressible (Fairclough 1995, 2013). Other authors Bloor and Bloor (2007, 6-7) distinguished the process of producing talk in this case oral history as a description of linguistic elements more particularly words, phrases, clauses, sentences and texts.

It also samples the language in use taking both speech and written formats. In this study, the oral narratives are formulated in speech scenarios. For the discourse to occur, there must be an interactions that reconstructed specific contexts such as the discourse of conflict and peace. In this case, the analysis goes farther in the interpretation of human exchange in terms of symbolic and non-symbolic sounds, movements and visuals. Oral narratives weigh on verbal communication in the interactive event (Bloor and Bloor 2007, 6-7). In historical oral narratives, we review talk or interviews as a unit of analysis. The talk can be coded in specific themes of violence, trauma, conflict, peaceful resolutions that the paper analyses and elaborates in the discussion section. In this paper, the stories gathered were recorded in a short video clip used for the purposes of the annual genocide memorial.

The recorded data is transcribed and analyzed for interpretations relevant to trauma healing. The video clips are chosen for non-verbal or non-symbolic cues such as body language, facial expressions. The idea of incorporating such data material in this paper is for the possibility to record the significance of trauma healing methods. The results could be used for references and future utilization within the study of memory and trauma healing. Written transcripts of the narratives are provided in the methods and material section. The overall goal of oral history research is the storage of findings to solve persistent research problems, as well as inform the research community.

Clandinin & Connelly (2000, 124) have argued that in tackling problems, there is a clear description and expectation of solutions. In oral historical narrative analysis, we aim to make an in-depth inquiry to re-enact how and why the problems occurred in the first place. Thereby, reformulating memories and thoughts not to repeat the problem. In any case, to have adequate ways to handle the problem when it recurs. Using oral history is a method of qualitative data collection, I listened to a 4 minutes video produced in 2018 and republished by the Aegis Trust to mark the 2020 genocide commemoration in Rwanda. The video, *Peace after Genocide* illustrates through oral historical narratives, how memories of the genocide both traumatic and those fostering peace are captured to inspire a nation towards healing. The narratives gathered and archived in the Kigali Memorial Centre, follow similar models of the Holocaust memorial centre in the UK. The video is a significant symbolic material for trauma healing and learning. The video starts with a deep reflection on how difficult it was for Rwandans to contemplate peace after genocide.

***Video Clip: Jean Depo Ndahimana and Marc Gamaka - Aegis Educators***

Right after the genocide, it was too difficult to think about the future. There was a lot of fear and anyone could not imagine that it would ever end. I couldn't imagine that perpetrators and survivors can stay together (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 3 to 18 Second).

It is through speaking that the depth of the damage the genocide caused is confronted. Astrid (2011, 13) illustrates how language of memories and commemoration is used to release suppressed toxic emotions. She gives an example of the Holocaust memorial day in Israel and the genocide in Rwanda. These events provide a medium through which memories can be enacted, re-constructed and shared among populations to find healing. Robert Bayigamba, a former minister of Youth and Culture was part of the team that pitched the idea of memory and remembrance in 2002.

***Video Clip: Robert Bayigamba: Rwandan Former Minister of Youth and Culture***

The concept was to remember our beloved relatives, to pay tribute and a place that people will understand the impact of what happened to never repeat it in the future (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 32 to 52 Second).

The oral narratives provide new information towards peace-building and reconciliation. Through oral historical narratives of conflict and trauma, we recognize bits and pieces of stories existing within memories of interlocutors or narrators like Freddy Mutanguha.

***Video Clip: Freddy Mutanguha - Aegis African Representative***

You cannot give what you do not have, if you teach peace, you have to be a person of peace. I was surprised by one of the killers when he came to Kigali genocide memorial and he started

crying. I asked myself what is this?. I thought that this man had completely lost his humanity. I found out that he retained some humanity and needed to take the opportunity and disarm hearts and minds (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 1.46 to 2.26 minute).

Narratives on memories of survivors and perpetrators archived are reminders of trauma, yet they serve to show nations and communities of what happened, and find ways to prevent a repeat. At the Kigali Genocide Memorial Center, narrators tell their personal stories and experiences of 100 days of massacre. They recall how Tutsis and moderate Hutus were hacked and clobbered to death. The video zooms to pictures on the memorial walls and victims with open skulls. In narrating the events, there are horrific tells of bloodletting and the stench of dead corpses strewn on the streets and enclaves of Rwanda in 1994.

### **Anita Kayirangwa - Director of Programmes, Aegis Trust**

Stories of survival, like that of a 10 year-old, who wrapped a baby on her back and desperately trekked and hid in search for safety. It's the story of Grace in 1994, she was ten years old. Against the opposition of the grandmother, she chose to save a baby. If a ten year old choose to show empathy, to show critical thinking, to show personal responsibility, anyone can do that (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 1.19 minute to 1.32 minute, skip to minute 1.35 to 1.44 minute).

#### ***Video Clip: Grace - Survivor***

I said, let us just keep going , I don't care. If I have to die for this baby, I don't care (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 1.32 minute to minute 1.35 minute).

People who experienced conflict may have forgotten or blocked their memories how the events occurred and need to be reminded. These stories form a rich reservoir of memories and histories. Through sharing, the oral historical narratives cement community identity and transformations.

#### ***Video Clip: Survivor - Unidentified***

I initially thought that the Hutus and Tutsi should never live together given what the Hutus had done, and that we should actually seek revenge. But since the people came to talk to us we realized we have to come together. We work in concert in order to build our nation (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 1.19 minute to 1.32 minute , skip to minute 2.30 to 2.45 minute).

In the oral historical narratives, experiences of trauma, loss, displacement and violence are recorded. These narratives are then meshed within community peace-building and trauma healing initiatives. The stories are used to frame and build up data for analysis and archiving.

#### ***Video Clip: Marc Gamaka- Aegis Educator***

This programmes brings a lot of young people from different parts of the country. These young people are trained in leadership, conflict resolution and how to start peace building projects. They go back to their own communities. They find out which problems they have and then they come out with solutions (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 1.19 minute to 1.32 minute, skip to minute 2.49 to 3.01 minute).

Through exposure to historical narratives, young Rwandans are transforming their lives and resolving not to turn to armed conflict. Innocent Nizeyimana another Aegis Educator has interacted with these young people, and sees positive reconstructions out of a traumatic history.

#### ***Video Clip: Innocent Nizeyimana - Aegis Educator***

A very touching message from a student in Gicumbi District. After training he said; "you were right" and he cried. My brother went into FDLR (militia in Congo). I was to go next week to join

my brothers. Now you have saved my life, but if you came before, you should have saved the lives of my brothers (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 3.03 minute to 3.35 minute).

Through speaking, it becomes evident that lives are saved and livelihoods secured as individuals choose peace rather than revenge.

***Video Clip : Jean Depo Ndahimana***

People were speaking their minds and hearts, one student stood up and said: “this workshop has saved my life and the lives of people that I was going to kill in revenge” (Peace after Genocide 2018; Video Clip: 3.38 to 3.46 minute).

Moyer (1993) has argued that in doing an oral historical analysis, the researcher must be well informed with an objective of constructing a historical record and using the data to construct solutions. In this paper, oral historical narratives and chronicles were collected as data from a video documentary. The video captures Rwandans who experienced the traumatic event or children of survivors. The community collectively re-creates narratives to heal from the experience.

**Discussion**

The historical oral narratives provides personal data of experiences, cultures and explanations of why conflict is rooted in certain scenarios. The narratives create dialogue and understanding within communities as well as close existing gaps in literature on cultural history. The findings stimulate new perspectives for conflict resolutions. First, the results indicate an effort to facilitate key factors in peace and reconciliation process. The analysis also captures diverse social cultural views among different community of perpetrators and victims. The historical memory is seen as a means towards peaceful resolutions. Merriam (1998, 19) shows that historical narratives as qualitative method provides an in-depth understanding of situations and meaning for those involved. He argues that researchers must be more concerned with the process of narrative reconstruction and transformations that occur rather than the outcomes. Secondly, historical oral narratives provides the research with personal data of experiences, cultures and explanation of why conflict is rooted in certain scenarios. From the analysis from the video clip, we can illustrate that traditional community and cultural methods are effective in handling conflicts as rooted in historical contexts of feuding communities.

The oral historical narratives create dialogue and understanding within communities and cultures. The focus on healing trauma through oral historical narratives stimulate new perspectives for conflict resolutions. We have seen how such methods were used in the Rwandan Gacaca courts, a process of demobilization and re-integration spread out following these interventions. Thirdly, through oral historical narratives communities cement peaceful co-existence. Through recanting using oral historical narrations, suspected perpetrators confront the trauma they caused on their victims. Through speaking, victims and perpetrators relive their trauma, yet talk offers a chance to release hidden toxic emotions unburdening the mind. Talking helps both victims and perpetrators find peace after remorse and experience forgiveness.

In this paper, the aim was to look at the overall context of the problem, rather than specific variables, in finding sustainable solutions and confirming conflicts. This is an effort to see how the past was experienced and its significance in the lives of people today. Through nuances of trauma, conflict and peaceful resolutions coded in the narratives, we begin to embrace memories as part of a significant history, which does not define the nation's future. Yin (2003b, 7) posits that historical method of qualitative research deals with the “dead” past - in this case, where there were no records or witnesses to give account to the occurrence. Therefore, I relied on primary and secondary documents, and oral historical narratives in a video as the main sources of evidence.

This oral historical method is stimulating, because the dead past is brought to live through historical narratives. The genocidal acts bore certainty to crimes listed in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948, Article 11). Further, the convention notes that genocide contravenes the spirit of the United Nations and the civilized world (Ghandhi 2008). However, the western world and the United Nations came under sharp criticism for watching Rwanda perish in the massacre for lack of significant interventions mired in bureaucracy. Following what has been termed as one of ‘the greatest failures of humanity’ (Sambira 2016), Rwanda has been categorical on the culpability of the west in the genocide, particularly France. Barrie has argued that an effort to reconcile feuding parties (RPF and pre-genocide regime) - the US, France and Belgium intervened in ways that created possibilities for mass slaughter (Barrie 2008). To avoid another historical failure, states that have ratified the genocide convention are mandated to protect all human beings against such crimes, under the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) protocol. History has also evidenced that it is easy to blame and shift responsibility. However, through oral history and memories, Rwandans vow to never let such unprecedented loss to humanity happen again. They choose to embrace their unique cultures, landscapes, economic viability and a resilient people.

## Conclusion

The unique approach in the oral historical narratives in Rwanda is to pass the messages of peace to young generations. Most of whom may have been orphaned in the genocide, or existed in child headed families. Those younger will not have witnessed the genocide, but their identity, cultures are ingrained in the genocide history. The messages of peace set a path to mold a new transformed generation that has a choice rather than resort to violence. In the memory programmes, trust is build, responsibilities are given to the educational institutions and integrated in the national curriculum to continue spreading healing narratives. In addition, the production of the narratives using media formats adds in the creation of mnemonics of symbols and schemata of remembering that allows for repetition, and the creation of powerful lasting meanings.

The Aegis Trust stands as a bridge, providing documentations of historical facts, and methodology in which groups and communities can experience a traumatic history, triggering thought and dealing with difficult truths that remain part of the Rwandan cultural identity. Contrary to De Forges (2007) argument that the genocide caused a complete breakdown of the Rwandan social and peaceful fabric, I premise that trauma healing through historical narratives offers a juncture for Rwandans to confront difficult truth. They conjure historical memories and look for alternatives to make sense of the new world. Rwanda among the East African countries has gained tremendous growth. However, we must be realistic in the sense that memorial contexts are fragments of the complex nature of the genocide. Memories are not a sufficient representation of the magnitude of a horrific occurrence like a genocide. Yet, memory sharing as we have considered in this paper, talking about memories ought not to haunt, but to heal.

## References

- Astrid, Errl. 2011. “Travelling Memory.” *Parallax* 17(4): 4-18
- Aljazeera. 16<sup>th</sup> May. 2020. *Rwanda genocide suspect Felicien Kabuga arrested in France.* <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/rwanda-genocide-suspect-felicien-kabuga-arrest-ed-france-200516110612325.html>. Accessed on 18.05.2020.
- Bloor, Thomas, and Bloor, Mariel. 2007. *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: Introduction*. Vol 1. No. 1. London: Hodder Arnold.
- Bonner, Raymond. 1994. “Unsolved Rwanda Mystery: The President's Plane Crash.” *New York Times*, November 12<sup>th</sup>. <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/11/12/world/unsolved-rwanda-mystery-the-president-s-plane-crash.html>.
- Clandinin, D. Jean and Connelly, F. Michael. 2000. *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Collins, Barrie. 2008. Rwanda: Obscuring the Truth About the Genocide. <https://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/201-rwanda/39226.html>.
- Des Forges, Alison. 2007. "Call to Genocide: Radio in Rwanda, 1994." In Thompson, A. *Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (eds.). London: Pluto Press, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, CH.4.
- Gandhi, Sandy. 2008. *International Human Rights Documents*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hollie, Nyseth, Brehm, Uggen, Christopher, Gasanabo, Jean-Damascène. 2014. "Genocide, Justice, and Rwanda's Gacaca Courts." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 30(3): 333–352, SAGE Publications.
- Fairclough, Norman. 1995. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. New York: Addison.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2013. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. Routledge: New York.
- Foucault, Michel. 1972-1977. *Power/Knowledge Selected Interviews and Other Writings*. (eds). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Guardian. 20th March 2017. *Pope Francis asks for forgiveness for church's role in Rwanda genocide*. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/mar/20/pope-francis-asks-for-forgiveness-for-churchs-role-in-rwanda-genocide>. Accessed on 3.05.2020.
- Institute of Healing of Memories. 2009. *Healing of Memories: Overcoming the Wounds of History*. <https://www.newtactics.org/healing-memories-overcoming-wounds-history/healing-memories-overcoming-wounds-history>. Accessed on 18.05.2020.
- Longman, Timothy. 2007. *Memories and Justice in Post Genocide Rwanda*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Merriam, Sharan. B. 1998. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. (eds.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Moyer, Judith. 1993. *Step by Step Guide in Oral History*. <http://chnm.gmu.edu/digitalhistory/links/pdf/chapter6/6.3.pdf>.
- Republic of Rwanda. 2008. *History of Rwanda*. <http://www.rwandahope.com/rpfhistory.pdf>. Accessed on 4.05.2020.
- Peace after Genocide. 2018. <https://vimeo.com/271069009?>
- Nora, Pierre. 1996. *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, eds. (Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions). New York: Columbia University.
- Republic of Rwanda. 2008. *RPF – History about Rwanda*. Available at: <http://www.rwandahope.com/rpfhistory.pdf>.
- Smith, James. L. 2014. *Trauma and Healing*. California Institute of Integral Studies.
- The Prosecutor vs. Wenceslas MUNYESHYAKA. 2005. [http://cdi.ulb.ac.be/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/5-TPIR-2005\\_Vol-2.pdf](http://cdi.ulb.ac.be/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/5-TPIR-2005_Vol-2.pdf).
- Thompson, Allan. 2007. *Media and the Rwanda Genocide* (Eds), and London: Pluto Press, Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
- Sambira, Jocelyne. 2016. UN and Africa Special: Rebirth and healing of Rwanda through culture <https://news.un.org/en/audio/2016/07/614722?>
- Wilson, Richard. A. 2007. "Combining Historical Research and Narrative Inquiry to Create Chronicles and Narratives." *The Qualitative Report* 12(1): 20-39. Retrieved from <http://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol12/iss1/2>.
- Winter, Jay. 1997. *Review of Nora, Pierre (eds). Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*. (Vol. I: Conflicts and Divisions). H-France: H-Net Reviews.
- Yin, Robert. K. 2003. "Case study research: Design and methods." Vol. 5. *Applied social research methods series* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.