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" IF YOU KEEP YOUR PROBLEMS IN YOUR
STOMACH THE DOGS CANNOT STEAL THEM "

TRAUMA, FORGIVENESS, AND CON-VIVIALITY IN RWANDA:
AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY FOLLOWING THE HEALING AND
REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES (HROC) PROJECT IN
GISENYI, RWANDA

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A minor dissertation submitted in *partial fulfilment* of the requirements for the award of the degree
of Master of Social Science in Practical Anthropology

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ABSTRACT

By bringing together survivors of the genocide with released prisoners to discuss trauma, healing, and trust, Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) in Rwanda may help people to broaden their networks of support and rebuild everyday life. Traditionally, kinship networks formed the basis of support for meeting daily needs, but as a result of repeated violence between 1959 and 1994—when genocides ravaged the country and neighbours killed neighbours—kin were spread not only across Rwanda, but around the world. After 1994, Rwandans, particularly in Gisenyi, found that many neighbours were strangers and members of “the other side”. Few Rwandans are able to meet their daily needs without accessing relationships of reciprocity, so how are such relationships established after genocide?

Over three months of fieldwork I conducted interviews and focus groups, observed interactions, and participated in daily activities, commemoration ceremonies, and the International Symposium on the Genocide Against the Tutsi. Five HROC participants offered me glimpses into their lives after the workshop, after a genocide, as they reformulated the world in which they lived. In this thesis I argue that restoring relationships of reciprocity is critical to the restoration of the everyday in Rwanda. The genocide in 1994 was unarguably a traumatic experience for the population in Rwanda, and it damaged common modes of social interaction. But for those I spoke to, forgiveness was important to the process of healing, it was offered as one way to initiate sharing and played an important role in the process of reconciliation.

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And especially to the five participants who taught me so much. One day while digging in the fields with one of the mama's, a man passed by and asked "EH? How much are you paying this umuzungu to work for you?" to which I responded "EH? We don't have money! She helps me with my work, and I help her with her work!" But I'm certain that I gained more in this bargain ... so this work is dedicated to you, you may consider it like flowers planted around my house.

Ndashimira by'umwihariko abahuguwe batanu banyigishije byinshi. Umunsi umwe turiguhingana n'umwe mubabyeyi, umugabo umwe yaduciyeho aratangara ati "Ehe! Uwo muzungu uri kugufasha uzamuhemba angaha?" Undi ati "Ehe! Nta mafaranga dufite! Ari kumfasha, nanjye nzamufasha mukazi ke!" Ariko ndazi neza ko nungutse byinshi muri iki gihe ... Nuko rero uyu murimo ndawugutuye, wufate nk'indabo zizengurutse inzu yanjye!

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CHAPTER ONE: WHY RECONCILIATION IN RWANDA?

The word reconciliation comes from the Latin *re-*, 'back', and *conciliare*, 'bring together', representing a call to reinstate a unity that has been divided. In Rwanda the New Government of National Unity has mobilised the term reconciliation with precisely this premise—rejecting ethnic divisions as a colonial creation and calling for a unified nation grounded in a pre-colonial ideal (see, for example, Kagame's speech commemorating the 10th anniversary of the 1994 genocide).¹ I went to Rwanda in February 2009 to learn how HROC understood reconciliation, which is the ultimate goal of the programme, and what the effects of that were on participants' lives. By interrogating the workshops and participants, I learned how they understood trauma, healing, and proper social relations. I have arrived at the conclusion that restoring relationships of reciprocity, which are damaged by traumatic experience but may be initiated vis-à-vis forgiveness, is critical to the restoration of the everyday in Rwanda. In this dissertation, I discuss trauma and suggest it is linked to concepts of madness, which has implications on healing. Therefore, I also explore the influences on repair and health, which are both linked to reciprocity. Forgiveness was frequently discussed in relation to repair of the self within the community. It is not the only method for repair, but I focus on it here because of its importance to my interlocutors. Forgiveness was located within a model of sharing and neighbourliness, again emphasising reciprocity and what it means to rebuild the everyday. In post-genocide society such as Rwanda, where extreme violence occurred between neighbours, reconciliation becomes the centre of both local and international discourse.

I am reluctant to say reconciliation can be "achieved": instead I focus here on the process of restoring relationships in everyday interactions. Reconciliation is ambiguous, ideal for applying to a broad range of contexts, and invoked in such a variety of circumstances it loses salience. Reconciliation is often conflated with ideas of forgiveness, reparations, and healing (Gobodo-Madikizela 2003, Doxtader 2004, Van Zyl Slabbert 2003, Soyinka 1999, Bar-Tal 2000). Conceptions of truth and memory, justice, and the 'victim' and 'perpetrator' discourse contribute to the haze. Reconciliation is often named as the alternative to the perpetuation of violence in post-conflict situations (Minow 2002), and is often assumed to be an end point rather than a process. South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) instituted the link between reconciliation and political transition. The efficacy of 'national' reconciliation projects are debatable, especially if it is not recognised as being one small piece of a process that must happen on many different levels over time and be accessible in different forms to various social groups.

¹ I will address historical developments of identities in the following chapter.

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Reconciliation, forgiveness, and speaking about traumatic experience, are also considered important to facilitating the process of healing, a cultural model that has gained global favour (Staub et al 2005), although Colvin (2004) and Ross (2003) argue, specifically in relation to the South Africa's TRC, that these processes limit the subject to one of violence. People are often silenced and prevented from giving voice to their experiences either because it is socially unacceptable (i.e. rape) or under threat of further violence (i.e. the oppression of abuses committed by the Rwandese Patriotic Front). The environment in which the TRC encouraged people to tell their stories restricted the emotions within that telling to sadness and grief (Kayser, 2005: 14). The stories which 'survivors' tell, and those of 'perpetrators', are similarly restrictive in Rwanda, and must fit into an acceptable discourse of trauma and apology. Das (2007) describes some women showing their experiences through acts of mourning, rather than speaking about which there simply were no words, suggesting a different model for healing than the TRC or psychotherapy. Memory is not contained in the past but is present in the fabric of daily life and *reconstructed* as lived experience (Gobodo-Madikizela 2003:86). As Ross notes, "stories, testimony and telling are fragments, parts of people's narration of their lives. They are particular instances, synopses of experience, told at given times for specific audiences and located in distinct spatial and temporal contexts" (2003:102). Words can be significant and powerful, but are not always sufficient to restore lives after traumatic experience.

Reconciliation is nearly always mobilised as an intervention between 'victim' and 'perpetrator' in transitional societies. The Government of Rwanda has deemed ethnic terms to be discriminatory and has criminalised their use, but memories are not so easily rewritten.² Although Bahutu are recognised to have been victims in the genocide, it is generally presumed that any Muhutu who opposed the genocide or President Juvenal Habyarimana was killed, so 'survivors' are exclusively Batutsi. Therefore, in local parlance, 'perpetrator' generally refers to Hutu. On the other hand, members of the RPA, as Batutsi and as members of the ruling party that stopped the genocide, are not (within Rwanda) cast as perpetrators even though in the course of their defensive human rights violations were committed (see Mamdani 2001). Even if 'Tutsi' and 'Hutu' have been eliminated from the local discourse, 'survivor' or 'perpetrator' serve to place individuals within a dichotomy of Self and Other (Tiemessen 2004:69), and euphemisms such as 'tall', 'short', or 'the other side' reflect continued divisions among those in my field site.

² Law NO 47/2001 Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Discrimination and Sectarianism, Article 1: "Discrimination is any speech, writing, or actions based on ethnicity, region or country of origin, the colour of the skin, physical features, sex, language, religion or ideas aimed at depriving a person or group of persons of their rights as provided by Rwandan law and by International Conventions to which Rwanda is party; Sectarianism means the use of any speech, written statement or action that divides people, that is likely to spark conflicts among people, or that causes an uprising which might degenerate into strife among people based on discrimination mentioned in Article One."

GEOGRAPHIC PLACEMENT

As of 2006 Rwanda is administratively divided into five Provinces: North, East, South, West, and Kigali. Prior to that, there were twelve Provinces (which were called Prefectures prior to 2006—see figure ii). These Provinces (*Intara*) are subdivided into a total of thirty Districts (*Akarere*). Each district is subsequently divided into Sectors (*Imirenge*), of which there are 416. Sectors are divided into Cells (*Akagali*), and the smallest administrative unit is the Neighbourhood (*Umudugudu*).



Figure i Map of Rwanda (CIA World Factbook)

My fieldwork took place in Gisenyi in the West Province on the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. Resting at the top of Lake Kivu, nestled in by the high volcanic mountains and the Virunga Forest to the north, it is a picturesque town in a key location: sharing the border with Goma on the DRC side. For local residents of Goma and Gisenyi, crossing this border is faster and cheaper than travelling anywhere within their own countries. Trade between the two towns is essential to many people's livelihoods, and makes it possible to find foods, goods, and/or services that are otherwise scarce or too expensive. Because there has been so much migration around the region for the past several decades, almost everyone I worked with had ties through kin or other social networks that cross the border.



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>BUTARE
 Bu - Butare
 Ma - Maraba
 Mu - Muganyaza
 Ny - Nyanza
 Si - Save</p> <p>BYUMBA
 By - Byumba
 Kh - Kibira</p> <p>CYANGUGU
 Bk - Bukuru
 Ca - Cishanga
 Cy - Cyangugu
 Na - Nyamashere</p> <p>CYANGURU
 Gk - Gakongoro</p> | <p>GISENYI
 Ci - Cyanzwe
 Gi - Gisenyi
 Ny - Nyamijamba
 Ng - Nyamatapan</p> <p>GITARAMA
 Gt - Gitarama
 Ky - Kayanza
 Rh - Ruhango</p> <p>KIBURUGU
 Ku - Kiburu
 Mu - Muna
 Hc - Hwanzazana</p> <p>KIBUYE
 Kk - Kibuye</p> | <p>KIGALI CITY
 Nr - Nyamagamba
 No - Nyamatapan</p> <p>KIGALI (N/G)
 Kb - Kabaya
 Sr - Shyamba</p> <p>RUHENGERI
 Bb - Bukamba
 Bn - Ruhoma
 Bt - Bugurura
 Bt - Butera
 Ca - Cyera
 Hc - Hwanzazana
 Nv - Nyaturu
 Hu - Ruhengeri</p> <p>UMUTARA
 U - Umutara</p> |
|---|---|--|

Figure ii Rwanda's 12 Provinces prior to 2006 (Wikimedia Commons)



Figure iii Topographic Map of Gisenyi, 1982 [adapted from Defence Mapping Agency, USA, series Z901 edition 3-DMA]



Figure iiiv Satellite image of Gisenyi, 2009 (Google Maps)

The *umudugudu* in Gisenyi where my fieldwork was conducted and where the majority of those who participated in my research lived is very close to the border. Prior to 1994 the area was entirely agricultural. Figure iii shows how scarcely the border area was settled in 1982, except along the main roads to the border and heading north (grey squares represent buildings). Figure iv shows the same area in 2009 and demonstrates a dramatic increase in development. The majority of the residents who settled here after the genocide were returning refugees, mostly Batutsi, and this reflects the present demographic profile of Gisenyi. As such my interlocutors are learning to inhabit the world anew in a new space. The current population of Gisenyi is 106335.

HEALING AND REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES

Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC) is a workshop developed from training at Healing of Memories (facilitated through the Quaker Peace Centre) in Cape Town, South Africa in 2000. Healing of Memories is premised on encounter, on “a mutually engaging presence, a coming face-to-face, a willingness to negotiate unexpected contradictions that emerge from an engagement with past experiences rather than presupposing (or primarily aiming for) an outcome of resolution, harmony, agreement and unity” (Kayser 2005: 18). Although HROC is more goal directed and does aim for resolution, this notion of encounter is envisioned in the process with the inclusion of genocide survivors and “released prisoners” (who were charged with crimes of genocide and released as part of a presidential mandate to free prisoners who confessed and would later be tried in Gacaca courts). In addition to adapting the goals of Healing of Memories, HROC was also influenced by western psychology. Judith Herman’s *Trauma and Recovery* (1992), promoting the therapeutic model of spoken narrative, is central to the lessons offered in the workshop on trauma and healing. While Healing of Memories is primarily structured around the sharing of stories,

HROC draws on much more on teaching psychotherapeutic concepts like trauma and healing from grief. Facilitators express the ambition that participants will share their experience and what they have learned with family and neighbours. The broader goal of HROC is to engage not only the twenty participants who attend the workshop, but also those with whom they live.

HROC was introduced in Rwanda in 2002 through the cooperation of Friends Peace House Rwanda, Trauma Healing And Reconciliation Services in Burundi, and the African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI—a U.S. based Quaker NGO). It has since expanded into Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo. Eight HROC basic workshops were held in Gisenyi between 2006 and 2008. Ten survivors and ten released prisoners are invited to attend each workshop. In Gisenyi, because Batutsi dominate the area close to the border where workshops were held, many of the released prisoners who attended came from Rubavu Sector to the north rather than from Gisenyi. There are four facilitators in Gisenyi who are also Rwandese and have been trained by the programme. Local leaders (government and religious), who are briefed beforehand by the HROC coordinator, invite the participants. Invitees are given little information apart from an invitation to participate in a trauma-healing workshop. Many are surprised to find participants there “from the other side.”³ The workshop took place over three days, at the Friends Church in Gisenyi, during which participants are given a notebook and pen, lunch and tea, and often transport money (usually 500Frw/day).⁴

The workshop is designed to solicit what participants already know and encourages them to share and build upon the knowledge of the group. The flow of the ‘lesson plan’ is intended to be fun and encouraging initially, followed by challenging and emotional lessons, and closing with relaxing and uplifting exercises. I provide a brief outline of the basic curriculum, but facilitators have the freedom to design and change the exercises that are used in the workshop according to what they feel is appropriate. The first day starts by introducing HROC and establishing ground rules for what participants expect of one another as they interact, then focuses on trauma: what does the word mean and what are the causes, symptoms, and consequences? The second day begins with a discussion of loss, grief, and mourning—first asking participants to describe what the words mean in general terms, and then asking them to share about someone/something they lost. This tends to be a very difficult experience for both participants and facilitators. Following this exercise is a lesson on the stages of grief and ways to heal from grief (based on Herman (1992)). On the final day, trust and listening are the themes around which exercises are structured. To close, participants discuss applications of the lessons, and share something that has had a significant impact on them. My three ethnographic chapters broadly follow the themes of the three days of the workshop.

³ Since the use of ethnic terms is illegal, this euphemism is used in their place.

⁴ At the time of research this was roughly 0.88USD, the exchange rate was about 568Frw to 1USD

METHODOLOGY

I worked closely with HROC and AGLI to arrange my fieldwork in Rwanda. As an intern for AGLI I conducted an evaluation of the workshops in Gisenyi, as well as other minor projects at their main office in Kigali. The tools I used for the evaluation formed the framework from which I conducted further research for this dissertation. HROC allowed me to observe a basic workshop in Byumba, as well as part of a facilitator training. While in Gisenyi, I stayed with the pastor of the Friends Church and his family.

I conducted twenty interviews with an interpreter as the basis for my evaluation and the starting point of my research. Due to the limited availability of my interpreter, Danielle, we conducted four interviews per day over five days. The interviewees, selected by HROC's local facilitators, included ten people who participated in the basic workshop in Gisenyi, four family members of participants, four local facilitators, one church leader and one community leader. All of these interviews were conducted at the Friends Church where the workshops were held. All but two of the interviewees resided in the same *umudugudu* in Gisenyi Sector. One person came from Rubavu Sector, the other from a neighbouring *umudugudu*. The primary factor influencing who was interviewed was time—many had work and school commitments that did not allow them time to speak to us. Nine of the people we interviewed were either unemployed or temporary labourers, and so my sample is weighted towards the poorer members of the community (admittedly the majority). Most people we interviewed lived within a 20-minute walk from the church, and so the sample represents a small geographical area. This allowed me to more easily map interactions and relationships.

The interview process was limited in particular ways. Had there been more time, going to the homes of the people we interviewed could have allowed a space for them to speak on their own terms. The interview was the first time that people met Danielle or myself. Speaking about personal and painful issues is never easy with strangers, and a white foreigner is particularly difficult to contextualise. Danielle shared a very telling Rwandan proverb: “If you keep your problems in your stomach, the dogs cannot steal them.” I recognise that speaking about life experiences leaves one vulnerable to the judgements of the listener and of whomever (s)he may share one's words with. Danielle, fluent in Kinyarwanda, English and French, has conveyed their words to us. She put people at ease and helped them to understand my questions, while also helping me to understand what lay behind their words and their silences. I cross-referenced her interpretations with the Pastor and/or the HROC Coordinator.

I used several strategies in an attempt to make the interviews a productive and positive experience. I used Kinyarwanda greetings and simple phrases because it made people smile and demonstrated a willingness on my part to understand local modes of interaction. I got permission from each interviewee to use a voice recorder and then tried to make the recorder itself as inconspicuous as possible. As the interview process went on I learned to adapt the way that I phrased questions so that they were clear. I asked very open questions in order to 1) avoid presupposing particular answers (both by myself and by the person I was interviewing), and 2) give the interviewee the freedom to choose what to share. I struggled initially with whether I needed to know painful histories and when to ask questions that probed deeper into people's stories. I found that silence was the best tool for deciding where to take an interview. When someone stopped talking, I waited. Often times the person would continue to speak. And when they had nothing more to say they usually said so. Sometimes details were lost in translation and so questions of clarification would prompt more detail. Ultimately I did not ask probing questions and felt it was more respectful to accept whatever people offered me freely. Some people were very open and shared extremely difficult experiences, and I tried to respond compassionately and allow them to lead the pace and direction of the interview.

Following the interview process, I selected five participants—two men and three women—to spend more time with in order to learn more about their daily lives. These five participants and their networks were the core of my ethnographic work. Our conversations and my observations of their interactions with friends and neighbours informed the direction of my enquiries and the subjects within this thesis. They offered me details of their life histories, helped me to map their immediate areas and frequently travelled paths, and taught me what it means to be a neighbour and member of the community. I visited each of the five participants in their homes to explain my research, goals and the relationship I envisioned between us. I emphasised that I wanted to spend a significant amount of time with them in order to understand what their everyday life is like. However, I did not want to be treated as a guest, but rather as a daughter. I chose to attempt to ingratiate myself in the lives of these participants as a daughter intentionally to counteract my status as a white foreigner, who would not be allowed to participate in their daily work. I was not comfortable paying the participants, and did not want them to expect that I would. I told them that I did not want to be a burden, so in exchange for their help with my research I would help them with their own work. Occasionally I would also bring food, which is a common practice among friends and family. I was continually aware of how my presence could impact participant's relationships with others. I struggled with how to mitigate misconceptions (e.g. the assumption by neighbours that I was giving money to participants) but hope that my behaviour and relationships with members of the community over time dissipated those misconceptions.

All of the participants I spoke to eagerly agreed to accept me into their home—working, eating, visiting and resting alongside them. In the weeks that followed I spent full days with each of the participants: digging in their fields, peeling what felt like millions of potatoes, learning to cook local dishes, visiting with neighbours, going to the market, washing clothes and snacking on sugar cane. Most of my time was spent with women, and most of these tasks are specific to women. Below I offer a brief introduction to each of these participants.

Mama Cécile⁵ is a 46-year-old widow with a teenage daughter who attends secondary school in Byumba. She grew up in and near Gisenyi. Her husband and many other family members were killed in the genocide in 1994. She lives in a house given to her (as a widow) by the Catholic Church. Her sister and brother-in-law were operating a beer selling business from Mama Cécile's home and in exchange she received food. Although this was her sole livelihood, she was unhappy with the arrangement and when I left Rwanda they had agreed to look for a different location.

Papa Samweri is 40. He participated in HROC as a released prisoner. He moved to Gisenyi with his wife and three of his children in 2005 from Cyangugu (at the southern point of Lake Kivu), where his two eldest children live with his mother. Papa Samweri pastors the First Choir Church but is not paid as such. He was a day labourer and travelled long distances to find work, so I spent most of my time with Mama Samweri. We worked together in their rented field cultivating beans, cooked, washed clothes, and rested in the afternoons.

Mama Agnes is 46 and has seven children. She is originally from Goma, but moved to Gisenyi in 1995 with her husband, who was a Rwandan refugee born in Goma. She participated in the workshop as the wife of a prisoner, but her husband (who also participated in HROC) was not imprisoned for crimes of genocide, but rather for selling counterfeit money. During my stay in Rwanda he was imprisoned again for a conflict with a relative who accused him of assault. Her only reliable, but minimal, income was letting the land they owned in Goma neighbours to grow beans. She rented a house in Gisenyi from a relative and grew beans on their land.

Mama Odette is married to a trader; she is 40 and has six children of her own, but also cares for two orphans who are in secondary school. She was born in Kibuye (south of Gisenyi) but moved with her family to Kigali as a teenager. During the genocide in 1994, she fled to Kibuye intending to find a way to cross into DRC (then Zaire), and her husband went to Gisenyi with the same intent. Her eldest child, her father, mother, and several other family members were killed in the genocide.

⁵ In Rwanda, when a woman has a baby both she and the father take on the name of the child, regardless of the child's gender. So Mama Cecilé is known as such because her daughter's name is Cecilé. Were Cecilé's father alive, he would be known as Papa Cecilé. When a couple has more than one child, they are generally referred to by the name of their eldest child, but the teacher or friend of a specific child would call the parents by the name of that child.

She reunited with her husband in Kigali, but he went to Gisenyi to find work and she returned to Kibuye to work for the District conducting a census. In 1997 the Sector leader and his family were killed by *Interahamwe* (the militia which conducted the genocide in 1994). Scared, she joined her husband in Gisenyi. She was elected the Female Cell Leader in 2005, and also the Secretary of the Committee to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children in 2007. These are unpaid civil positions and she is unemployed, but learning English hoping it will help her to find a job.

Papa Joseph is 79 and has seven children; the two youngest are in secondary school. He also supports his nephew, who attends secondary school. Papa Joseph was born in Kigali but fled with his family to Masisi (north of Goma) in 1960 because of the massacres during the Hutu Revolution (when Batutsi were removed from power). He remained there as a refugee until late 1994, when he returned to Rwanda with his family. They moved to Gisenyi in 2001 and built the house in which they live. No longer able to do the work of a tailor, he is retired. His wife sells milk in Goma twice a day providing the bulk of their income.

These five participants formed the core of my ethnography, but it is not limited to them. Through them, and my host, I was able to engage with their networks and with community life in general. With their help I have sought to grapple with the Kinyarwanda language throughout this text as it relates to the issues at hand. My analysis was a continual process, including daily notes in a field journal, field reports to my supervisor, mapping (geographical and conceptual), drawing out common threads for deeper inquiry as well as noting distinctions and seeking reference points in the work of other academics. Safety of those participating in my research is the first priority and required consideration in writing this dissertation. The political environment in Rwanda is restrictive so certain things spoken in certain ways can be dangerous. In order to protect anyone involved in my research from any potential recrimination, for any blunders I may make here or for anything they may have said to me as an outsider, I use pseudonyms for everyone named herein.

I proceed from this introduction with a review of Rwanda's history in order to place identities and the cause of the genocide into context. In the following chapter, I build a theoretical framework from the core literature from which my argument draws. I begin to expound this argument with a discussion of trauma and suggest it is linked with concepts of madness. This has implications for healing, so chapter five reviews influences on discourses around repair and how traditions of reciprocity are linked to health, ultimately arguing that forgiveness can be utilised to instigate relationships of reciprocity. Finally, I look more closely at the values of trust and sharing which so many participants emphasised, and attempt to show that con-vivality (Ross n.d.) is central to the work of rebuilding the everyday.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL NOTES

Rwanda is defined the world over by three months of its history in 1994, forming the foundation from which people build an understanding of Rwanda. There are many different perceptions of Rwanda's history and the causes and effects of the genocide. No historical account is comprehensive or without manipulation. Rwanda's "history has evolved in such a way that legitimate and contradictory histories are intertwined" (Sibomana 1999: 154). Pottier (2002) offers a detailed discussion of the ways that Rwandan history has been told and retold with different emphasis, new evidence, and variation to detail, depending on the narrator, their sources, and their position in the historical, social, political, and economic landscape. This chapter offers an outline of historical processes which have influenced identity and the unfolding of events that led to the genocide in 1994, in which at least 500,000 Batutsi were killed along with thousands of Bahutu (Des Forges 1999:1).⁶

IDENTITY PRIOR TO COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

It is commonly agreed that the first inhabitants of the region now known as Rwanda were hunter-gatherers, followed by agriculturalists and pastoralists. In the 17th century before the foundation of the Kingdom of Ruanda, three ethnic labels were in use: Hima, Batutsi, and Batwa. Batwa designated those who lived in the forests in the north and west. As pastoralists and agriculturalists desired more land, Batwa were pushed further into retreating forests. As forests were cleared, many became potters and some were employed by the king (*umwami*) as executioners, police, and entertainers (Maquet 1954, cited by Taylor 2004: 361). Discrimination against Batwa as "less than human" because they "belonged to the forest" was the first dualistic alterity in Rwanda (Taylor 2004: 361). According to Taylor (2004: 353), the symbolic importance of the Batwa is essential to understanding the construction of Bahutu and Batutsi identities. Most pastoralists were considered Hima, and the elite among them were called Batutsi (Vansina 2001: 52, cited by Taylor 2004: 361). The majority of the population were agriculturalists and were named in association with descent group, clan affiliation, occupation, and/or regional origin (Vansina 2001, cited by Taylor 2004: 360). The term Bahutu, meaning 'social inferior', 'social son', or 'servant' (Taylor 2004: 363) came into use as a categorical signifier under *Umwami* Mazimpaka (1735-1736), used by Batutsi soldiers as a demeaning term for porters and support staff (usually cultivators).

⁶ The number of people killed is contested. In Rwanda, the number is always "over one million". The UN estimate is 800,000 from April to July 1994, which counts all deaths, including those who died of causes other than genocide (Des Forges 1999:15-16).

Lemarchand (1970) acknowledges clans and lineage play a large role in determining political status but does detail these relationships. African Rights (1995:3) identifies fourteen major and numerous minor clans encompassing members of all three groups.⁷ One of these clans, the Nyiginya Batutsi, rose to dominance in the seventeenth century and formed a central ruling institution in central Ruanda. In the later nineteenth century under *Umwami* Rwabugiri (of the Nyiginya clan), the Ruandan state became more centralised and authoritarian (*ibid*: 4). Rwabugiri instituted two systems of exploitation that enabled Batutsi to expand their power in Ruanda. *Ubuhake*, or cattle clientship, facilitated the exchange of cattle for working the land. The client was entitled to the cow's milk, but female calves were returned to the patron (restricting access to cattle production and the ability to become patrons). The second system, which Pottier (2002: 13) argues was more significant to defining Bahutu-Batutsi relationships prior to the arrival of Europeans, was *uburetwa*, a *corvée* labour service required of Bahutu two to three days out of six, severely restricting their livelihood security. Even prior to these institutions, the use of the terms Bahutu and Batutsi were not malleable: If Muhutu rose to a position of power in central Ruanda, he was then considered Mututsi (Lemarchand 1970: 39). A rinderpest epidemic in 1891 caused the majority of cattle wealth to be concentrated with the most powerful (Chrétien 2003: 221). As European encroachment began, Bahutu and Batutsi identities were already crystallised, contrary to prevailing discourse that colonialism instituted ethnic divisions (Malkki 1995, Mamdani 2001).

COLONIAL ENCOUNTERS

Among the earliest contact between Europeans and inhabitants of Ruanda was during Stanley's exploration in 1876 (Lemarchand 1970:47). Numerous bouts of disease and famine followed over the next seven decades (Chrétien 2003). When *Umwami* Rwabugiri died in 1895 civil war ensued, and the new *umwami*, Yuhi Musinga, viewed the Germans as useful allies when they made contact in 1897 (*ibid*: 248). The north-western region, predominately Bahutu, resisted both the *umwami* and German administration. Ruanda and Urundi were administered as one territory by Germany from 1898 to 1916, when Belgium established military rule of Ruanda-Urundi after World War I. From 1925 Ruanda-Urundi was administered through indirect-rule as part of the Congo Provinces.

The commonly cited "Hamitic Myth",⁸ developed by John Hanning Speke and utilised by colonialists and missionaries propagating race theory in the 1900's, reflected more the intellectual atmosphere of Europe than early Rwandan history (Des Forges 1999:36). Europeans described three distinct population groups in Rwanda: Ethiopid, Bantu, and Pygmoid (based almost entirely

⁷ However, according to Taylor "many urban and even some rural Rwandans, particularly in the south, claim not to know their clanic affiliation" (1992:15).

⁸ "Hamitic" is derived from an earlier hypothesis that black people were descendants of Ham, the biblical son of Noah.

on physical characteristics, identifying Batutsi, Bahutu, and Batwa respectively); and believed that Batutsi were superior to Bahutu, and Bahutu superior to Batwa, just as Europeans were superior to all Africans (*ibid*). Europeans believed Batutsi to be evolutionarily more advanced and thus more capable of ruling Rwanda. This “hamitic” race was thought to have descended from Ethiopia and conquered the local population establishing a feudal system (*ibid*). Mamdani (2001:16) argues that Belgian colonial authorities constructed political identities wherein ‘Bahutu’ were *indigenous* Bantu and ‘Batutsi’ were *alien* Hamites. These politicised identities were solidified in 1933-4 when ‘ethnicity’ started to be designated on identity cards, legally impossible to change (African Rights 1995:6). These cards were used during the genocide to identify whom to kill (Des Forges 1999). Lemarchand’s (1970: 19) description of the physical caricatures are now recognised as highly exaggerated. While there are people identified as Batutsi who fit the tall, lean, light skin, thin nose image,⁹ and Bahutu who are comparatively shorter with darker skin and wider noses, in reality these physical markers are highly unreliable (though still undeniably important in the construction of identity). Rather, “Rwandese tell an individual’s group by his or her lineage, not by his height or straightness of his nose” (African Rights 1995: 5). There are many other methods for identifying one’s group, including education, class, geographical migration, and language.

Catholic missionaries arguably had even more impact on politics, economics and identity than colonial administration (Taylor 1992, Chrétien 2003). Colonial policy supported the centralised power structures of chiefdoms, but Christianity threatened the sacredness of the *umwami*, and thus his legitimacy, so proselytising initially focused on Bahutu—who, impoverished and without a patron, sought the church for protection (Taylor 1992:55). Bahutu who worked at the mission stations (which were also commercial centres) were paid cash from 1912, introducing the concept of wage labour (*ibid*). *Umwami* Musinga, considered an obstacle to establishing a Christian kingdom, was deposed in 1930 (Chrétien 2003: 275). His son replaced him and converted to Christianity in 1931, simultaneously adopting the Hamitic Myth to further justify the power of the Batutsi court (African Rights 1995:9). Henceforth the church became more closely affiliated with Batutsi elite. By 1935 ninety per cent of Batutsi chiefs were Catholic, and 700,000 Ruandese were baptised Catholic by 1960 (Chrétien 2003: 272). Missionaries ran a large proportion of the schools in Ruanda, attended almost exclusively by Batutsi. Chrétien (*ibid*: 285) argues that schools were the main vector in reformulating the Hutu-Tutsi cleavage. School attendance records demonstrate this point, as well as the differences between Ruanda and Urundi. In 1925 *Nyanza Ecole pour Fils de Chefs* in Ruanda had 349 students, all Batutsi; in 1928 at *Muramvya Ecole pour Fils de Chefs* in Urundi there were 177 students: fifty ‘sons of chiefs or aristocracy’, sixty-seven Batutsi, fifty-three

⁹ President Kagame is often cited as an example (Gourevitch 1999)

Bahutu, one mulatto, one Asian, and five 'sons of soldiers' (Lemarchand 1970: 75). Batutsi were evenly distributed throughout Rwanda and dominated chiefly positions (except in the north), but in Urundi, Batutsi tended to be clustered in specific areas and Bahutu also held the status of chief.

Rights to land use became political and racialised in northern Ruanda, where Bahutu chiefs had control, after the Belgians incorporated the region into the central state. *Ubukonde* dictated that the client offer gifts such as banana beer, sorghum, hoes, and occasional labour to the owner of the land, who was a lineage head or 'first occupier' of the land. When this area became part of the central state the *umwami* became owner of the land—displacing Bahutu patrons—instituting *corvée* labour in exchange for land use, a system known as *isambo* (*ibid*:183).

REVOLUTION AND INDEPENDENCE

The Hamitic Myth became the basis for Bahutu leaders to deny the legitimacy of Batutsi dominance as "foreign invaders" (African Rights 1995: 10). In 1957, Grégoire Kayibanda published the manifesto of the Party of the Movement of Emancipation of the Bahutu (Parmehutu) expressing "racial enfranchisement, social justice, the extension of economic privileges, and anti-communism" (*ibid*: 11). Meanwhile, Batutsi leaders in the National Rwandese Union (UNAR) emphasised a harmonious and integrated pre-colonial history of Rwanda, arguing that "Bahutu" and "Batutsi" were colonial impositions (*ibid*). *Ubugake* was abolished in 1954, but Batutsi continued to dominate the state and control the land (Taylor 1992:60). With UNAR insisting on independence, Belgium was eager to switch support to Parmehutu. In 1959 when the *umwami* died, Belgian paratroopers supported the abrupt and violent end of Batutsi rule by installing Bahutu chiefs (Chrétien 2003: 304). This set off the Bahutu revolution, beginning in the northern prefectures of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi (Taylor 1992:79). Approximately 10,000 Batutsi were killed, and many more fled the country (African Rights 1995: 11). Kayibanda led a *coup d'état* in 1961 supported by Belgium and the new *umwami* fled. Kayibanda became president in 1962, before Rwanda gained independence on July 1 (Chrétien 2003: 304). Rwanda's political relationship with France began after independence with development aid (Uvin 1998, Bossuat 2003).

After the Bahutu revolution the ethnic hierarchy was simply reversed. Although *ubuhake* had been abolished, *ubukonde* land clientship (benefiting Bahutu chiefs) continued to be practised (African Rights 1995: 12). Batutsi were systematically discriminated against in education, civil service, and armed forces (*ibid*). Some Batutsi bribed officials to obtain Bahutu identity cards (*ibid*). Murders of Batutsi went unpunished (Chrétien 2003: 305). The Catholic Church continued to operate the majority of primary and secondary schools throughout the country, as well as the University of Butare in the south (African Rights 1995: 13). Violence erupted again in 1973 to purge educational

institutions of Batutsi (*ibid*), prompted by genocide in Burundi, where Batutsi still held the majority of government positions, and where many Batutsi from Rwanda had fled. As many as 200,000 Bahutu were killed in Burundi, and many fled to Rwanda and elsewhere (UN Security Council 2002:paragraph 85). Ostensibly to restore order in Rwanda, Major-General Juvénal Habyarimana mounted a *coup d'état* to end ethnic and party politics. Pogroms against Batutsi stopped, but discrimination continued (African Rights 1995:13). President Habyarimana formed the National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND) in 1975. Apart from official organs the only press was the Catholic *Kinyamateka* daily and *Dialogue* journal; and the archbishop of Kigali from 1976 to 1994 was a member of the MRND's Central Committee (Chrétien 2003: 308).

WAR AND GENOCIDE

On October 1, 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) (the armed wing of the Rwandan Patriotic Front, RPF), consisting primarily of several thousand second-generation Rwandan refugees, invaded from Uganda.¹⁰ The agenda of the RPF was the return of the Rwandan diaspora, whom Habyarimana had refused to allow back into Rwanda, and to reconstruct the Rwandan state (Chrétien 2003: 320). The offensive was quickly crushed by the Rwandan Armed Forces with the support of troops from France, Belgium, and Zaire. Belgian and Zairian troops left quickly, but French troops remained (Des Forges 1999: 50).¹¹ To rally support, Habyarimana staged a fake attack on Kigali on October 4, subsequently arresting 13,000 suspects (*ibid*: 49). Habyarimana had hoped the arrests would unite Bahutu against Batutsi as *ibiyitso* (accomplices). Rather, it consolidated the repressive image of the government and strengthened internal oppositions. Human rights organisations formed and in 1991 Habyarimana was obliged to adopt an amendment legalising multiple political parties (*ibid*: 52). After massive street demonstrations in 1992, Habyarimana agreed to a coalition government. Habyarimana and the MRND retained the presidential seat and nine ministry posts, the newly formed Democratic Republican Movement (MDR) obtained the post of prime minister and two ministries, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and Liberal Party (PL) each got three ministry seats, and the Democratic Christian Party (PDC) one seat (*ibid*: 53). The Coalition for the Defence of the Republic (CDR) was not included in the coalition government, but as an extreme anti-Tutsi party, some observers believed they represented the radical position of the MRND (*ibid*). In 1993 one third of local administrative seats were changed, but the MRND held all seats in Gisenyi and Ruhengeri, but none in the south.

¹⁰ The RPA was 70 to 80 percent Batutsi, the rest were Bahutu who opposed Habyarimana (Hagengimana and Hinton 2009: 223 n1).

¹¹ In 1992, the French oversaw a military training program for the whole Rwandan Army (Des Forges 1999: 120).

Gisenyi Prefecture, the home of President Juvénal Habyarimana's, was an MRND stronghold. In 1990, a bimonthly periodical called *Kangura* (The Awakening) was launched from Gisenyi. Proclaiming hate-filled campaigns against the *inyezi*¹² and their Bahutu *ibytso* (accomplices), it published the "Hutu Ten Commandments" which banished relations of any kind between Bahutu and Batutsi (Chrétien 2003: 323). One of the few recorded speeches from a party meeting in the period leading up to the genocide was given in Gisenyi on 22 November 1992. Leon Mugesera, vice-president of the MRND and part of the Ministry for the Family and the Promotion of Feminine Affairs, spoke in unusually blunt words warning against the danger of invasion by "Inyezi" and closed with "Know that the person whose throat you do not cut now will be the one who will cut yours" (quoted in Des Forges 1999:86). Mugesera also states it was a mistake that some "Inyezi" were allowed to get away in 1959, referring to the Hutu Revolution and the massacre of Batutsi. His message to opposition parties is "that your home is in Ethiopia, that we are going to send you back there quickly, by the Nyabarongo [River]" (*ibid*: 85). The reference to Ethiopia recalls the Hamitic Myth, the Nyabarongo River presumably flowed north to meet the Nile. Many murdered during the genocide were thrown into the rivers.

Another MRND leader, Colonel Théoneste Bagosora (also born in Gisenyi Prefecture), as head of administration at the Ministry of Defence made plans to arm and train civilians for "self-defence". He identified Gisenyi to initiate the self-defence programme (along with Kigali, Byumba, and Ruhengeri) and in January 1993 delivered weapons to teachers, government employees, communal councillors, army reservists, and shopkeepers (Des Forges 1999:107-108). The *Interahamwe* (those who stand/fight/work together) was a militia of MRND youth given military training that carried out massacres of Batutsi and other crimes that went unpunished (*ibid*: 4). In 1992 training of this militia increased, but was kept secret by putting the training camps in rural areas, one was in Gishwati Forest near the town of Gisenyi. Through the early 1990s, the MRND and other political parties practiced seemingly random and targeted violence, until it was accepted as normal in the pursuit of political ends (*ibid*: 58). Systematic slaughters of Batutsi were used to "create the appearance of massive opposition to concessions to other political parties and to the RPF" (*ibid*:88).

The RPF continued guerrilla incursions in Rwanda, despite occasional cease-fires and negotiations. Only after the coalition government was formed in 1992 did serious negotiations take place. The RPF by this point had driven the Rwandan army from a significant portion of Byumba Prefecture, displacing some 350,000 residents (Des Forges 1999: 60). A cease-fire was signed in July 1992 in Arusha, Tanzania, and the first of a series of agreements later named the Arusha Accords.

¹² The term *Inyenzi*, literally "cockroaches", was revived at this time. It was previously used to describe Batutsi who invaded Rwanda in the 1960s (Des Forges 1999: 51).

Habyarimana repeatedly signed peace agreements only to later denounce them. In August 1993 Habyarimana signed the final agreement under the threat that international funds for his government would be halted if he did not (*ibid*: 124). The U.N. promised a peacekeeping force, later named UNAMIR, to help implement the agreement. The transitional government would include all the parties already in the coalition government and the RPF. But there was strong opposition to the accords among soldiers, over half of who would be demobilised under the Arusha Accords.

Habyarimana's plane was shot down over Kigali on the evening of April 6, 1994; responsibility is still contested. The only consensus is that it was an act to instigate confusion and renew fighting. Strategic killing of Batutsi in positions of power, as well as Bahutu who opposed Habyarimana and the MRND, began immediately in Kigali, and by mid-day on April 7 in Gisenyi, Batutsi were being killed and their property pillaged (Des Forges 1999: 209). All of the participants with whom I worked who were living in this area in 1994 were able to flee to Zaire, along with hundreds of thousands who escaped to neighbouring countries.

“France, Belgium, the United States and the United Nations all knew of the preparations for massive slaughter and failed to take the steps needed to prevent it” (Des Forges 1999:2). UNAMIR was under-resourced and denied a mandate that would allow them to protect Rwandans or halt the slaughter, despite explicit warnings and requests from the mission's commander, General Roméo Dallaire. Belgium withdrew all of its soldiers after ten were killed on April 7, and on April 21 the entire peacekeeping force was reduced from 2,548 to 540 soldiers.¹³ When France proposed a military intervention in mid-June, Operation Turquoise, motivations were questioned because of their continued military support of the MRND. France proclaimed the humanitarian nature of the operation, but it was well known that it was interested in preventing a victory by the RPF (Des Forges 1999:668). France continued to support the interim government, formed exclusively of Hutu Power supporters, throughout the genocide (Des Forges 1999: 655, 669).

The RPF was also aware of preparations for a massacre, and reportedly anticipated help from the international community to defend civilians. On April 9 the RPF proposed a joint military operation to include 300 soldiers each from the RPF, the Rwandan army, and UNAMIR. It was rejected and the RPF took upon itself to stop the genocide and win the war (Des Forges 1999: 697). In July the RPF gained control of Kigali. The interim government, with hundreds of thousands of *interahamwe*, *genocidaires*,¹⁴ and innocent civilians who feared reprisals because they were Hutu, fled to neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, Batutsi refugees began returning to Rwanda. The

¹³ The Security Council officially allowed 270 troops to remain, but UNAMIR “never found the right time for a plane to land to evacuate the troops” and retained the additional 270 soldiers. (Des Forges 1999: 632).

¹⁴ This term is often used to identify those who organised and participated in the genocide in 1994.

RPF's victory was not innocent, they also killed civilians and conducted summary executions (Des Forges 1999). A UNHCR mission led by Robert Gersony concluded that the RPF killed between 25,000 and 45,000 persons between April and August 1994 (*ibid*: 16). There are no concrete numbers identifying how many people were killed as a result of the war between 1990 and 1994.

In Zaire, some Bahutu refugees formed a militia now called the FDLR (Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda) and continued to conduct cross-border raids in Rwanda and instigate violence against local Tutsi populations in Zaire. Rwanda invaded Zaire twice, first to install Laurent Kabila as President in 1997, and again in 1998 to enforce the repatriation of Bahutu. As the leader of the RPA Paul Kagame (Mututsi) installed himself as Prime Minister and Pasteur Bizimungu (Muhutu) as President. Bizimungu was removed in 2000 and Kagame took the over the post himself. The first elections were in 2003 and Kagame won the presidency with ninety-five per cent of the vote.

At the request of the Rwandan Government, the United Nations Security Council created the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) in November 1994 to prosecute persons responsible for genocide and other serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in Rwanda between 1 January and 31 December 1994. The ICTR is framed within a Western model of justice: it is defendant-centred and focused on punitive goals. Since the courts are located in Tanzania,¹⁵ the majority of the population has little conception of what happens there (Des Forges and Longman 2004:56). While the ICTR focused on prosecuting those responsible for planning and encouraging genocide, within Rwanda every citizen accused of participation was imprisoned. Overwhelmed by the number of prisoners and struggling to rebuild its justice system, the government initiated Gacaca courts, based on a traditional community justice system in Rwanda, to try lower level crimes (Karekezi, et al 2004). Because these courts seek restorative goals they are considered an important to reconciliation. However, they also draw on punitive justice models and present day Gacaca Courts are much different from past practices. Perpetrators are offered reduced or remitted sentences to "tell the truth" about their role in the genocide, where victims are buried, and others who participated (*ibid*:74). Some of those I worked with, however, suggested that Gacaca was not linked to their own ideas of reconciliation, (see chapter five). Wole Soyinka argues that reconciliation originates in the attenuated history of Africa, and drawing on what he understands to be an African propensity to forgive he questions how this frames the concept of justice in Africa (1999: 21, 24). In South Africa, reconciliation obscured the question of justice for victims, but in Rwanda the goal to reverse a "culture of impunity" contradicts ideas around forgiveness.

¹⁵ Which prompted Rwanda to vote in the Security council against the institution of the ICTR.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL MODEL

This chapter situates my argument in this thesis in relation to a broader body of literature.¹⁶ Taylor's thesis (1992) about the philosophy of blockage and flow in Rwandan healing systems offers a grounding point of reference to contextualise my own observations and build an historical understanding of repair. Mauss' argument in *The Gift* (1969) is central to Taylor's work, and I draw on it in particular in relation to Derrida's work on forgiveness (2001) in order to suggest that the conditionalities that forgiveness requires in transitional society resemble the obligation that a gift entails. The process of forgiveness and reciprocity constitute a process of remaking everyday life, and Veena Das (2007) provides an invaluable analytical tool for understanding how lives are remade in the aftermath of conflict. My conclusion is built on Ross' (n.d.) reformulation of the concept of conviviality, in which she argues that what she terms 'con-viviality' does not stand in opposition to violence, nor does it necessarily entail harmonious relationships, but it is rather a dependence on living together in order to sustain life. Together these texts provide a framework for understanding how everyday worlds are remade after genocide.

THE CONCEPT OF THE GIFT

A gift in the Maussian sense is not without interest. Things which are given in a gift economy hold a value that is not only material, but spiritual as well, linking the thing to the giver, and therefore the receiver to the giver (Mauss 1969). For Mauss, the stakes are not strictly altruistic; there is obligation linked to a gift as well. Not returning a gift degrades the one who gave it. By the same token, "charity wounds him who receives" (1969: 63). Receiving a gift places one in debt, and the inability to return a gift places one in a subordinate position (*ibid*: 72). This is how clientage systems in Rwanda have worked in the past. For example, in *ubuhake*, the giving of a female cow to someone unable to return an equally substantial gift creates a patron – client relationship. The client gives agricultural produce and the female offspring of the cow as gifts to the patron. As none of these have such a high value as the cow, the client is always in a position of subordination to the patron. Historically, pastoralists in Rwanda were most often Batutsi (and therefore patrons), while agriculturalists were most often Bahutu (and therefore clients). Two alternative systems were also practised, primarily in the north: *Umuheto*, where the client gave cattle as a gift to the patron, and *Ubukonde*, where patrons gave land to clients. These systems bind clans while simultaneously keeping them distinct, dividing labour and compelling exchange (*ibid*: 71). This exchange is a necessity as much as it is a burden.

¹⁶ For a comprehensive review of the literature on Rwanda see Lame 2005: 4-11.

Mauss sees the concept of the gift as continually relevant to all contemporary societies. He identifies a reversing shift from the focus on individual needs and rights in Western societies towards a “group morality” in which the sentiments of the individual mingle with those of “charity, social service and solidarity. The theme of the gift, of freedom and obligation in the gift ... reappear in our own society like the resurrection of a dominant motif long forgotten” (*ibid*: 66). Thus, the transition from a gift economy to a commodity economy that Taylor identifies below for Rwanda is one that Mauss identifies the world over as a multi-directional shift.¹⁷

THE CONCEPT OF FLOW AND BLOCKAGE IN RWANDAN THOUGHT

Mauss’ argument that “the mere pursuit of individual ends is harmful to the ends and peace of the whole, to the rhythm of its work and pleasures, and hence in the end to the individual” (*ibid*: 75) could be transposed into Taylor’s (1992) argument about social relationships in Rwanda. Taylor draws on Mauss’ theory of the gift to expound a theory he describes as “flow” and “blockage” in determining the health of individuals and society as a whole. “Pre-colonial Rwandan notions of pathology were based upon the openness or closure of the body, and the flow or blockage of substances into, within, or from the body” (Taylor 1992: 24). This reflects a notion of personhood wherein giving something is also giving part of oneself, just as to receive something is to incorporate aspects of the giver within oneself (Mauss 1969: 10). The giving and receiving of gifts creates a system of flow between individuals and families, which is believed to benefit society as a whole. If a person either withdraws from that system of exchange or does something to exclude another from that system, then it disrupts the flow of the system and causes misfortune.

Flow begins within an individual’s body. Reproduction is the ultimate gift, and so if there is not proper flow within an individual’s bodily fluids (menstrual blood, breast milk, faeces, sperm, etc) the possibility of producing children is threatened, and the health and continuity of the community is at stake (Taylor 1992: 206). Witchcraft is understood as anti-social behaviour, such as not sharing, doing things which benefit yourself but not others, or an attack on the flow of bodily fluids of another in order to impede reproduction (*ibid*: 178). Therefore, someone who practices witchcraft is a blocking being, while someone who is attacked by witchcraft is blocked. However, by being blocked one is also blocking. Similarly, by refusing to take part in proper social exchange, or other blocking behaviour, one can also become blocked. Much of the violence inflicted on victims in the genocide in 1994 directly targeted flow and presented Batutsi as blocked beings by emasculating, cutting breasts off, or impaling from anus to mouth (Taylor 1999, Hagengimana and

¹⁷ The non-linear processes which societies undergo over time is discussed elsewhere, notably by Ferguson 1999.

Hinton 2009, also see Malkki 1995). Restoration of health for the individual and the community is dependant on the restoration of proper flow.

The transition to a commodity based economy caused disruptions in this system. The introduction of Christianity and cash payments in Rwanda in the twentieth century instigated the development of new religions and therapies (such as *Nanga y'ivuza*) that incorporated both new ideas and traditional ones in explaining misfortune and healing (*ibid*: 63). Traditionally, causes of misfortune were external to the sufferer, and therapy began with an accusation. However, newer religions began transferring causation internally, thereby replacing accusatory healing techniques with confession. Many of Taylor's case studies describe a juggling of beliefs, as often those who converted, particularly to Catholicism, found that the religious words and gestures, and Western symbols of biomedicine, could neither articulate nor cure all symptoms. Those religious and medical histories reflected symbolism of commodity culture (*ibid*: 169). Urban professionals faced a dilemma between gift logic (which risked impoverishment if they appeased all the demands of family members) and commodity logic (in which they risked being accused of selfishness and even witchcraft by relatives and friends). One of the contemporary therapies that Taylor investigates, *Nanga y'ivuza*, acted as a "cultural broker" for commodity logic by offering a moral system based on the concept of sin which also integrated elements of flow/blockage symbolism (*ibid*: 193). The words that express the symbolism of flow and blockage in HROC and among participants include the need to be open and an emphasis on sharing: on giving and receiving. Traumatic experience causes people to be *guhambira*, tied or bound, but as I will show in chapter five, forgiveness was suggested as a means to be open again and restore relationships of exchange.

THE CONCEPT OF FORGIVENESS

Derrida argues that forgiveness is an aporia because it can only be offered for that which is unforgiveable, and further, that forgiveness "must be a gracious gift, without exchange and without condition" (Derrida 2001:44). That is, Derrida understands forgiveness to be a pure ethical transformative act. However, with the political globalisation of the concept of forgiveness and the demand in national reconciliation projects (as initiated by South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission), forgiveness becomes instrumentalised and two poles of forgiveness are formed: the conditional and unconditional. Derrida dismisses forgiveness with condition because it ceases to be a pure act in its own right. Nonetheless, he recognises that conditions are inseparable from forgiveness and are in fact what allow it to be inscribed into history, law, politics, and existence (*ibid*). These two poles of forgiveness are irreducible but nonetheless indissociable, for "if one wants, and it is necessary, forgiveness to become effective, concrete, historic; ...it is necessary that this purity engage itself in a series of conditions of all kinds (psychosocial, political, etc)" (*ibid*).

Reconciliation is almost always taught from a Christian world-view that demands forgiveness as the crux of the process (Tutu 1999). Martha Minow highlights the role of forgiveness in breaking the cycle of vengeance, but also recognises that it cannot be ordered (2002: 17). In chapter five I draw out the discussion between Derrida's philosophy and the popular Judeo-Christian discourses in Rwanda.

Derrida's ideas on the purity of forgiveness are in contradiction to many other writers. Soyinka Wole argues that reparations are the link between forgiveness and the asking; the material manifestation and tangible action between notions of reconciliation and truth (1999: 35). For Derrida, forgiving someone who has repented is forgiving someone other than (s)he who is guilty — the act and the person must be inseparable, otherwise the need for forgiveness is negated (2001: 35). But to Verdeja this inevitably leads to resentment on the part of the forgiven, who is placed in subordination to the forgiver (2004: 30). Both the concepts of the gift and that of forgiveness raise questions regarding sovereignty. Just as a gift giver becomes superior to the receiver (until the receiver reciprocates), so one who offers forgiveness becomes sovereign over the one who is forgiven (Derrida: 59). To say "I forgive" presupposes judgement, and judgement presupposes power (*ibid*). Therefore Derrida's understanding of pure forgiveness, along with being offered in response to the unforgivable without condition, would also be without power (*ibid*). Derrida's call for forgiveness that does not place the forgiven in debt requires that forgivers forget both the act they have forgiven and their own act of forgiveness (Verdeja 2004: 32). Verdeja suggests that if the act and the person are distinguished, the person can be repentant and can be forgiven, but the act itself would not be forgiven nor would it be forgotten (*ibid*). If the guilty party is repentant, he will not be resentful of the act of forgiveness or the power it entails.

In chapter five I place Derrida in conversation with my interlocutors in Gisenyi and argue that in Rwanda forgiveness can be understood as a gift, which obligates the receiver to reciprocate. Derrida's ideas of forgiveness and the gift in their purest sense would negate such an argument. However, his recognition of the necessity of conditionality in effecting historical change is the meeting point between the philosophical ideal and the rebuilding of everyday life in Rwanda. It is to conceptualising the everyday after violence that I now turn.

REMAKING THE EVERYDAY

Veena Das (2007) contends that when mass violence occurs it is not only witnessed and remembered, it colours and shades ordinary life causing one to question what previously was taken for granted in the everyday and blurring boundaries of existence. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda shook people's understanding of the world they live in. Central to much of Das' work is the

demonstration that the ordinary motions of the everyday cannot be taken for granted (see especially Das 2007 and 1998). Psychotherapy suggests that time is linear and attempts to isolate traumatic experience in the past. In *Life and Words* (2007) Das suggests that time is not frozen, but rather engages in the formation of subjects. Her central thesis is that persons do not transcend, overcome, or escape from traumatic experience and “spaces of devastation” (2007: 214-215); rather, recovery is found in the process of making that space one’s own through gestures of mourning and through the “descent into the ordinary” of everyday practical necessity in the present. Here we find her goal in writing an ethnography of violence; “one that is not seen as bearing an objective witness to the events as much as trying to locate the subject though the experience of such limits” of making the world one’s own (2007: 5). Her work builds on how events reach beyond the temporality of the event itself and become enfolded into the everyday, transforming the ordinary.

This point makes salient her concept of “poisonous knowledge” as a critique of trauma. Das describes poisonous knowledge as only gained through the experience of suffering which is not socially sanctioned and thus not publicly expressible (*ibid*: 76). Poisonous knowledge is produced by acts of violence which cause one to question life itself. Elsewhere she identifies this as philosopher Stanley Cavell’s vertical forms of life: “it is the vertical sense of the form of life that he suggests marks the limit of what is considered human in a society and provides the conditions of the use of criteria as applied to others” (Das 1998: 180). Some experiences are allowed to be spoken while others cannot be, in which case silences were meaningful (*ibid*: 10). Sometimes the experience is expressed in a language other than spoken words; it may be embodied and shown rather than spoken (*ibid*). Das argues against the psychotherapeutic model that traumatic memory is repressed, rather she believes “it is like the background pattern in a weave, ever present and yet not fully visible” (*ibid*: 226 n20). In addition, she argues against the model that a narrative is healing; words can be numb, frozen and lifeless (*ibid*: 8). Indeed, “the obligation to maintain a narrative continuity with the past contradict[s] the ability to live in the present” because remembering the atrocities that occurred in the past made it all the more difficult to accept the lives they were expected to live in the present (*ibid*: 29). It is thus her goal to show “The repression of voice and what is it to recover it—not through the speech generated in collecting oral history or in the process of psychotherapy, but as part of the everyday in which women give an expression to their violation” (*ibid*: 37).

Although I did so somewhat unintentionally in my fieldwork, in my argument below I follow on Das’ interest, not in describing the moments of horror that took place in Rwanda, but rather “what happens to the subject and world when the memory of such events is folded into ongoing relationships” (*ibid*: 8). What kinds of relationships are possible when living together in a society

so mangled by genocide? How people go about living with those who committed acts of genocide, or are suspected to have done so, or with those from whom they fear accusation, or with those they resent or suspect either because they were not there during the genocide in 1994 or because they were, is addressed in chapter six.

CONVIVIALITY

All of my participants in my own fieldwork in Rwanda expressed the desire to live in peace, to not be angry or afraid, and to share with their neighbours. Fiona Ross' (n.d.) reinterpretation of the term conviviality is useful to understanding how such a community might be constructed. To identify more closely with its Latin etymology, Ross reformulated the term as con-viviality: *con-* 'with' and *vivire* 'live'. Ross defines con-viviality as

an ethic that seeks to secure life, both life itself ... and 'good life' as it is made through relationships. Con-viviality used in this sense anticipates that life itself, being alive, is at stake in social worlds, and that it is accomplished alongside and through others. It does not necessarily anticipate peaceableness ... include[s] violences of many kinds—interpersonal, symbolic and structural.” (n.d.: 3)

By exploring concepts of trust in chapter six as they are discussed in HROC, I discuss how people imagine living together today. The concept of conviviality comes into question when one asks how people envision life together in Rwanda after such mass violence as occurred in 1994 and before. Amazonian scholars have written a great deal about the concept of conviviality and its use in maintaining harmonious and peaceful relationships (Santos-Granero 2000) and alternative ways of being social, or sociality (Overing and Passes 2000). In Africa, Nyamnjoh (1998) writes about conviviality in African societies as a space of empowerment that reinforces interdependence, or intersubjectivity. Conviviality may be about enjoying the company of friends, but it is also the intersubjective experience of reciprocity, of mourning and grief, and of building a cooperative community in the face of conflict and misfortune. Illich (1973: 2-3) speaks of the pursuit of a “multidimensional balance of human life” and of conviviality as “the triadic relationship between persons, tools, and a new collectivity.”¹⁸ The triad he proposes for intersubjectivity can be read as an alternative to Mbembe's (2002) formulation of subjectivity, which is formed in a triad of war, desire, and religion.

However, no society is homogenous and sometimes conviviality within one group can cause conflict with another group (Salo 2003). In Rwanda, the manipulation of conviviality within separate groups who share the same space can contribute to something as devastating as the

¹⁸ It should be noted that Illich's triad does not exclude the possibilities of conflict, and the genocide could be read as resulting from this type of triad as well. Similarly, Taylor (1999: 182-3) argues that a 'culture of terror' is not a radical departure from a 'culture of ordinary sociality.'

genocides in Rwanda. In this case, it is specifically conviviality with the “Other” which is required for the prevention of conflict, and may be a tool for restoration after conflict.

CONCLUSION

Das’ concept of “descent into the ordinary” and finding ways to “inhabit a space of destruction” (2002: 216) represent a call for mourning. In a society devastated by mass murder, mourning becomes worked into the everyday. In Rwanda, reminders are ever-present: national symbols are changed (such as the machete being removed from the Coat of Arms and rewriting the National Anthem so it does not include “Hutu” and “Tutsi”), memorials are built, and songs are written. But mourning continues in less overt ways as well, in bodily comportment and in the ways that one interacts with the social body (or not), which I explore in chapter six. My interlocutors understand forgiveness as part of the processes of mourning and of reconstructing the everyday. Forgiveness can be understood as a reciprocal act, and reciprocity is important to how they envision living together. The concept of the gift is central to ideas around health and community in Rwanda. In certain contexts, the idea of the gift and its obligations shifts to ideas of reciprocity in everyday life. In reformulating ways of living together after mass violence, when restoring the health of the individual in the community is at stake, restoring relationships of reciprocity is pivotal. For those I worked with in Gisenyi, as I will show, forgiveness was a salient means to begin that process of restoring reciprocity, facilitating “openness” and mourning, pursuing healthy relationships and a means for living together.

CHAPTER FOUR:

AHABAYE INKOVU HADASUBIRANA

“A WOUND DOES NOT HEAL COMPLETELY”

(Rwandan Proverb)

Mama Cecilé’s neighbour had a painting in the sitting room. It depicted a man climbing up a tree. Lying at the base of the tree was a machete and an axe, and the trunk of the tree was partially cut through. The tree was on the bank of a river, and looking up from the river was a crocodile. On land there was a lion. A snake was wrapped around the tree trunk. I cannot imagine a more distressing and hopeless scene. When I asked about it, her son simply said that the crocodile, the lion, and the snake represent pain. The image suggests it is impossible to escape from suffering in one form or another.

Few, if any, who were present in Rwanda in 1994 escaped horrific pain. Many bear its evidence on their bodies. For many, many more, pain is not written on their bodies, but within. I interviewed a young woman whose cousin participated in the workshop. When her cousin told her that HROC helps people to heal from their wounds she asked “what do you mean, wound (*igikomere*)?” Her cousin said “You remember what happened to you?”—evoking experiences in the genocide that people rarely name directly. “I remembered and asked ‘Is that a wound?’ I thought it was something like a cut on the skin.” She discovered that her heart (*umutima*) was wounded as well as her body in the genocide. Another participant explained to me “when you have trauma (*ihungabana*) the heart (*umutima*) has a wound (*igikomere*).” Taylor (1992: 148) identifies the heart as the “central organ of consciousness, volition, and desire.” The heart is also the “*umwami w’umuntu*” (the king of the person) (Taylor, personal communication). The theme of wounded hearts threaded through many of my interviews and conversations, suggesting that people in Rwanda understand traumatic experience to affect their hearts, rather than the psyche as Western models suggest. Western Psychology’s concept of trauma was introduced in Rwanda after the genocide and is becoming common in popular discourses. ‘Trauma’ in Kinyarwanda is *ihungabana*, a word created after the 1994 genocide, which is broadly used today and not specific to the genocide.¹⁹ I discuss the local understanding of ‘trauma’ more below. There is another word for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), *ihahamuka*, which literally translates as ‘without lungs’, named such because the primary symptom is shortness of breath (Hagengimana and Hinton 2009: 206). Those in HROC translated *ihahamuka* ‘to turn one’s heart upside down.’ The second

¹⁹ Taylor also notes that “the term ‘traumatise’ in French was being used indiscriminately to refer to those who had been traumatized by the genocide and those who had a serious psychosis like schizophrenia” (personal communication).

translation does not contradict the first, as the heart is considered a respiratory organ (*ibid*: 213). Prior to the genocide in 1994 the phrase *kuba igikange* (easily threatened) was used to describe someone who experienced panic and fear (*ibid*: 210). By contrast, one participant told me that the workshop helped him to “put my heart in one place” because “my heart to hate people stopped.” Hagengimana and Hinton (*ibid*: 213) explain that “A person with ‘a heart in one place’ (*gushyita umutima hamwe*) has ‘a calm character.’”

Most often it was *ihungabana* that people used when speaking about trauma, but in more severe situations *ihahamuka* was invoked. Both words are common to everyday discourses of not only the people I worked with, but on local radio and television and in international organisations. In accessing and discussing trauma, the multitude of international organisations and researchers ask diagnostic questions which compare symptoms named by survivors in Rwanda with those in the American Psychiatric Association’s DSM-IV, but deeper questioning into the meaning given to these symptoms by Rwandese suggests that there is an overlap between *ihahamuka* and madness (*umusazi*), and the distinction is nebulous.

I HAVE NO PROBLEM, BUT...

I interviewed Mama Cecilé the week after I arrived in Gisenyi and she became a participant in my ethnographic research. She captured my heart and my interest in many contradictory ways. Our interview was incredibly difficult because on several occasions she became distressed and seemed to speak in stream of consciousness, unaware of the need for Danielle to translate her words for me. Her demeanour was strikingly sad. She almost always had her head down, her shoulders slumped, a deep frown on her face. After spending more time with her I realised that I had become accustomed to her despondent deportment: I didn’t even notice that it was such until she smiled. It was such a dramatic change that it made my heart jump. Usually when she spoke she kept her hands close to her body, methodically running her finger up and down the inside of her forearm. But when she became excited or amused she sat upright, and made broad gestures with her arms and hands—she demanded attention. But as soon as the subject of conversation changed the smile was gone and she faded into the wall.

Mama Cécile first introduced herself to me as a widow of genocide and mother of one child. In that first interview she revealed much—she was intentionally generous, but she revealed even more in what was not intentional.

Because I am trained a lot, now I can help others who have trauma. Now I am strong. But sometimes even though I am a Healing Companion,²⁰ sometimes the problems make me unstable. But no problem, it is not like after genocide. Sometime if I get problems and my daughter misses something I start to think about the genocide. If I had a good house and a good business, I would have no problem. [crying] But the big problem is my daughter—if my daughter misses something then I start to think about the genocide. ... Before [the workshop] I used to stay alone, but now I share with others and meet with others. ... I saw that if I continue to allow trauma (*ihungabana*) to come, if I did not heal from trauma, then I will be mad (*umusazi*).

In this excerpt, it is striking how Mama Cecilé fluctuates between saying she has no problem, and telling me how distressing her very prominent problems are—not being able to provide for her daughter, not being able to fix her dilapidated house, and being very limited in livelihood options. This pattern in her speech continued throughout my time with her, especially when she was upset. It is clear that her daughter is her primary concern. Cecilé attends secondary school in Byumba, Northern Rwanda, on a scholarship from FARG.²¹ Mama Cecilé does not have to pay for school fees, uniforms, or boarding. Her concern about her daughter “missing something” is related to providing school supplies, clothing, money for making phone calls or using internet, and transport. For the school break in April during the Week of Memorial for The Genocide Against the Tutsi,²² Mama Cecilé could not send money for Cecilé’s transport to come home. Instead, Cecilé stayed with an aunt in Kigali, who probably paid her transport from Byumba to Kigali. A bus from Kigali to Gisenyi costs 2,800Rwf (5.10USD) one way. In addition, Mama Cecilé would have had to provide food for her daughter, for which she often depended on credit at nearby *Boutiques*.²³

Part of the reason that Mama Cecilé fluctuates between saying she has no problem, and then describing her problems, can be understood if you consider that she is referring to different kinds of problems. Problems of the heart and material problems are often interlinked, but they can be viewed distinctly in order to understand Mama Cecilé’s fluctuations. The lack of money, work, a stable house, and the ability to provide materially for her daughter are material problems for Mama Cecilé. But her comment, “no problem, it is not like after genocide” gestures towards a different sort of problem, which she explains in more detail later by saying that she no longer stays alone and she shares with others. Her comment reflects images of proper personhood, which I will address more in relation to healing in the next chapter. It is worth noting that several other participants linked problems to their hearts. One of the facilitators told me that “after the genocide I had a big

²⁰ The HROC workshop that I focus on here is the basic workshop. HROC also offers an advanced workshop, ‘Healing Companions’ that offers more in-depth discussion of trauma and grief, and lessons on how to help people in emotional distress—particularly focusing on good listening. This is the workshop Mama Cecilé refers to.

²¹ FARG is *Fonds National pour l'Assistance aux Rescapés du Génocide* (National Fund for the Survivors of Genocide).

²² This is how the 1994 genocide is officially named by the government of Rwanda.

²³ A *Boutique* in Rwanda is a small shop, usually operated out of a room in the owners home or compound, in which basic goods are sold (e.g. soap, tissue, tea, potatoes, spices, pre-paid airtime, and baked goods like bread or *anadazi*).

worry on my heart”, and another that “trauma causes you to lose peace in your heart”. Another young man said “Someone who has trauma has a lot of problems on his heart, he gets angry, cries a lot, runs away, is quiet, talks to himself, stays alone, he is like a crazy man.” This statement also recalls my argument that trauma and madness are intertwined.

Mama Cecilé says “If I had a good house and a good business, I would have no problem.” Her house was given to her in 2002 by the Catholic Church (who provided several dozen others immediately around her), but it was poorly built. In 2005, the southern facing wall collapsed. The wall was rebuilt but the structure remains unsound. A large crack over the central doorway presents an imminent threat. More recently, a windstorm tore off part of the corrugated roof. The metal has been hastily tied down, but it remains insecure. Although the government provided her with new roofing, she does not have the money to effect the full repair. “A good business” was a source of contention for Mama Cecilé and her family during my time in Gisenyi. Her sister, Mama Jeannette, lived with her husband and four children nearby. They had recently started using Mama Cecilé’s house to sell beer. Mama Cecilé helped in the business in exchange for food, but she was very unhappy with the arrangement. She said she did not like having drunk people in her house, and told me that selling beer from your home was not respected (a point my interpreter, Papa Adrien, confirmed emphatically). She would prefer to sell charcoal in the market (a bag can be bought for 7,000Rwf and sold for 7,500Rwf) and was struggling to save money in the hopes of pursuing such a business venture. Over the weeks she had become more and more unhappy, until finally she told me she felt she “had no human rights” anymore. She invited another sister, Mama Olivié, to come and assist her to tell Mama and Papa Jeanette that they could not continue to sell beer from her home, they agreed to stop as soon as they could find a new location.

Mama Cecilé was born in Gisenyi in 1962. When her parents died in 1984 (from “illness”) she and her five siblings went to live with their uncle. She married in 1990 and her daughter was born in 1992. During the genocide, her husband was killed, as were her uncle, his wife, and eight of his children; her aunt and three of her children; and her brother and two of his children. Mama Cecilé fled to Zaire with her daughter when the genocide began in April 1994 and remained there as a refugee until July when she returned to Rwanda and lived not far from Gisenyi with her sister, Mama Olivié, and their children, until Mama Olivié remarried in 1996. She said that while her family outside of Rwanda helped her other two surviving siblings after the genocide (Mama Jeannette stayed in Gisenyi and another sister moved to Kigali), they did not help her and Mama Olivié, which she was very angry about. Mama Cecilé felt abandoned and betrayed by her surviving family, and felt that Mama Olivié was the only one who supported her. She told me her siblings do not help her (to fix her house, to pay transport for her daughter to come home during the

break, because her sister did not call her when I visited them in Kigali as she asked, etc). She was clearly not satisfied with the ways they did offer help (her daughter stayed with her sister in Kigali, Mama Jeannette provided some financial support through the beer business). Her sister in Kigali had asked her to come and stay with her, but Mama Cecilé had refused. When I met her sister and “brother” in Kigali, he commented, “widows often get bad behaviour and want to stay alone” which suggested they had tried to help Mama Cecilé but were unsuccessful. Mama Cecilé was not only angry, but deeply hurt by this state of relations. With tears in her eyes she asked Papa Adrien what to do. He told her things will get better “slow by slow.”²⁴ When I asked him about the situation later and his advice to her, he said “because of the genocide Mama Cecilé’s mind is not okay, every time she thinks of it she must cry. She asks the facilitators for help, but she learned everything in the workshop so what can I tell her?...families, even when they have money, cannot help.”

Mama Cecilé’s statement that if she does “not heal from trauma, then I will be mad”, coupled with Papa Adrien’s reference to the limitations of help are disturbing. According to the Coordinator of HROC, madness is understood to be incurable. Those considered mad are avoided, even ostracised.²⁵ HROC utilises the word *ihungabana* to discuss trauma in the workshop. A HROC facilitator told me about a participant in one of the workshops:

After seeing the symptoms of trauma in the workshop an old woman gave testimony. She said that she thought her daughter was mad, but now she sees that her daughter has trauma. After the workshop the woman asked her daughter to forgive her for telling her that she was mad. She tried to help her slowly, telling her good words. Even her neighbours would say that her daughter was mad, she explained to them that she is not mad. She tried to make her daughter strong. She said that her daughter has no problem now.

But this substitution is limited, just as Mama Cecilé told me, as well as others, “If you have a lot of trauma it may cause you to become mad”. Trauma, *ihunganbana*, in this understanding, has an identifiable cause, is treatable with support and through speech, and should not persist beyond a point that the community determines is reasonable, for it is family and neighbours that apply the label of madness. Since trauma has a recognisable cause and is treatable, a person seen to be traumatised is offered support, usually expressed through “approaching the person and talking to them” which, unlike the exclusion of madness, includes them in social interaction. On the other hand, if their behaviour persists the diagnosis of trauma is exhausted, and people may rather describe them as *umusazi*, and since it is unexplained and untreatable, it often results in ostracisation. But the distinction between *umusazi* and *ihahamuka* is unclear: Papa Samweri told

²⁴ I heard this phrase often from HROC facilitators and participants. It speaks to an awareness of a long and arduous process of mourning. See also chapter six.

²⁵ One day a friend pointed out a woman whom he said was mad because she beat her children and threw stones at her house. He did not greet her as we passed, which I was repeatedly told was required anytime you passed someone you knew regardless of your relationship with them.

me that before the workshop he thought *ihungabana* was *ihahamuka*, which Danielle initially translated as madness, but after consulting with the HROC coordinator learned it was PTSD. Since the workshop applied new meaning to those behaviours (listed in more detail below), and because of the way that it was invoked and the confusion in translation, it suggests that *ihahamuka* is entwined with *umusazi*. Papa Adrien's comment about Mama Cecile hints that she is exceeding the knowable and acceptable limitations of trauma, thus exceeding the limitation of help and support and moving into the realm of madness.

HISTORY OF TRAUMA

The negotiation between madness and trauma is very recent, beginning only after the 1994 genocide with the introduction of a westernised conception of trauma from international organisations and the new government. Trauma is often understood to be an experience beyond what is expressible in words, but the DSM-IV (2000: 463) offers specific defining features and symptoms, including persistent re-experiencing, avoidance, or increased arousal "following exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor ... that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury." According to Herman (1992:1) "Remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of the social order and for the healing of individual victims." Herman describes the psychology of trauma as a dialectic between the will to deny and the will to proclaim,²⁶ with denial often prevailing such that the story of the trauma surfaces in symptoms rather than a verbal narrative. Veena Das (2007) contests the idea that traumatic experience is repressed, rather it is ever present in awareness as "poisonous knowledge" and articulated through gestures of mourning.

The origins of the word 'trauma' are in the late seventeenth century, coming from the Greek, τραύμα, literally translated as "wound". In the late 19th century Janet and Freud each studied hysteria in women and independently arrived at the conclusion that it was caused by psychological trauma (Herman 1992:12). Freud concluded that sexual abuse/violence as a child caused hysteria, but his theory was met with public outrage and rejected even by himself when he realized that if his hypothesis were true, then "perverted acts against children" were endemic (*ibid*: 14). The study of trauma was shelved until World War I when "shell shock" was identified as psychological trauma rather than physical trauma caused by concussive effects of exploding shells. At this time, Kardner and Spiegel utilized Freud's "talking cure" which focused on the recovery and cathartic reliving of traumatic memory, but also the integration of those memories into consciousness (*ibid*: 25-26).

²⁶ This dialectic between remembrance and forgetting is ever-present in Rwanda, as people assert "it is good to remember" in one sentence and in the next state "we have to forget to move forward."

The systematic study of the long-term psychological effects of combat did not happen until after the Vietnam War when veterans in the United States themselves initiated peer-counselling and self-help groups, bringing the concept in public awareness. In 1980, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) was included in the third volume of the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III), giving it official recognition for the first time (*ibid*: 27). The impact of trauma was expanded when women began making public the violence that was a routine part of their lives: exactly what Freud had denied in the 19th century.

However, this sketch of the history of trauma does not reveal the diversity of research and opinion on the nature of trauma, which has been obscured in the interest of integrating the field and defining a diagnosis for the DSM (Leys 2000: 6). After World War I, British physicians debated whether cathartic therapy depended on the recovery and integration of traumatic memory (*ibid*: 12). More recent debate is over locating trauma in the *mind*, and thus in narrative memory, or the *body's* reflexive, habitual, neurological memory (*ibid*: 7). Colvin (2008) describes how the term helps to legitimate the symptoms that sometimes follow violent encounters, but it also confines and reduces the experience. 'Trauma' is a medicalised concept that results from a specific (violent) event that occurred at a specific moment in time to a specific person, and does not address the social, political, economic, and moral dimensions of violence. Therapy is rooted in accepting that the traumatic event is in the past and is no longer a threat (*ibid*: 232). When violence is historical and systematic (e.g. institutionalised oppression or chronic poverty), this supposition is not very convincing.

Herman's (1992) description of the effects of trauma demonstrates the biological focus of understanding trauma in western Psychology. She describes the "ordinary human response" to danger in order to identify causes of persistent symptoms of trauma. When someone perceives him/herself to be in a dangerous situation the body increases adrenaline production, increasing alertness. Perception is altered, and normal feelings of hunger, fatigue, or pain are diluted, while feelings of fear or anger are heightened, which normally result in a "fight or flight" reaction. When resistance or escape is impossible, this response system becomes disorganised and disconnected and components of the response to danger persist in an altered state after the danger is over. This clearly locates the primary experience and effect of trauma in the mind of the individual, reflecting the political and philosophical history in which these theories were developed.

Bracken *et al* (1995: 1075), identify three underlying assumptions in the diagnostic category of PTSD: a western notion of individuality, the idea that all cultures respond to trauma in similar ways, and the expectation that treatment strategies developed in the United States are universally applicable. These assumptions are demonstrated in this response to the critique that somatic, social, and cultural aspects of trauma are excluded: "although trauma takes place in a cultural context, it is

experienced by *individuals*. There is reason to believe that there is a *universal biological* response to trauma” (Dyregrov 2000:18, emphasis mine). Bracken *et al*, recommend an alternative framework which recognises that,

Social, political and cultural realities structure the context in which violence is experienced and determine to a greater or lesser degree: a) the subjective meaning of the violence or trauma; b) the way in which the distress associated with violence is experienced and reported; c) the type and extent of general support available to the individual; and d) what type of therapies are available and are appropriate. (1995: 1077)

Marsella *et al* (1996: xvi), despite their goal to address the *Ethnocultural Aspects of PTSD*, maintain the “universality of many of the biologically determined components of the PTSD experience.” That trauma is experienced by ‘individuals’ is an idea based in Enlightenment literature. This model of the individual is not universal; a variety of philosophical ideas about individuals and persons, as well as alternative ontologies to western biological concepts, are practised around the world (see, for example, Comaroff & Comaroff 2001, Conklin & Morgan 1996, Gottlieb 1998, Lamb 1997, Taylor 1992, or Santos-Granero 1986). The notion that the effects of trauma are universal disregards that fact that not even all ‘westerners’ respond to the same traumatic event in the same way—some may experience PTSD while others do not, some may experience it far later than others, and in different ways. A ‘universal biological response’ also neglects the complexities of ways that people may heal from traumatic experience or from PTSD.

TRAUMA RESEARCH IN RWANDA

Immediately after the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, humanitarian organisations began addressing and questioning trauma within the local population. The majority of the initial research that took place was in cooperation with International Non-Profit/Non-Governmental Organisations, specifically intended for use in project planning. Bolton’s (2001a: 243) study of local perceptions of mental illness in Rwanda was intended to determine the validity of Western diagnostic instruments in relation to genocide in Rwanda. Although Bolton used free-listing of the problems caused by genocide, and then key-informant interviews, the framework began and ended with a western Psychological model (specifically, the DSM-IV definitions of depression and PTSD, and the Hopkins Symptom Checklist).²⁷ Bolton concluded that the Western conception of ‘trauma’ was compatible with *ihahamuka* (PTSD), that ‘depression’ was compatible with *agahinda* (grief), and that the two terms were used in the same way in the U.S. and Rwanda. This, despite the recognition that *ihahamuka* was a term which only came into popular use in Kinyarwanda after 1994, and that the concept of trauma had already been introduced by external interventions.

²⁷ The Hopkins System Checklist is a screening instrument utilising commonly observed symptoms to diagnose depression and anxiety

Bolton (*ibid*: 245) argues that only one of the two communities in which they conducted research was exposed to external information about *ihahamuka* because the second community used the term *agahinda*, a much older term. His conclusion is that the two terms are essentially interchangeable, that one community had simply learned a new word to describe a list of known symptoms, but Dyregrov (2000: 4-5) notes that sensitisation about trauma began on the radio in 1995 by the Ministry of Education, and Hagengimana and Hinton (2009: 210) suggest that the majority of the population was familiar with the term within a year after the genocide. My own informants were familiar with both of these terms and did not use them interchangeably. Although some of the symptoms coincide (which will be demonstrated below), they are understood as distinct from one another. As I've shown, *ihahamuka* is conflated with madness, not grief. Indeed, Bolton's own data demonstrates that the terms have distinct symptoms (see figure v).

Bolton's conflation of the two terms is not based on local descriptions, but on comparison of those descriptions with symptoms in the DSM-IV for depression and PTSD, "Between them, *guhahamuka* and *agahinda* include all the symptom categories required for DSM-IV based diagnoses of depression and PTSD. This supports the content validity of both syndromes among this population" (*ibid*: 247). His conclusion that Rwandan conceptions and Western conceptions are compatible is based in the naming of symptoms, but not in understanding the *meaning* of those symptoms (see also Bracken *et al*, 1995), thus missing the opportunity to understand the "local perceptions" he sought. Hagengimana and Hinton (2009) offer a study which explores how trauma is perpetrated and experienced within Rwanda and explain that the shortness of breath experienced in episodes of *ihahamuka* is understood as an impediment to flow and considered life threatening.

Figure v "Table 3 Local Syndromes with Depression-Like Features" (Bolton 2001:247)

Symptoms

Guhahamuka (mental trauma)

- Not sleeping
- Despair, hopelessness
- Anger
- Failure to eat
- Failure to talk
- Loss of intelligence
- Attempting suicide
- Confusion
- Acting crazy
- Conflicting thoughts
- Feeling extremely weak
- Easily startled
- Absentmindedness
- Too many thoughts
- Worthlessness
- Feeling you have a "cloud" inside
- Feeling disconnected from others
- Falling sick every now and then
- Repeatedly dreaming of bad events
- Fleeing from people and hiding
- Lack of trust
- Feeling like fighting
- Making a lot of noise
- Being quarrelsome
- Being rebellious
- Excessive crying
- Telling everyone about your pain
- Being violent
- Mental chaos or flashbacks
- Instability of the mind
- Felling like you are having epilepsy
- Acting without thinking
- Nightmare about fighting others
- Deep sadness that can cause death

Agahinda (deep sadness or grief)

- Isolation
- Lack of self care
- Loss of mind
- Being very talkative
- Not working
- Drunkenness
- Feeling life is meaningless
- Feeling shattered
- Committing suicide
- Don't feel like talking
- Crazy behaviour due to alcohol
- Not pleased by anything
- Easily overcome by events
- Burying one's cheek in his palm
- Difficulty interacting with others
- Sadness

Pham *et al* (2004) assessed the symptoms of PTSD in order to measure the relationship between PTSD and attitudes toward justice and reconciliation in Rwanda, using the PTSD Checklist-Civilian version (PCL-C).²⁸ They also used a list of seven traumatic events determined from 100 interviews, which were selected for frequency of citation: property destroyed or lost, being forced to flee, serious illness, a close family member killed, a close family member died from illness, sexual violence, and physical injury (2004: 607). They found that 518 of the 2074 respondents met PTSD symptom criteria based on the PCL-C instrument. Of these, eleven did not experience any of the seven listed traumatic events, between 11.7% and 75.4% of all respondents experienced one or more (*ibid*). These numbers are remarkably high and certainly worth attention. However, there is no discussion in the article about how the traumatic events are perceived to affect the person who experienced them, or the meaning given to the symptoms which so many respondents identified.

The consequence is in what follows this checklist-style research. Much of the research accepts that if the symptoms western Psychology identifies as the effects of trauma are present, then it is reasonable to label that cluster of symptoms as PTSD (for example, in addition to those cited above, Basoglu *et al* 2005, Bolton 2001a&b, Carlson & Rosser-Hogan 1994, Onyut *et al* 2005).

Researchers are often interested in identifying trauma in order to later demonstrate healing. If it is concluded that *ihahamuka* and *agahinda* in Rwanda are compatible with trauma in ‘the West’, then the assumption is that it can also be ‘treated’ in the same way, which may or may not be the case (whether or not *ihahamuka* and trauma are compatible). When research does question “cultural” implications, there tends to be homogenisation of “non-western”, “Third World”, or “underdeveloped” countries and their experience and response to trauma.

TRAUMA AND HROC

There are two possible levels of analysis in HROC’s understanding of trauma: how the organisation conceives it and how the participants conceive it. HROC claims Judith Herman’s text as the foundation of the theory behind the workshop—I referred to it above. Here I focus on the responses of participants in the workshops to questions about trauma.²⁹ On the first day of the three-day workshop, the symptoms, causes, and consequences of trauma are discussed. To start, participants are simply asked to list what they know about trauma.³⁰ A facilitator concludes by

²⁸ A 17-item instrument corresponding to symptoms associated with PTSD in the DSM-IV.

²⁹ As mentioned above, there has been significant sensitisation around trauma in Rwanda since 1994 from international organisations and government programmes, via educational radio programmes as well radio and T.V. drama’s, and through workshops and other projects by international organisations. This intensive and intentional sensitisation has likely influenced most people’s understanding of trauma before they attend the HROC workshop.

³⁰ I have incorporated this information into the more specific categories in the tables below.

defining trauma: “the emotional wounds left by things we did, saw, heard, or experienced.”

Participants are then asked to list what they think the causes of trauma are, depicted in Table 1.

TABLE 1 CAUSES OF TRAUMA

STATEMENTS IN WORKSHOP IN BYUMBA:	STATEMENTS FROM INTERVIEWS IN GISENYI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ war* ❖ death of parents* ❖ bad relationships in families ❖ loss of property* ❖ incurable disease* ❖ serious injury* ❖ rape* ❖ torture—e.g. beating a child ❖ insecurity ❖ injustice* ❖ stigma ❖ mental illness can traumatise the children ❖ seeing people being killed* ❖ extreme poverty ❖ disappointment ❖ being a refugee* ❖ an accident ❖ grief* ❖ ignorance—e.g. seeing others writing and you cannot. ❖ Reliving the wounds you’ve experienced.* ❖ Experiencing bad things that make you question “How am I going to survive?”* ❖ Remembering relatives who have passed away. ❖ If you loose a relative and your family acts as if it meant nothing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Trauma comes because of something that happens to you (x2)* ❖ Everyone can get trauma because of what they did or what was done to him.* ❖ Trauma moves someone from a good place because of bad things that happened. You are not created with these things. ❖ A lot of people are traumatised because of bad relationships in the family...or by poverty. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sometimes parents can cause their children to be traumatised, like maybe in the morning mama goes to find something for her children, then when she comes back she starts to tell bad things to the children, at that time the children have no security. ○ People can get trauma in the family, like as we are married, sometimes you can get trauma (such as when the husband comes and starts to scold and you don’t know where this comes from, so you can get a problem). ○ I was traumatised when I was married. I was married to a man and that family was in a bad situation, they were badly educated and it was difficult to stay with that family. My husband used to drink and beat me and liked many women. I saw that I couldn’t stay in that life, my family had a good life so I came back home. That was my only trauma, it touched me so much. ❖ To meet a person in the road and beat him for nothing, that may cause him to be traumatised. ❖ When I saw prisoners in the workshop I got traumatised.* ❖ Loosing something that you need causes you to be traumatised / family members lost or things lost.* ❖ Because of the war everyone is traumatised, because they saw people kill each other.*

I’ve highlighted in bold those items that were named identically in both the workshop I attended in Byumba, and in my interviews with participants in Gisenyi. Notice that some interviewees in Gisenyi repeated the definition given by the facilitator in Byumba—it had been between seven months and two years since any of the interviewees had attended the workshop in Gisenyi. This suggests either that such an explanation is part of the common discourse in Rwanda on trauma, or that it has had a significant impact on participants so they remember it. I’ve marked with an asterisk those items that can be directly linked to the genocide, although they are not necessarily limited to the genocide. Many of the causes people named are not necessarily connected to the genocide (though some may have a causal connection). Familial relationships are frequently mentioned, suggesting they are central to people’s conceptions of health and illness.

Next, participants are asked to list the symptoms of trauma, shown in Table 2 below.

TABLE 2 SYMPTOMS OF TRAUMA³¹

STATEMENTS IN WORKSHOP IN BYUMBA:	STATEMENTS FROM INTERVIEWS IN GISENYI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ being quiet ❖ isolation (staying alone) ❖ crying ❖ fear ❖ sadness ❖ shouting ❖ confusion ❖ separate yourself from the group ❖ shame ❖ carelessness ❖ abnormal behaviour in a normal situation ❖ your behaviour becomes strange, changed from before 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ being quiet (x4)* / cannot talk to anyone (x2) ❖ staying alone (x2)* ❖ crying a lot (x2) ❖ Fear of what happened and no means to remove it.* ❖ cannot get happy ❖ talking to yourself (x2) ❖ cannot love ❖ there are some who run away ❖ some decide to stay in the house ❖ not wanting to see other people ❖ I hated all people.* ❖ pass people without greeting* ❖ thinking that all people are bad* ❖ getting angry a lot (x2) ❖ saying bad things about others even though they did nothing to me* ❖ have a lot of problems on your <u>heart</u> ❖ <u>heart</u> has a wound ❖ I would think like a crazy man ❖ if you find someone who did wrong you fall down or run away like a crazy man* ❖ if you see someone who did wrong and your <u>heart</u> [jumps]* ❖ If you see someone you are surprised and have worry in your <u>heart</u>* ❖ some talk without answering what you ask.

The items I've marked with an asterisk are not explicitly about genocide, but were almost always implicitly discussed in relation to it. It is common in Rwanda not to speak directly about sensitive issues. For example, "if you see someone..." stated in context, refers either to the specific person who harmed him/her, or more generally to a person identified as belonging to another ethnic group. It is also important to note that many of the items listed here are associated with madness: "your behaviour becomes strange" depicts the example I gave in my earlier discussion. All of the symptoms given in the list from the workshop in Byumba could be transferred to a list of symptoms for madness. One participant stated "I would think like a crazy man" while another woman told me a person who has trauma "is like someone who is mad (*umusazi*)."

This demonstrates how indefinite the boundaries between "trauma" and "madness" are. There is also frequent reference to the heart (in contrast to the rare mention of the mind or psyche). Hagengimana and Hinton (2009: 211) also discuss the centrality of the heart and describe witnesses to episodes of *ihahamuka* placing their hand over the heart of the subject "to keep the heart from bounding out of the body."

Following this listing exercise, a facilitator explains that each of these symptoms falls into one of four different areas: behavioural, emotional, physical, or cognitive. In small groups in the workshop, participants were asked to identify which area each symptom belonged to. This is how they divided the symptoms they previously identified, with some additions:

³¹ As in Table 1, items in bold were repeated in both situations, and an asterisk marks items specifically linked to genocide.

TABLE 3 CATEGORISATION OF SYMPTOMS

BEHAVIOURAL (things you do)	EMOTIONAL (things you feel)	PHYSICAL (what happens to your body)	COGNITIVE (what you think)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ being quiet ❖ isolating from others ❖ suspiciousness ❖ talk to yourself ❖ separation ❖ extreme laughing ❖ carelessness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ hopelessness ❖ regret ❖ fear ❖ unable to talk ❖ jealous ❖ suspicious ❖ speaking meaningless things 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ poor hygiene ❖ anger ❖ crying ❖ shouting ❖ fatigue ❖ nausea ❖ headache ❖ sleeplessness ❖ sleeping too much 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ jealous ❖ confusion ❖ become negationist³² (in action and thought) ❖ fear ❖ separate from others ❖ trouble resting

Although this system of categorisation may reflect a Western ideology, that does not necessarily mean that the way participants have placed symptoms reflects Western understandings. For example, ‘jealousy’ and ‘fear’ would likely be placed in the “emotional” category rather than the “cognitive” if this were a group of Americans. There was some negotiation in the placement of various symptoms, particularly because several were duplicated in multiple categories (and some still are, such as ‘separation’, which is listed as both “behavioural” and “cognitive”). For example, ‘shouting’ and ‘crying’ were originally listed under both “behavioural” and “physical”, but it was decided by the group that they should only be listed under “physical”.

In the final section of this very intensive day of the workshop, participants are asked to identify the consequences of trauma. I have marked with italics those items that also appear as “Causes of trauma” in Table 1, which reflects a cyclical relationship, for example madness can be both a cause and a consequence of trauma. After participants completed the list, the facilitator made the statement that it is not only survivors who are traumatised, but also people who killed.

TABLE 4 CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA

STATEMENTS IN WORKSHOP IN BYUMBA:		STATEMENTS FROM INTERVIEWS IN GISENYI:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ mental harassment when you lost your relatives ❖ You cannot stay in the community if you do not share and talk. ❖ If teachers are traumatised students cannot learn. ❖ Have to take food to relatives in jail. ❖ Children being ashamed if their father killed. ❖ Identity crises—e.g. people being ashamed of being Hutu. ❖ mental wounds ❖ <i>poverty</i> ❖ low development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ suicide ❖ killings ❖ <i>madness, mental sickness</i> ❖ If you have trauma for a long time you become mad. ❖ vengeance ❖ <i>hatred</i> ❖ misbehaving ❖ tribalism ❖ mistrust ❖ <i>unhappiness</i> ❖ loosing confidence ❖ hate yourself ❖ <i>war</i> ❖ helplessness ❖ emigration ❖ <i>stigma</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ traumatise others ❖ If you do not know the symptoms of trauma you can think that person is mad. ❖ Cannot see good things. ❖ Sometimes I saw someone who had trauma but ignored him and didn’t care for him. It is not good to ignore someone with trauma, he has a lot of problems on his heart. ❖ If you aren’t careful you can die. ❖ If you have a lot of trauma it may cause you to become mad. (x2)

³² The theme in 2009 for the highly publicised 15th Commemoration of the Genocide Against the Tutsi was “Let us commemorate the Tutsi genocide of 1994 while fighting against negationism and building our country.”

Participants in Byumba identified social, personal, economic, educational, health, and political consequences of trauma, emphasising the communal impact of trauma. Facilitators also discuss how the consequences of trauma impact the nation, the family and community, and the individual to emphasis the extent of effects.

Three comments in the list from interviews are about madness (which was also listed in the workshop in Byumba) and are inter-related. One person said “If you do not know the symptoms of trauma you can think that person is mad” which was repeated in the facilitators re-telling of a story from a workshop about a woman who decided after this lesson that her daughter was not mad, but traumatised (above). The statement that “Sometimes I saw someone who had trauma but ignored him and didn’t care for him” was preceded in the interview by telling me that what he learned was trauma in the workshop he previously thought was madness. He was telling me was that he used to ignore people he thought were mad. Once again, this demonstrates people’s understanding of the altered behaviour, the symptoms listed in Table 2, is directly linked to madness—the interventions taking place throughout Rwanda are in many ways simply giving the diagnosis of those symptoms a new name. However, a dramatic change is taking place with that new naming: unlike leaving a person with madness alone, people recognise a need to help those with trauma—when symptoms become explainable, people can negotiate a different response. That is not to say that *all* madness is now thought to be trauma, or that *all* trauma is treatable. The boundaries are blurred, being negotiated and renegotiated as the family and community find appropriate within the circumstances.

CONCLUSION

I started this chapter by arguing that the application of a Western Psychological notion of trauma in Rwanda is superficial because it does not make enquiries into the meaning behind the symptoms people experience. Such enquiries reveal that many of the symptoms people now associate with *ihungabana* are comparable with those identified with *umusazi*. The diagnosis of madness can be supplanted with trauma when people recognise that such anti-social behaviour is a result of a traumatic experience—which could be genocide or other forms of loss which dramatically impact one’s view of the world (as opposed to madness which has no identifiable cause). Since this diagnosis has a recognisable cause, it is also understood to be treatable. Healing is generally spoken about in terms of speech, which I address further in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that while it is considered appropriate to ignore someone who is mad, someone with trauma should be “approached” and “spoken to.” For those who do not recover proper social interaction, the community diagnosis of trauma shifts to one of madness, but it may be referred to as *ihahamuka*. This diagnosis rests in uncertain terrain. While some recognise it as a legitimate medical diagnosis, their response to it is identical to how one responds to madness. The proverb in

the title, “a wound does not heal completely” is quite fitting to this spectrum of possibilities, for it highlights the risk that one who has trauma is already at risk of madness.

This negotiation is actively pursued in Rwanda. Radio and TV dramas incorporate it into their story lines (as well as concepts like reconciliation), numerous humanitarian organisations offer information, workshops, and clinics for trauma, and people invoke it commonly when someone is distraught. During the Week of Memorial and at many commemoration ceremonies, it was common to hear the screams and cries of women overcome by grief. Inevitably someone commented “she is becoming traumatised.” At all of the official ceremonies there were medical personnel (usually in Red Cross vests) who would carry these women away to a designated area, presumably to offer them comfort and quiet them. Those who participated in my research made distinct efforts to offer support to those they believed were traumatised. But this support is limited. Symbolically, the symptoms of *ihungabana* and *ihahamuka* represent blockage, which is considered dangerous to both the individual and society. When acknowledged modes of healing do not “put your heart in one place” then efforts to restore you to social well-being may halt.

CHAPTER FIVE:

UJYA GUKIRA INDWARA ARAYIRATA

“IF YOU WANT TO HEAL FROM YOUR SICKNESS YOU MUST TALK ABOUT IT”

(Rwandan Proverb)

In the previous chapter I began to raise questions about the implications of how trauma is understood in relation to healing. I suggested that *ihungabana* (trauma) looks similar to *umusazi* (madness), but is understood to be treatable. However, if one was not reintegrated into the social fabric he/she could shift into the realm of untreatable *umusazi*. I would now like to explore in more depth what modes of healing are possible. Ideas around healing in Rwanda have been influenced over time by multiple sources. People continue to negotiate between the most recent ideas, introduced by western psychology after the genocide in 1994 and based on individual narrative storytelling; Judeo-Christian concepts particularly focused on confession and forgiveness which began to be integrated in the early 1900's; and much older ideas based in Rwandan conceptions of personhood and community. All three of these influences are reflected in HROC's programming, particularly in the shifting between individual and communal goals. As I interviewed HROC participants, forgiveness emerged as central to almost every person's understanding of healing. I will argue here that the historical influences on healing have converged in their contemporary use so that forgiveness can be understood as an act of exchange in the context of a gift economy, thus working to build relationships of reciprocity, which are important to the health of the community.

“TO BE OPEN”

In citing Judith Herman's "Trauma and Recovery" as the theoretical foundation of its lessons, HROC clearly builds a psychoanalytic framework for the workshops (Herman 1992; HROC Training Manual). The second day of the workshop focuses on loss, grief, and mourning, (*ukubura*, *agahinda*, and *n'icyunamo*, respectively). Facilitators offer the primary means of healing from grief as "*Nibyiza gufungukira kuvungu ibyawwe*" (It is nice to be opened to say your personal things). The emphasis was "to be open" (*gufungukira*), and to speak about your problems. When I asked friends on separate occasions if they knew any proverbs about healing, they offered the same one: *Ujya gukira indwara arayirata* (If you want to heal from your sickness you must talk about it). The phrase "to be open" recalls Taylor's (1992) thesis, which describes Rwandan pathology in terms of openness or closure of the body (see Chapter 3). The request "to be open" signifies a request to encourage flow. In the workshop, facilitators first recognised the potential difficulties or reasons people may not want to speak about their problems:

- You may think the person does not have something to say in response
- You may be ashamed
- You may fear the consequences of speaking (for example, if others know I was raped maybe I cannot marry)
- If someone you trust disappoints you, then how can you trust anyone?

The influence of individualistic psychotherapy is evident here in two ways. First, it is implied that one should overcome the issues addressed above, all of which are in reference to negative social relationships. The individual takes priority. However, those consequences which cause an impediment to marriage or other social relationships would be considered blockage in Taylor's terms because they impede reproduction; a contradiction to the idea that speaking is "to be open" or promote flow. Second, the ideas offered by facilitators as positive results of speaking about one's problems were almost all regarding the individual person:

- You feel free, released
- You don't feel alone
- You feel comforted and strong
- It creates hope
- You can get advice
- You learn that you are not the only one to experience that or similar problems

The facilitators statement that it was important "to be open" in order to heal suggests the influence of traditional conceptions of healing. The fact that "to be open" is understood as telling one's story (in spite of the fact that there may be negative social consequences) reflects the influence of the psychotherapeutic model and its individualistic focus. However, HROC reinserts the importance of the social by then focusing on how to help others heal, the central idea being that once one is healed by telling one's story, then one would be able to help others to heal by listening to their problems. This mirrors the idea in Turner's *Drums of Affliction* (1968) of the sufferer being transformed into the healer. The common African ideal that healing and recovery is inherently about healing the community (*ibid*) weaves its way through the individualistic ideals resented in the workshop.

After the workshop, nine of twenty participants said "sharing my problems" or "pouring out my heart/problems" or "taught me to be open" was one of the most meaningful lessons for them and something they intended to do in the future. Listening, helping/comforting others, and showing compassion was the response of nine additional participants. Others spoke about trust and newfound hope. Overall sharing and listening were overwhelmingly meaningful to participants,

placing emphasis on the importance of social relationships. The participants I spoke with in Gisenyi repeated the importance of speaking about your problems and listening to others.

Mama Odette is one of the participants in Gisenyi with whom I spent a great deal of time, and as the Female Cell Leader and also the Secretary for the Committee to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children,³³ she describes much of her work with the community in terms of speaking and listening. As the Female Cell Leader her role is that of mediator, listening to the problems people bring to her (always of a domestic nature) and offering advice. Speaking about problems is acceptable and common under certain circumstances—depending on what the problem is and to whom you are speaking. When the pastor who hosted me needed money to pay his children's school fees and for expenses related to the birth of his next child, he visited another pastor “to talk about my problems.” But the HROC workshop asks people to speak about “problems” or experiences which are not usually voiced, such as rape, experiences during genocide, and other experiences understood to be traumatic in terms of the model I described earlier. I remind you of the distinction I made in the previous chapter between material problems and problems of the heart. For Mama Cecilé HROC and other workshops helped her with problems of the heart, specifically her experiences during the genocide. However, material problems still abound, and sometimes even cause problems of the heart to resurface. The distinction between the material and the heart is applicable here to understand the limits of speech. When one is in need of money, food, or other expenses, going to close friends and family for help is common. However, issues such as rape, abuse, or experiences during genocide are not spoken about openly, but HROC is encouraging that they should be. The national and international arenas also encourage speech, demanding that survivors (in particular) share their stories of the genocide in order to ensure that the world knows what happened to them and so that the stories can be preserved in history for future generations (International Symposium on the Genocide Against Tutsi: 15 years after the Genocide against Tutsi in Rwanda. Stakes, challenges and future prospects. April 4-6 2009).

The demand for words in the face of violation may be asking for something which cannot be given. In her work in India on the Partition, Veena Das (2007:89) has found that words are insufficient, or unsayable, for some acts of violence (or as I've described, some problems of the heart). She observed women embodying mourning in such a way that it allowed them to become active in the politically charged debates of the story of events, not through spoken words but through physical representations (Das 2007). Bear in mind that in Rwanda this *may* lead to a diagnosis of madness and social ostracisation. Some of the women Das observes intentionally use gestures of madness to

³³ She was elected to the committee as a result of her sharing about HROC at a Sector level workshop. Its primary goal is to reconcile families when they have separated or there has been abuse.

demonstrate their suffering (*ibid*). More than words, what helped people to make life inhabitable again were the ordinary acts of everyday life. When poverty is something that people speak about on a regular basis (as I observed in Gisenyi and Kigali) finding work, sending children to school, getting food, saving money to pay bride-wealth, and building a house of your own are the things for which people strive. But when people feel incapable of attaining these “simple” survival-based goals, they often attribute their difficulties to the loss they experienced in the genocide. Recall Mama Cecilé’s concern for providing for her daughter. She feels that if her husband were alive she would not be alone and would not face such financial difficulties. The inability to provide for her daughter turns her thoughts to loss the experiences of genocide.

Often in times of mourning and existential questioning, people's behaviour is described as traumatic, or mad (as detailed in the previous chapter). This may include staying alone and being quiet, or constantly moving and talking a lot but in ways that do not make sense to those around you. Either way, the grief is not a coherent spoken or written narrative. Nor is such embodied language recognised as socially acceptable outside of particular circumstances or part of a healing process. Most Rwandan therapies link relationships directly to health and illness, where “the absence of gift exchange, of hospitality, or even of ordinary conversation, can lead to illness” (Taylor 1992: 192). What is at stake is one’s relationship with the social community.

HEALING SYSTEMS IN RWANDA

The history of traditional healing practices in Rwanda demonstrates a dialectic between the communal and the individual. Taylor identifies early healing practices in northern Rwanda as “Accusatory Therapy” (1992). Through divination a healer could identify the source of affliction, and thus the individual who had practised witchcraft in order to bring misfortune to another. The body is causally implicated in and connected to the social nexus in which it participates, therefore bodily illness is connected to troubled social relations (*ibid*: 206). For example, poison can disrupt the flow of bodily fluids, disrupting the flow of social expectations of reproduction, thereby impeding exchange relations. Accusatory therapy identifies the source of blockage and aims to restore proper flow within the body in order to restore proper flow in the community.

Early healing systems in Rwanda were premised on the logic of a gift economy. Although there has clearly been a significant shift into a capitalist commodity-based economy, many of the ideals and practices of a gift economy endure. This is evident not only in such practices as the exchange of bridewealth, which creates bonds of interdependence between two families, but also in ideas of personhood. In general, African personhood is described as a process of becoming (Comaroff and Comaroff 2001). This continual process takes place through an individual’s participation in the

community. It contradicts the idea of static or automatic being, if personhood is not consistently pursued and worked towards, then it begins to be undone, which occurs through isolation or removal from social interactions, or through witchcraft, which is a hindrance to another's process of becoming. Madness can also be explained in this model—anti-social behaviour removes one from proper modes of interaction.

Taylor identifies many similar themes in discussing the role of Rwanda's gift economy (1992). Individuals are linked by ties of reciprocal dependence (*ibid*: 40). A gift symbolises giving of part of one's self to another; food is particularly symbolic of receiving part of another into the self (*ibid*: 5, citing Mauss 1969). Exchange symbolises flow, or openness, and so should be continuous. Debt is perceived as a source of social cohesion. Exchange relationships were rarely nullified, even if it were impossible to repay in full, exchange continued (*ibid*: 8). When the receiver could not return a gift of equal value, he was subordinated (*ibid*). This is made evident in systems such as *ubuhake* clientship. The ideals of exchange may be diluted in the present commodity-based economy, but are nonetheless present. "Sharing", a concept I focus on in the next chapter, encompasses the idea of exchange. An individual cannot be self-reliant; to remove yourself from social interaction, from giving as well as receiving, makes you a "blocked" being (and therefore also blocking) in Taylor's terms. My interlocutors described such isolation as madness. It can also bring accusations of witchcraft. Gift exchange, in material and non-material form, is the mechanism for ensuring flow. When that system of flow is blocked (or overflows), misfortune and illness result. Reciprocity and interdependence promote open, healthy individuals, and therefore a healthy community. As I said earlier, HROC uses the term "to be open" to promote healing, suggesting that when an individual shares his/her story, one gives something of him-/herself to another, and by listening to others one receives part of another person into him-/herself. Although HROC uses "to be open" as a means to heal the individual, it is implied that through individual healing the community as a whole can be healed, which Taylor suggests to be the case in traditional healing systems.

In more recent popular therapy called *Nanga y'ivuza* (meaning "the harp that plays by itself"—an image of autonomy), Taylor identifies a remarkable similarity to western psychiatric practices, placing great emphasis on childhood experience and talking about the past (1992: 191).³⁴ *Nanga* reinforces Rwandan imagery of flow by using purgatives and sudorifics to expel foreign substances that have invaded the body and to "open up" the blood vessels, but the imagery is confined to the individual human body and does not extend to the wider cosmos (*ibid*: 192). In *Nanga y'ivuza*

³⁴ I will use "*Nanga y'ivuza*" to refer to the healing practice, and "Nanga" to refer to the healer Taylor speaks about. Taylor says the healer in Rwanda took the name of the group as a personal name (*ibid*: 180). Bashahu founded this healing practice, which became popular in 1950. Nanga began practicing in the late 1960's in southern Rwanda.

relationships are indirectly linked to illness, improper emotions (sin) of the individual in regard to the social, or “the witchcraft in one’s own heart that is dangerous” (*ibid*: 192). The source of the problem is identified within the individual.

Nanga y’ivuza therapy was clearly influenced by the founder’s Catholic training,³⁵ evident in the emphasis placed on sin as causing individual misfortune. As such confession is the focus of healing. Sins identified by Nanga include: “betraying a friend, sowing quarrel among neighbours and friends, cheating, stealing, lying, taking or giving bribes, divulging a secret left by a deceased relative, and attempting to do witchcraft” (*ibid*: 181). Jealousy is also considered a sin, as it almost inevitably leads to suspicions of poisoning (*ibid*).³⁶

Foucault associates the trend of confession with the rise of individualism in the West.

For a long time, the individual was vouched for by the reference of others and the demonstration of his ties to the commonweal ... then he was authenticated by the discourse of truth he was able or obliged to pronounce ... truthful confession was inscribed at the heart of the ... individualization of power (quoted in Taylor 1992:196).

His analysis links the emphasis on confession in *Nanga y’ivuza* (influenced by the Catholic Church) with the increasing focus on the individual alone as a worldwide trend. The church has had a prominent influence on relationships in Rwanda and people’s ideas around healing.

FORGIVENESS

In contemporary Rwanda forgiveness is spoken about frequently and in a variety of venues, including churches, TV and radio dramas, popular songs, and official speeches. One of Rwanda’s most famous contemporary singers, Jean Paul Samputu, recently produced a song about forgiveness and began an organisation called Samputu Forgiveness Campaign “To promote and continue bringing healing to the populations affected by conflicts by creating a ‘Culture of Forgiveness’ and to encourage youths and empower leaders” (www.samputufc.org). Samputu’s campaign was initiated by his own story of forgiveness and reconciliation with the man who killed his parents in the 1994 genocide. That man is now Samputu’s personal assistant.

HROC’s formal lessons do not address forgiveness (nor does the training manual). It did not arise in the workshop that I attended in Byumba. However, all twenty people whom I interviewed in Gisenyi spoke about forgiveness of their own accord. Much of what was said about forgiveness mimicked what I heard Pastor Francis preach. He taught that as Christians you know you are

³⁵ Taylor does not expound on Basuhu’s training in Tanganyika, so it is unclear what influenced his healing practice prior to returning to Burundi.

³⁶ Nanga identifies the origin of belief in *uburozi* (poison) with *ubuhake* clientship, when the few who became wealthy were suspected of *uburozi* (Taylor:181).

forgiven by God, and that provides the basis for being able to forgive others and to share the peace you have within. Christians, he said, needed to forgive not only to find peace for themselves, but for the sake of the community because one lives in relation to others. Pastor Francis emphasised that not forgiving isolates one from social relationships. By refusing to forgive one becomes like a prisoner, afraid and jumpy, and it can cause physical ailments such as teeth grinding, ulcers, and stomach aches. In addition, he said it is a command from God to forgive others. Pastor Francis' most striking statement was that a person who does not forgive is the same as the person who has inflicted harm.³⁷ This is a reversal of the usual victim/perpetrator dichotomy. In the sermon it was stated that forgiveness gave the victim the power to do something, but the obligation of forgiveness seems to take that power away. It threatens to turn a victim into perpetrator: sins are forgivable, but refusal to forgive is not. Philosopher Jacques Derrida (2001) would take issue with this idea: for him forgiveness is only meaningful in response to the unforgivable, it cannot be conditional (namely, requiring repentance and transformation), and it must be without power. Forgiveness in its purest sense then "is a madness of the impossible" (*ibid*: 45).

Forgiveness in the Judeo-Christian sense is always conditional; it requires repentance and implies transformation. Forgiveness in its purist form (as Derrida describes) is an utterly individual gesture; it can only be given by the victim, and it requires nothing of the guilty. But how does this understanding of forgiveness fit into a conception of an individual defined by relationship? When the misfortune of an individual is perceived as the misfortune of the community? Forgiveness is offered by the individual, but it has broader social implications. For Derrida, "forgiveness ... should never amount to a therapy of reconciliation" (2001: 41). But most of the people I worked with identified forgiveness as an imperative for healing. Mama Agnes told me that "if I don't forgive then I feel *guhambira* (tied or bound)." One of the facilitators said that "if many of your family members died then your heart has anger, if people came and took your things your heart feels heavy. If you forgive your heart feels free, and that is how you rebuild hearts." Since the heart is the centre of consciousness, and trauma is often spoken about in reference to the heart, healing also hinges on the heart and "putting my heart in one place." But forgiveness not only worked to heal one's heart, one participant said that "to forgive is to remove the problems you have with others", and a woman told me "if I forgive the wound is finished, and now, someone who did wrong, I can share with them. Now we can visit and share and my heart is clean, it has no wound." The further question is how does forgiveness by an individual lend itself to healing the community?

³⁷ He referenced Matthew 6:14-15: "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins your Father will not forgive your sins."

I asked Mama Cecilé “why do you forgive?” Her response was simply “It makes me feel peace in my heart.” Many of the people I interviewed associated forgiveness with peace (“forgiveness is needed so your heart can be free”), with healing (“if I forgive then the wound is finished”; “if you forgive grief is finished”), with reconciliation and unity (“forgiveness is a way to help people to build Rwandan community”; “after forgiveness and reconciliation is peace”), and with “forgetting bad things caused by others.” Every person that I interviewed spoke to me about forgiveness without my asking about it explicitly. Both men and women, between the ages of 21 and 79, some with very little education and others who were in university, married, single, widowed and divorced, identified forgiveness as an important process in healing and/or reconciliation. They all lived on meagre wages and so material problems were a daily struggle. They were also all Christian, and understood forgiveness as a means to address problems of the heart. Forgiveness is spoken about as central to the process of repair. Mama Odette told me that as part of the Committee to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children she taught people that “the consequence of not forgiving is that you cannot have peace.” Forgiveness is seen as a step toward reconciliation, but it is an independent process, something that must happen distinct from and prior to reconciliation. As one participant told me, “sometimes even if you forgive you do not improve the relationship, but if you can have a good relationship this is reconciliation.” Clearly then, forgiveness does not automatically result in healed relationships, but it is a possibility, a beginning.

Let us then look deeper at the implications of forgiveness. Psychotherapy regards forgiveness as a delusion (Herman 1992:189). At the opposite end of the spectrum, the church demands it. This is evident not only in Rwanda, where 93.5% of the population reports to be Christian,³⁸ but also in other post-conflict situations such as South Africa, where Archbishop Desmond Tutu (1999) declared forgiveness a necessity. For Margalit (cited by Ross and Reynolds 2004:108), “if forgiveness is a duty, it is a duty not to the other but to the self”. For Derrida, forgiveness is personal and internal. But a forgiveness that involves the wrongdoer extends the potential beyond the individual. For Jacoby (cited by Ross and Reynolds 2004:108), forgiveness has the potential to be a social bond for restoring social relations if the process includes contrition. Thus forgiveness is an intersubjective exchange.

FORGIVENESS AS A GIFT

The giving of a gift places the receiver in debt, obligated to reciprocate. This sense of obligation was expressed in several of my interviews. Papa Samweri, a release prisoner, told me

³⁸ 49.6 percent Catholic, 43.9 percent Protestant; another 4.6 percent identified as Muslim, 1.7 claimed no religious beliefs, and 0.1 percent practiced traditional indigenous beliefs. Cited by U.S. Department of State 2004 International Religious Freedom Report < <http://www.state.gov/drl/rls/irf/2004/35377.htm>>

It is very difficult for someone whose family was killed to see the killer, and for someone who killed and is released to meet the family member of the person he killed. But when we came [to HROC] and start to receive words and be comfortable, you start talking and you forgive each other, you share food, you start to marry, if one has a problem the other helps, and you start to forget what happened.

He was not alone in expressing the idea that once forgiveness passes between two people, a longer-term relationship was implied, or at a possibility. One young woman pointed out that after forgiving someone who did wrong she “can share with them”. I discuss the meaning of sharing in more depth in the next chapter, but the broad implication is that when one is in need, one can ask for help, and whatever one has, (s)he will share with another. One of the facilitators told me about an orphan whom her family took in after the genocide. She encouraged him to forgive the man who killed his parents and cut his neck with a machete. Now she says the person who killed the boy’s parents sometimes gives him money on the way to school.

Another participant, David, who had been in prison for committing crimes of genocide, said that being forgiven creates not only a debt to the person who forgave, but also to those who have wronged him (which reflects the Christian ideal that because you have been forgiven you must also forgive others). David told me that he asked forgiveness of the neighbour whose family members he killed, and said that now they are like brothers. “We speak to each other and go to church together. If he has something to do he comes to me and I help him, sometimes he can send me somewhere [to do work]. We are together.” David then forgave a neighbour who sold his land while he was in prison saying, “I was forgiven for killing, how can I not forgive someone who took my land?” David said that he forgave his wife for marrying another man while he was in prison, he accepted her back into his home and now cares for the children she had with the other man. In addition, another neighbour destroyed his house while he was in prison, and when he returned home from prison he forgave that man as well. Neither the man who sold his land nor the one who destroyed his house would have been able to repay him monetarily. Forgiveness has had significant material implications for David. He describes working for the neighbour who forgave him, and he has lost both his land and his house without compensation. In addition, Gacaca often requires material recompense from the guilty (e.g. helping to build houses or roads).

Another young man, Jean, described how his brother, who was accused and imprisoned for crimes of genocide, now has a “good relationship” with the family of the person he killed. Jean’s brother confessed and asked that family for forgiveness. When he was released from prison it was under the condition that he help to build a new home for the family of the person he killed (Jean did not specify but this was likely part of the Gacaca process). Jean said that his brother would go work on the house alone even when he was not required to. His brother also gave a goat to the family

although he was not required to. Now Jean says his brother has “no problems.” The process of restoration and building a “good relationship” for Jean’s brother began with him asking for forgiveness (which was a programme initiated by the government in preparation for Gacaca in order to reduce the number of men in prison, wherein prisoners who confessed and ask forgiveness were released to be tried at Gacaca). But it also required a material exchange between him and the family he injured.

Gacaca has played a role in both men’s exchanges with the families from which they sought forgiveness, mediating their release from prison and their reintegration into the community. But for many of the people I interviewed the act of forgiveness superseded the Gacaca process. If I asked anyone directly what they thought of Gacaca, the answer was always positive, that it was good for the community and helped with reconciliation. But in relation to issues like forgiveness the attitude was different. One participant said “if you forgive it is not good to go to Gacaca” because he didn’t think you should accuse someone you had forgiven. Mama Cecilé told me that because her husband was killed in Cyangugu,³⁹ she does not know how he died or who killed him, so she cannot go to Gacaca, which she said was a great relief. She said “you should only speak the truth [in Gacaca], if you create things or don’t speak the truth it can cause big problems.” Another participant, Paul, positioned accusation in opposition to forgiveness, and to building trust, while forgiveness was linked to healing:

After the workshop I went to Kibuye [where my mother was killed]. I tried to approach people and told them not to fear because I forgive you, there is no problem. They showed me who killed my mom, I forgave him and I didn’t go to Gacaca, so trust came again. If you forgive you can start to trust and to share. If you forgive, grief is finished. You can still mourn at certain times, but at other times you are free. Now I know how to live with people, how to approach someone with trauma and help them until their heart becomes healed.

Because Paul forgave the man who killed his mother, he did not accuse that man in Gacaca. Because he did not go to Gacaca to make accusations, “trust came again”, as well as healing and knowing “how to live with people.” Gacaca is viewed as a place for seeking retribution, but also revenge or unfounded attacks. Often those who make an accusation (true or false) in Gacaca feel vulnerable to counter-accusations (true or false). At a Gacaca proceeding at the end of my time in Gisenyi, those I knew found the accusations that were made unfounded. A school teacher who was from another area was accused with what amounted to rumour (“I heard from someone that when you were in that place you...”). A friend of mine was disturbed, “what can he do? This is not his area so there is no one that knows him and can say, ‘no, it isn’t true,’ so he goes to jail!” I was told that people take advantage of the Gacaca courts, accusing someone of involvement in the genocide

³⁹ He worked as a delivery driver, and was making deliveries in Cyangugu when the genocide started.

when in reality their quarrel is of a much different nature. The fact that Gacaca is avoided via forgiveness explains why the government responded so negatively to Samputu's song of forgiveness⁴⁰ (according to an informant it was taken off the radio and Samputu was also accused of promoting a negationist message),⁴¹ for although the government is pursuing a campaign of reconciliation, it is also pursuing a campaign against impunity.⁴²

Papa Joseph said to me "if someone wrongs me I could go and accuse them in courts, but instead I forgive." My suggestion in this chapter is that forgiveness is not the end point, it may mean that you do not seek the justice of the courts, but it does not mean it is the end of exchange. Pastor Francis told me that "forgiveness is something I say to establish a relationship that has been broken." It begins with words, but it does not necessarily end there.

Derrida (2001) identified the conditionalities of forgiveness as the crux upon which it can effect historical change. The conditionalities people expressed around forgiveness are of a sort that re-establish proper social relationships of interaction and often reflected traditional African systems of restoration which call for a material exchange. Longman and Rutagengwa (2004) found that most participants in their study agreed that Rwanda needed reconciliation (*ubwiyunge*);⁴³ they understood reconciliation as an "effort to bring together victims and victimizers in order to rebuild community", which meant that "those responsible for the genocide should be judged and that those who committed offenses should admit their errors publicly and receive forgiveness" (*ibid*: 172). I note that those who are identified as needing to be judged are "those responsible for the genocide" or, leaders who planned the genocide and recruited the masses. On the other hand, "those who committed offenses" are people's neighbours who killed and looted. This statement does not say they should be judged, but rather confess and receive forgiveness. The statement that this rebuilds community must be understood in light of the fact that the genocide was committed between neighbours; the violence symbolised blockage (Taylor 1999) and destroyed a sense of social interdependence. The exchange of forgiveness begins to rebuild that sense of interdependence.

⁴⁰ This may also influence why HROC does not explicitly address forgiveness.

⁴¹ The accusation came from IBUKA, the government's umbrella organisation for genocide survivors (The New Times, 15 April, 2009).

⁴² In so far as a "culture of impunity" developed after the Hutu Revolution and under Habyarimana's government, which did not punish the killing of Batutsi. The irony is that the government refuses to acknowledge or punish criminal acts committed by the RPF during the genocide.

⁴³ The root word for *ubwiyunge* comes from the same root used to describe setting a bone (Longman & Rutagengwa 2004: 172). This link was visually and descriptively evident when Papa Joseph explained to me how he understood reconciliation. He said that "it is like this metal [makes a sawing motion with his hands on the bars on the windows], if it is cut, then you bring the two pieces together [makes a fist with each hand and puts them together]."

CONCLUSION

The limitations of my fieldwork did not allow for me to observe exchanges between people who have forgiven and those they forgave. Partly this was due to time, and partly due to the circumstances of the participants I worked most closely with (many of whom settled there after the genocide, some do not know who is responsible for the deaths of their family members). Thus, I recognise that most of the data I have presented is rhetorical. Nonetheless I find the consistency of people's ideas and the connections that they draw to living together and sharing extremely important. They are also pertinent to ways that I observed neighbours interacting and the kind of community people idealise, which is the focus of the next chapter.

Traditions of reciprocity and their implications for individuals and their relationships with the community endure in contemporary Rwanda and may moderate processes of repair after the 1994 genocide even whilst utilising western psychotherapeutic and Judeo-Christian discourses. The narratives called for by psychological interventions are spoken about in ways that symbolise reciprocity; "to be open" which Taylor identifies as counteractive to misfortune in Rwandan ontology. These psychotherapeutic interventions almost always work with 'survivors' who alone are recognised to have trauma.⁴⁴ But the confession that those who participated in genocide are called to make is also a narrative. It can be likened to the confession therapy Taylor describes because it identifies the source of misfortune within the individual. The psychotherapeutic narrative for survivors is inward looking, locating the source of misfortune (trauma) in the individual and diminishing the social, similar to confession therapy. When a confession is accompanied by acts of restitution (which my participants identify as being initiated by forgiveness), then the focus shifts from the individual to the social. In this way healing in Rwanda can still be understood in terms of restoring proper flow to social relations, which can be maintained through reciprocity. As Mama Cecilé said "If I don't forgive I feel *guhambira* (tied/bound), but if I forgive my heart is open (*umutima wonafungutse*)."

In Mauss' terms, the giving of a gift obligates the receiver to reciprocate. When forgiveness involves both the wrongdoer and the wronged, and that exchange of words creates a sense of obligation to reciprocate in material ways, then I believe forgiveness can be understood as a gift in the Mausean sense. Once again, Derrida disagrees, for him a gift can only be identified as such through its distinction from other objects of exchange (Schrift 1997: 10). But is this realistic? Many of the people I worked with, at least at an ideological level, understood forgiveness as the

⁴⁴ HROC is unique in working with survivors, those who have been imprisoned, and their families. It is also unique in suggesting that those who killed and their families may also experience trauma.

start or renewal of relationship, which inevitably in daily interaction involves interdependence and reciprocity.

This understanding is not absolute and it is not unproblematic. It reflects what I see to be a possibility for making sense of the traumatic experiences of the past to “inhabit the same space now marked as a space of destruction in which you must live again...make such a space of destruction your own not through an ascent into transcendence but through a descent into the everyday” (Das 2000:208). As stated above, the “opening up” of a narrative has the potential to damage social relationships, in which case I suggest that it could be understood as excessive flow, which is also damaging to the social body. Some people forgive without hearing a confession, or sometimes without even knowing who is responsible for the death of family and friends. Some may not forgive. Some may forgive but not feel bound to ongoing reciprocity. For those who do, the burden of reciprocity may be heavy indeed—for how could one ever fully reciprocate? Just as Mauss identifies the giver of a gift as superior to the receiver, so Derrida see the one who forgives as sovereign over the one who is forgiven (2001:59). Unable to fully reciprocate, the forgiven may be in a permanent state of indebtedness which has an unsettling resemblance to that of a client under the *ubuhake* system (in which a client is rarely able to fully reciprocate the gift of cattle from a patron). But as Taylor (1992) notes, the inability to return the gift in full does not end the flow of exchange. It does however mean that the client is always in subordination to the patron.

CHAPTER SIX:

UMUTURANYI' MWIZA AKURUTIRA UMUVANDIMWE

“A GOOD NEIGHBOUR IS BETTER THAN A RELATIVE”

(Rwandan proverb)

Based on my observations in Gisenyi, neighbours form the basis of social support networks. Prior to the genocide families tended to live close together, so those neighbours you depended on were likely to be relatives. During and after the genocide families were scattered and institutions and infrastructure were destroyed. The genocide in 1994 only expanded the Rwandan diaspora in the world; Batutsi had fled during the revolution in 1959, and during subsequent violence in the 1960's and 1970's. After the RPF victory in July 1994, the Batutsi diaspora was replaced by Bahutu as Batutsi from all over the world flowed back into Rwanda and Bahutu poured out.⁴⁵ As people returned to Rwanda they did not necessarily settle where they had lived before. Indeed, many of them may have been born in other countries, and more recently there had been an increase in rural to urban migration. The area of Gisenyi where my fieldwork was conducted was not settled prior to 1994, only afterward, as refugees began returning from Zaire did they begin to build there.⁴⁶ As a result, neighbours are less likely to be relatives, but they continue to access the traditional gift economy to meet daily needs. However, despite the government's initiative to eliminate ethnic identities, whether someone is Tutsi or Hutu, “survivor” or “prisoner”, influences relationships and sets boundaries on trust, as is evident by statements in interviews:

Papa Samweri: When genocide survivors and released prisoners see each other they think “that is my enemy.” They think “I cannot believe them.” For some their family was killed, and others were accused of killing. This caused them to not talk to each other.

Mama Cecilé: After the genocide when I met people, Hutu, I thought he would kill me. I thought all Hutu were killers.

These were common statements during my research. HROC encourages participants to consider the causes and consequences of mistrust and trust. Ultimately many participants decide it is important, both for their personal wellbeing and that of the broader community, to take steps toward trusting those whom they would not have trusted before the workshop based on their ethnic background and its presumed relationship to the genocide. Establishing basic trust (often through processes—or rhetoric—of forgiveness) in order to rebuild everyday life, while living in the midst of groups of

⁴⁵ Many of whom remain in refugee camps in Uganda, Tanzania, DRC, and elsewhere, but the Rwandan government is insisting on the closure of these camps and the return of these refugees to Rwanda.

⁴⁶ I was told that as refugees returned the government encouraged them to settle in this and other areas in northern Rwanda in order to increase the number of Batutsi where the population had historically been primarily Bahutu.

people that history has deemed untrustworthy, emerged as a primary goal of many of the participants I spoke with, a goal which I describe as con-viviality (Ross n.d.).

A DAY WITH MAMA SAMWERI

Most of the people that I worked with in Gisenyi rented the houses they lived in; some were able to rent from relatives who were not living there (or friends or someone otherwise introduced through friends or relatives). For example, Mama Agnes rents a house from a relative where she lives with three of her nine children.⁴⁷ Initially her family did not pay rent to stay in the house, but worked a small plot of land and gave the profit from the sale of the beans to the house-owner. But when another woman came to her claiming to be a relative (although Mama Agnes had never met her) and asking for a place to stay, the owner thought they should begin to pay rent. This began a series of conflicts that resulted in Papa Agnes' imprisonment, accused of assaulting the woman that came to stay with them after a fight over rent, which she did not want to pay.⁴⁸ Papa Agnes' was also imprisoned in 2006. His participation in the workshop as released prisoner demonstrates that HROC perceives conflict and the lessons in the workshop not only in terms of the 1994 genocide, but much more broadly.

But Papa and Mama Samweri have no relatives or other connections in Gisenyi. Papa and Mama Samweri live with their three children and nephew in a lodge, the cheapest way to rent when there is no family nearby to offer a place to stay.⁴⁹ Both are from Cyangugu where the majority of their family members now live. Papa Samweri taught primary school until 1991, and then joined the Rwandan Army. At some point during the genocide he fled to Bukavu⁵⁰ as a refugee (he did not specify when, but it was likely towards the end of the genocide when the RPF was taking control and the army, with scores of other Bahutu, were fleeing across the border). In Bukavu he met Mama Samweri who was living in another refugee camp there. They married in 1995, returned to Cyangugu in 1997, and in 1998 he "became a soldier again" for the Rwandan Army and was sent to DRC for four years when Rwanda invaded DRC for a second time. The family moved to Gisenyi in 2005 because, as Papa Samweri said, they "felt it was right." He was unemployed in Cyangugu, but did not offer more of an explanation for the move. Papa Samweri (and his wife) participated in

⁴⁷ Three children died (before the genocide); one son, aged 21, is a soldier, one son, aged 15, lives with Mama Agnes' uncle in DRC, and a daughter, aged 17, stays with and works for Papa Adrien and his family.

⁴⁸ In April 2009 Papa Agnes was sentenced to one year in prison, Mama Agnes was seeking an appeal.

⁴⁹ Their eldest child, along with a daughter from Papa Samweri's first marriage, stays with Papa Samweri's mother in Cyangugu. Papa Samweri's nephew's parents are also in Cyangugu. He came to Gisenyi to attend secondary school. If a student passes the exams at the end of primary school, the government selects both the school and the subject of study for each student. Often the school selected is far from the child's home, and if they do not have family near the proposed school, paying for transport and boarding can be more expensive than paying for a private school (where they can study a subject of their own choosing). For some, as for Mama Agnes' children, neither option was affordable and none of her children have attended secondary school thus far.

⁵⁰ in DRC across the border from Cyangugu, which is in southern Rwanda

the HROC workshop as a released prisoner, however he never spoke of his imprisonment, or the genocide to me. He now pastors the First Choir Church in Gisenyi, but his congregation cannot afford to pay him a salary. He does day labour, building houses or working in fields, anything he can find. Sunday was his only day at home.

The lodge where they stayed had three connected homes, each consisting of two rooms. To the side there were three small rooms that served as a shared toilet, a bathing room, and a kitchen. Next to Mama Samweri lived a young man named Jean-Pierre from northern Rwanda who was attending university across the border in Goma, studying nursing.⁵¹ He also did not have family in the area but his parents supported him financially. (I knew two other young men living in Gisenyi under similar circumstances). Mama Anthony lived in the third home with eight children. Mama Elisé lived in the house next to the lodge.

Each time I visited Mama Samweri, these four neighbours were outside together. All of the children, and many others from nearby, would play together, often in front of Mama Samweri's door. Jean-Pierre was usually studying under the banana tree, where I found him the first morning I came. Mama Samweri had already left to work on her plot near the border, bringing her toddler with her, and leaving the two older children with Jean-Pierre. Jean-Pierre took me to the field to help her work. When we returned in the afternoon, Mama Samweri didn't have water to cook beans so she asked her three neighbours. They also did not have water so no one cooked food that afternoon. Instead, we spent more of the afternoon than usual in the shade of the banana trees—most people are up and working by sunrise, so afternoons are often spent resting and visiting. The women sat together chatting in the shade of the banana trees while the children played together.

On a separate occasion, when water was available, the three women sat adjacent, doing laundry in the morning and then preparing food. Mama Samweri borrowed salt from Mama Elisé. Mama Anthony left before the food was finished so Mama Samweri fed her children. These small acts of sharing, exchanging, and helping were a regular part of these women's relationships, and are central to how people define neighbourliness. Mama Samweri frequently watched over neighbour's children, including Mama Anthony's and Mama Odette's. Mama Elisé gave two pairs of shoes her own children had outgrown to Mama Samweri's and Mama Anthony's children. Papa Joseph, for example, told me that his neighbour had given him transport money to go to his daughter's wedding in Kigali. For Papa Joseph being neighbours meant that you "know each other's news, you visit one another, if they have a party they invite you, if there is a death you help. You can help if there

⁵¹ School fees for both secondary and tertiary education are significantly lower in DRC than in Rwanda, so it is very common for youth to live in Gisenyi, which is much safer at night, and cross the border to Goma for their studies.

is some problem, like if you are sick or need money.” All participants repeated similar sentiments. Mama Cecilé told me neighbours are “all persons who live together, sharing if there is a problem, sharing if you are in a good situation.” Antoinette told me “A neighbour is like a part of my body.”

Mama Odette offered several examples of the reciprocity of neighbours. If the waterspout in her front yard isn't working she gets it from a neighbour who also has a waterspout.⁵² A neighbour who owns a *boutique* will give her store credit if she needs it. It is rare for a *boutique* or seller in the market to give credit—Mama Agnes laughed at me when I asked if it was possible to get things at the market or a *boutique* on credit because it wasn't possible. The only other person I knew who was able to get food on credit was Mama Cecilé, which was only because *boutique* owners often take pity on widows. As the Female Cell Leader, many neighbours come to Mama Odette for advice about domestic problems, primarily regarding marital disputes but also in relation to the abuse of women and children. Other examples of how she helped neighbours were helping a neighbour buy sorghum to make beer to sell, and giving money to a neighbour for his marriage.

Mama Agnes goes to different neighbours for different things: aware of others' circumstances and what they are likely to have (or not) she may go to one neighbour for advice, but another for food or money. Since her husband was in prison, she sought out all the help she could get from neighbours near and far, including walking six hours across the mountain to visit a neighbour from years before to ask her for beans to bring to her husband in prison. Mama Samweri was “closer” to certain neighbours—meaning that the women were also home during the day, rather than working outside the home, so they were more accessible and interacted more often—and thus went to them first for help. In Cyangugu many of her neighbours were relatives, and she went to them first whenever she needed something. But since coming to Gisenyi in 2005 she has had to develop social networks to help her to meet the daily needs of her family based on non-kin relationships.

Taylor (1992) describes how the gift economy forms the matrix of social relationships, as discussed previously. He also notes that Rwanda was quickly transforming in the decades before the genocide towards a commodity-based economy, and that transformation still is in process. In the period of Taylor's field work people still were not entirely dependant on the capitalist economy, particularly those in rural areas. I believe that, despite current dominance of capitalism in Rwanda's economy, individuals are still linked by relationships of mutual dependence. This is true even within capitalist ventures: a friend who wanted to start a small business selling chipati⁵³ was advised to invite everyone she knew and give them chipati for free for two weeks, after that “they

⁵² Most people go to the public spouts and pay about 20Frw/jerry can, or 0.035USD

⁵³ A delicious flat bread common in Kenya and Uganda.

will be hooked and will always come to you to buy chipati, but if you don't your business will fail." This business model reflects the values of a gift economy: by giving chipati for free, she is ensuring that those who have received her gift will return the favour by being faithful customers. In addition, in order to afford to give away free chipati, she would also need to become indebted to someone.

Prior to the genocide, networks of interdependence were built around kinship and marriage (Taylor 1992, Lame 2005). But the fabric of kinship was decimated by the genocide, by the death of family members, separation and settlement in different areas, imprisonment, and isolation or rejection (particularly of children of 'mixed' marriages). In the absence of traditional networks of kin to draw upon, people must turn elsewhere. In the face of poverty, and especially with the collapse of nearly all infrastructure after the genocide in 1994, people continued to access exchange relationships to meet their needs.

BEFORE HROC, AND BEFORE GENOCIDE

If the destruction of institutions by the genocide promoted the accessing of reciprocity to get by, it also (backed by a history of divisive politics) limited the networks one could access. While many people told me that before 1994 Bahutu and Batutsi got along just fine—living, working, eating and sharing together—a new boundary of interaction was drawn by genocide. Corkalo, et al (2004), found similar sentiments in Bosnia, Herzegovina and Croatia. Before attending HROC in mid-2008, Mama Samweri saw the neighbours on either side of her as enemies. "The workshop changed my relationships with my neighbours because it taught me how to live with my enemies⁵⁴ with no problem. I learned to trust (*kwizere*) them and that I must love them and that we can be friends." *Kwizere* can be translated as to trust, to hope, or to believe, it is commonly used and was translated according to how my interpreter understood the context. Before the workshop she did not trust them, although she lived alongside them, and while they shared certain tasks out of necessity, she would not ask them for anything she was in need of (such as water, food, or money). Their children did not play together. They did not chat together in the shade of the banana tree whilst resting in the afternoon. She feared what her neighbours may or may not try to do to her or her children because they were from "the other side".

Implicit in this fear is the risk of poisoning. Jealousy, hatred and revenge (related to genocide, business ventures, money, or any number of quarrels) were cited to me as motivations for poisoning someone's food. As a result of this fear, many will refuse prepared food from someone they do not know or trust. One afternoon while resting with Mama Cecilé behind her house and snacking on sugarcane, two young girls who lived across the road came to greet me. Mama Cecilé cut them

⁵⁴ "Enemies" is often used as a synonym for the euphemism "the other side", so it can be read here to mean "Batutsi"

each a piece of sugarcane and we sat together. After they finished their sugarcane they went back home and returned a few minutes later with a plate of cut pineapple. As they approached, Mama Cecilé gestured that I should not eat the pineapple and went inside. Later when I asked why, she said simply that she did not know them—if they had brought the whole uncut pineapple she would have accepted it, but she didn't know them so she couldn't eat it and therefore did not want me to eat it either. On another occasion when I was working with her to draw a map of the area immediately around her, she could not name who lived in the house the girls with the pineapple came from. The area where Mama Cecilé lives is predominantly housing built for widows by the Catholic Church. The houses are all virtually identical, so the few houses not built for widows stand out. The house where the girls with the pineapple lived was not one of the houses built for widows, and it was one of the few houses in the area where Mama Cecilé did not greet anyone when we walked past, since, as she told me earlier, she did not know them. Since she did not know about their background, where they were from, or what their experience had been during the genocide in 1994, she felt it was safer to avoid them. Even if people are more willing to trust after attending HROC, they are not necessarily willing to trust anyone and everyone. Other fears, especially around poisoning, remain.

The myth that tells of Death's origins also describes the origin of witchcraft. Death was one of four brothers (the others being Lightning, King, and *Imaana*) and Death's inheritance from Creator was blood. Since he ravaged the possessions of his brothers to get blood they decided to kill him, but in the pursuit Death convinces an old woman (*agakeecuru*) to let him hide in the folds of her dress. He remains there, sheltered from rain, with access to all the blood that he wants. The old woman *transmits Death to all her progeny by eating with them*, and they in turn take it to every corner of the earth (P. Smith 1975:129-33 quoted by Taylor 1992: 34-35, emphasis added). Every woman following her is born with Death in her uterus, sucking her blood until he destroys her capacity to produce new life. Taylor understands witchcraft as an endeavour to either hinder or haemorrhage the flow of bodily fluids—which is also the action of Death (1992:34-35). This myth identifies the transmission of Death through food shared by the old woman, thereby providing an explanation for the fear of poisoning through food.

The fear is widespread. Pastor Francis invited me join him to visit a young member of the church who had been sent home from school because she was ill. She explained to me that she was poisoned three years ago by a friend—perhaps because she was jealous, she couldn't say for sure—and since no one could identify what kind of poison had been put in her food, it was difficult to identify the correct treatment. She is sure of who poisoned her because she became ill right after eating food given her by that friend. She still has periodic episodes of illness which may be caused

by the original poison, or by incorrect treatments. The pastor was translating for us and occasionally offered his own thoughts. He confirmed her explanation of her experience and told me that poisoning of food between people who are close (by relation or by proximity) is extremely common. This is at the heart of Mama Samweri's fears. Taylor identifies brothers as implicated most commonly in cases of poisoning, the next highest incidence was from either a step-mother or a neighbour, and after that from either one's father's brother or a professional rival (1992:76; see also Lame 2005). Although foreign missionaries whom I spoke with in Kigali dismissed poisoning or witchcraft as uneducated explanations for illness otherwise unidentified or untreated, it seems that local church leaders are not so quick to dismiss the possibility of such malevolent behaviour.

Another young man, Modeste, told me that when his mother was pregnant with him in Kinshasa she was poisoned. When Modeste was born the nurse told her that it was not safe to breast-feed him because of the poisoning, so she sent him to be raised by his aunt in Gisenyi. When an American working in Goma and staying with a Congolese family there became sick, his host family believed he had been poisoned and took him to a traditional healer. No one I worked with in Rwanda spoke about traditional healers, and people did not explicitly associate poisoning with witchcraft. In Rwanda, the church discourages accessing traditional healers and the state rejects the system in favour of westernised 'modern' medicine used at public hospitals and clinics.

TOO FEARFUL TO TRUST?

Mistrust seems to dominate ideas around poisoning: according to Lame (2005: 332) the communal drinking of beer was intended to make it impossible for anyone to introduce a poison to the shared pot. Mistrust can exist in all kinds of relationships for any number of reasons, but being identified as part of a group formerly known as Hutu or Tutsi now often supersedes other identities and forms the basis of mistrust. Papa Joseph told me that before the workshop he used to think that Bahutu were his enemies, but now he does not get angry or think of revenge when he sees them. Danielle said she felt the same way before attending HROC—even Bahutu in her church and the children of accused killers in school were all killers in her eyes. Mama Agnes said that when she came to the workshop and “saw the opposite side I was afraid, I wanted to get out.” Many participants also describe one of the symptoms of trauma as running away or becoming fearful when they see “someone” or “the other side”. Another participant whom I interviewed was accused of participating in the genocide (he was 15 at the time) and imprisoned because people thought “because he had Tutsi friends it was not possible that he did not kill even one.” He said he felt no peace because during “the Interahamwe time” his family was harassed (because they knew that RPF rebels had been to his house), and after the genocide he was constantly accused. He believed his wife was poisoned for the same reasons.

Such fear and suspicion is hardly surprising. Here are the words of a facilitator who has been working with HROC since it began in Rwanda in 2002:

The situation in Rwanda is very different from Uganda, Congo, Kenya, everywhere. In other places people came from outside, they attack, they kill, and they go again. But here it is so difficult to understand: in the morning your neighbour comes, you take tea, you talk, then he comes back in the afternoon with a *panga* [machete] and begins chopping you! He cuts your arm, then leaves and comes again in the evening to cut your leg, then again tomorrow to cut your eyes. And all the time you are speaking to him, saying 'why are you doing this to me? What have I done to you?' Your **neighbour!!** Are you imagining it?! How is it possible?

Veena Das (2001: 56) describes how the events around Indira Ghandi's assassination destroyed and then transformed people's everyday world into one of paranoia, "a world full of excessive distrustfulness and delusions of persecutions by others.... Doubts and uncertainties exist in everyday life, but the worst is not expected to happen every time". Genocide, coupled with histories of structural and physical violence, has made many in Rwanda believe that the worst will happen. But Das (*ibid*) goes on to say that in order to understand how the "heterogeneity of everyday life" can prevent turning the Other into the enemy in a way that leads to totalising destruction one must understand the processes by which trust is maintained or repaired. Modes of interaction may mediate these processes.

The coordinator for HROC in Rwanda, described how individuals are ideally expected to interact with one another. You should always greet those you know when you pass by them, neighbours should visit one another to share news (the regular greeting after "good morning" or "good day," is "*Amakuruyawe?*" or "what is your news?"), you should go to your neighbours for advice or material help when you need something, and you should share whatever you have. Whenever someone had food, whether they were on a bus or in their home, they always shared with those around them. Not taking part in these activities brings your wellbeing into question. If you do not receive visitors your neighbours will "know there is a problem", not greeting someone is a personal offence, as is not offering a visitor, at the very least, a drink (but not water, because "water is for cows"). If you do not visit others, or do not receive visitors, then your neighbours will think there is a problem (i.e. your social standing is in question; either you are choosing to isolate yourself from the community, or they are choosing to isolate you for some reason). Your daily existence occurs in the presence of your neighbours. When those neighbours whom you've shared so much with turn on you, bitterness and mistrust seem inevitable. Corkalo, *et al* (2004), found similar sentiments of betrayal and identified it as a profound obstacle to social repair. But what happens when you continue to live next to those whom you consider to have harmed you? For Mama Samweri it meant living next to someone she feared.

EACH TREE HAS ITS OWN FRUITS (*IGITI KIMENYERWA KUMBUTO ZACYO*)

The 'Trust Tree' was named by thirteen of the twenty people I interviewed as one of or the most important lesson in HROC. In an average workshop, the entire third day is centred on discussions of trust. A common introductory activity is the Trust Walk, in which participants are paired randomly⁵⁵ and then take turns being

8 / 10	Participants
4 / 4	Facilitators
1 / 4	Family members of a Participant

blindfolded and guided by the partner. After a brief discussion of how this exercise made everyone feel, there is a discussion about trust and mistrust. A picture of a tree is drawn on a large piece of paper on the wall, and people are asked to name the fruits of mistrust, and then the root causes of those fruits. There is little introduction and no discussion or questioning of the ideas that are presented by the group. At the workshop I attended in Byumba, people named the following things:

FRUITS:

indwara - diseases

nyamwigendaho -selfish, greedy, egotistic

ishyari - jealousy

ruswa - corruption

inda nini - greed

kumena ibanga -breaking confidentiality

ubukene - poverty

ubwoba - fear

gushidikanya - hesitate

ibitekerezo bibi - evil/bad thoughts

inzangano - hatred

ubujiji - ignorance

ubuhunzi -exile

amakenga - much attention, assiduous

kwikunda - self-seeking

ROOTS:

gufatwa kungufu - being raped

ubukene - poverty

ubuyobozi bubu - bad governance

inda nini - greed

kwicirwa abantu -

massacre/killings of your relatives

kwamburwa - being robbed/ losing your properties

amateka mabi - bad history

kutiyakira - no self

acceptance/understanding

kwikubira - selfish/greedy

kutaba inyangamugayo - no integrity, man without integrity

Figure vi Tree of Mistrust (*Igiti cyo kutagira icyizere*)⁵⁶

⁵⁵ First a game called "When the Big Wind Blows" is often played. In it, all participants stand up, a facilitator calls something out, e.g. "The Big Wind Blows for everyone wearing red" and then everyone wearing red must find a new seat. After a few rounds everyone's seats have been shuffled.

⁵⁶ The last term, *Inyangamugayo* is a term used to describe a leader in the community, a person who has great integrity. This title given to persons who are elected by the community to act as judges in *Gacaca* courts.

This list pertains to structural issues such as corruption, bad governance and poverty, interpersonal issues such as jealousy, breaking confidentiality, and hatred, and violent issues which can be linked to genocide (but are not exclusive to it) such as exile, being robbed, and relatives being killed. In addition, many are things that individuals can control, such as laziness and lack of integrity, but many are beyond individual control, such as disease and bad history.

The group was asked if there is mistrust in Rwanda, to which they agreed. The facilitator said this tree should be left behind and people should plant a tree of trust in its place. Proverbs like the one introducing this section, and “*Ntiwatera orange nguza sarure igitoki*” (You cannot plant oranges and expect bananas) suggest that the concepts the facilitators are engaging have local significance. The group then lists the fruits and roots of trust.

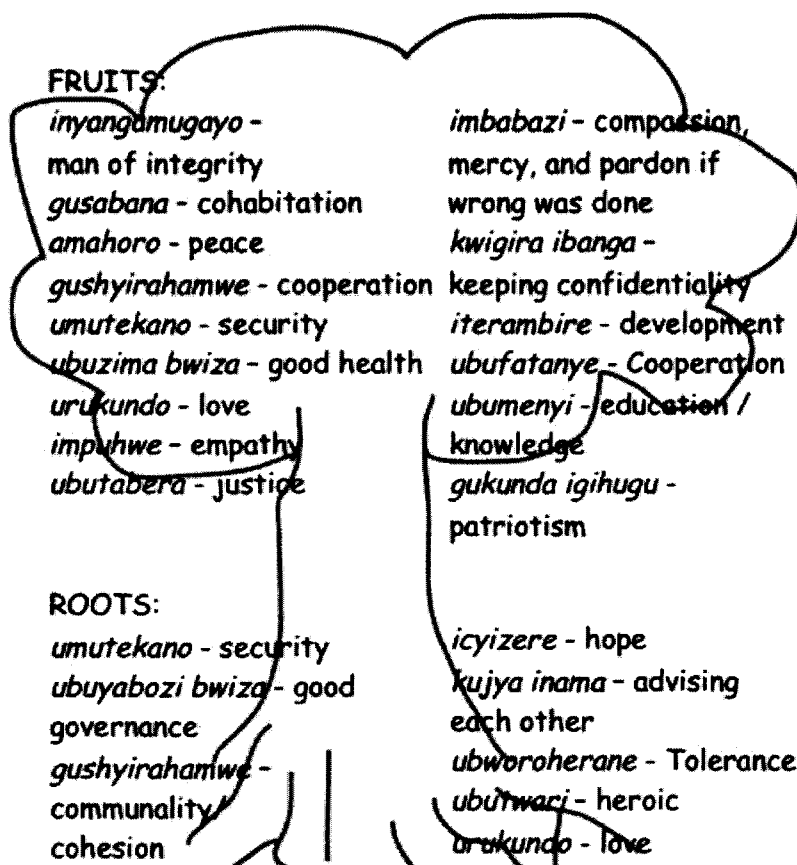


Figure vii Tree of Trust (*Igiti cy'icyizere*)

The most significant difference in this tree is the communal ideals that are introduced: cohabitation, cooperation, empathy, justice, advising each other, tolerance, and communality. In comparison, the Tree of Mistrust is focused on negative, individualistic behaviour (greed, selfishness, pride). Other comparisons include those around physical interactions (illness and rape versus health), interpersonal exchanges (hesitation, jealousy, and fear versus cooperation and love), ideological relationships (lacking integrity versus justice, hope, and patriotism), and structural ones (corruption, poverty and ignorance versus security, education, and good leadership). These ideas

also reflect both horizontal relationships (within family and groups) and vertical ones (between civil society and government).

The final lesson in the workshop is a brainstorming session in small groups to discuss how mistrust can be uprooted and trust can be planted in their community. Some ideas include sharing what participants have learned with family, neighbours, and at meetings; calling for discussion sessions where people can come to talk about the problems they are facing and try to work together towards solutions; and continued relationships among participants in the workshop to support and encourage one another. My correspondence indicates that the group tries to meet once a month.

By considering the causes and consequences of trust and mistrust, the participants I interviewed claimed that they were both challenged to envision the society they would like to live in, and to take action to begin building such a society. Mama Odette, among a few others, followed through on the action envisioned. She asked a local leader if she could share what she learned at HROC at a Sector meeting. As a result, the community established the Committee to Prevent Violence Against Women and Children, of which Mama Odette is now the Secretary. A group of participants in Gisenyi decided to establish an association, so that those who attended the workshop could meet to talk about their problems and find ways to solve them together, as well as share with the rest of the community. Papa Samweri is the president of the association, which they named *Ihumure* (which does not have a direct translation but means to advise, make strong, give hope, make patient and see good in the future). He said that they started the association “because we understood we have the power to do something.” The facilitators in Gisenyi, along with Mama Odette, went to Burundi for additional training while I was in Gisenyi, and were seeking funding (with Pastor Francis’ help) to turn this association into a group that could continue to give trauma healing workshops. Their initiative demonstrates the value they place in the workshop and in its potential in the community.

CONCLUSION

The workshop is brief, only three days, but what people say about it speaks to a dramatic change in their everyday lives. From the limited time and observation of my fieldwork I cannot make conclusions about how much their lives may or may not have changed in material or relational terms, but their rhetoric was clear. Many people described a desire “to live with other people”, “to feel free”, and “to live in peace.” Mama Cecilé told me “Tutsi and Hutu must live and work together. To live in peace we must meet, share, and plan what to do so we can live.” Her statement is practical. It suggests that living in peace entails getting along so far as everyone is able to meet basic needs. Trust, forgiveness and restoration all involve sharing.

Papa Joseph told me that before the workshop there were some people that he would not even share water with. When he saw them on the road he would turn his body and look away from them so that he would not have to greet them. But when he saw the Peace Tree,⁵⁷ he said, he decided to change, to have pity on others, “because if you have peace you can live.” For Papa Joseph not feeling fear to meet people and being able to share were essential to peace (and trust, if his word exchange can be reversed). Sharing (*gusangira*, or *gusabana*) was a term I heard constantly. Examples that people offered were of sharing food and other materials, helping when someone is sick or there is a ceremony (e.g. a wedding), and marriage itself. It presumes that you do not “stay alone” and it embodies the concept of neighbourliness. One of the facilitators echoed this sentiment, saying, “sharing is to live in peace with other people, it means you sit together and do not feel a bad heart, you eat together and drink together.” For another participant “it is good to live with other people in peace, to share, to help each other with problems, and when you wrong someone to go and ask forgiveness.” It is important to recognise that he does not suggest that living in peace is equated with the absence of conflict, but with how it is dealt with. Similarly, a family member of a participant said that “living in peace” meant “I go without worry and do not accuse anyone.” As Das (1998: 179) argues, “participation in forms of sociality (Wittgenstein’s form of life)...is never a matter of shared opinions,” which helps to convey Ross’ (n.d.) con-viviality and the acknowledgement that violence is enfolded into the everyday

For everyone I spoke to trust was the precursor to sharing. For Papa Samweri trusting others meant not feeling alone. For Mama Odette it meant not feeling blame and thinking that “I am with others”. The theme throughout is the establishment of social ties. If HROC taught Mama Samweri to trust, what taught her neighbour, Mama Anthony, to trust? Mama Anthony did not attend the HROC workshop, yet she engages Mama Samweri in acts of sharing, suggesting there is some level of trust. I will use a story of Papa Joseph’s in attempting to interpret that dynamic.

Angela: You said that before the workshop you were angry. Do you still feel anger?
Papa Joseph: No, no, no, it is finished! (claps hands together and then spreads them palms down). I used to get angry because there are people I compared like enemies, but now they are friends!

Angela: How did they become friends?

Papa Joseph: It is me who approached them. And I showed them that there is no problem even if there are things that divide us.

Angela: How did they react?

Papa Joseph: Some, they thought I was lying to them, but slow, slow, slowly, they saw that there is no problem. They try to say that “maybe tomorrow you will do bad things to us,” but when they didn’t see anything [bad] they believed me.

⁵⁷ He transposed the word Peace (*Amahoro*) for Trust (*Kwizere*), in naming the exercise. The name he used for the Tree of Mistrust was Trauma (*Ihungabana*) Tree.

Angela: What about the workshop helped you to overcome that anger?

Papa Joseph: They showed us some things, especially the tree, and you come to see that what they say is true. But it didn't finish at that time, but slow, slow, slow.

According to Papa Joseph his own act of trust won the trust of the person he had considered an enemy (and seemingly vice-versa). He mentions twice though that this was a slow process, his repetition: "slow, slow, slow" I heard from others as well, including from Papa Adrien when he was comforting Mama Cecilé (see chapter 4). It is apparent that personal healing (Papa Joseph's anger and Mama Cecilé's grief) and repairing of relationships is not immediate, but a process which happens slow, slow, slowly. Similarly, how people envision "living together" is not a dramatic surface transformation. It may sometimes be (as when a famous singer, Samputu, forgives the man who killed his parents in 1994 and then hires him as his personal assistant), but the more common reality is a much smaller transition—where instead of turning away from certain people as one passes them on the road one greets them, and where one can leave one's children at home under watchful eye of a neighbour. Small, but significant changes that highlight that the work of the everyday should not be taken for granted, rather it is the focus of learning to live together.

Keywords which people use to define good neighbourliness are greeting, visiting, sharing, asking for help and offering help. In my interviews with participants many identified these same things as the outcomes of trust and forgiveness (see chapter five). Fear and mistrust are, of course, not solely an outcome of genocide. As Taylor (1992) shows, healing is most often sought in response to cases of poisoning, which most often occur between kin. In my own experience, no one expressed fear of being poisoned by kin (which is not to say that does not occur), rather there was a generalised fear of "the other side". Asking a neighbour for help of any kind means that they in turn may ask you for something, and is therefore a vulnerable position which people avoid putting themselves in with people they do not trust, but it is none-the-less the rhetorical ideal. Participants who are able to trust those who might otherwise be considered enemies are then able to build networks of support with a broader range of neighbours and build con-viviality (Ross n.d.). Each of the participants I worked with could name a handful of people from "the other side" whom they felt they could approach if they were in need.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

CONCLUSION

“IF YOU KEEP YOUR PROBLEMS IN YOUR STOMACH THE DOGS CANNOT STEAL THEM”

There are not many dogs in Rwanda today. When this proverb was first translated for me I was told “...the dogs cannot *eat* them” which conjured up disturbing images of the genocide in 1994 and immediately after, when U.N. soldiers shot dogs which were eating corpses piled in roads and fields all over the country. The proverb suggests that revealing your problems leaves you vulnerable, just as those who died were vulnerable to being consumed by dogs. Lame (2005) writes about a “culture of secrecy” in Rwanda. The missionaries I knew in Kigali also described a “culture of mistrust” which precedes 1994. In an interview with one of the facilitators, when I asked about the Tree of Mistrust, she named “killings” as a root and “conflict” as the fruit; that is, genocide is now seen as the root of conflict in the present. On the other hand, David, who asked forgiveness from the family of people he killed in the genocide, told me “genocide came because of bad fruits from our elders, a bad heritage that taught us to love things and not people.” David speaks to generational inheritance and historical process, the fruits of his elders growing the roots of present relationships. His statement should be considered not only with regard to how something like genocide can happen, but how the effects are passed to future generations. HROC workshops encourage people to speak about their problems, both material and of the heart, with an awareness of those effects and the intent to foster trust.

HROC explicitly operates on an interpersonal level, but during the Tree of (Mis)Trust exercise, governmental issues are also raised (leadership, governance, corruption, education, etc). Much of the contemporary development literatures on Rwanda see trust as the basis upon which both interpersonal and people-state relationships must be built (see for example, Colletta & Cullen 2002, Fred-Mensah 2004, Lambourne 2009, and Unsworth and Uvin 2002). Colletta and Cullen argue that intrastate conflict

weakens [the] social fabric. It divides the population by undermining interpersonal and communal trust This damage to social capital—the norms, values, and social relations that bond communities together, as well as the bridges between communal groups (civil society) and the state—impedes the ability of either communal groups or the state to recover after hostilities cease. (2002: 3)

Fred-Mensah (2004:437) agrees “the most critical task in post-conflict reconstruction is the building of trust...an integral part of what is termed social capital.” The emphasis on social capital, however, may be over stated. Ben Fine (2001: 742), for one, argues that the term is an oxymoron because it assumes that “capital” is not social and “social” is non-economic, and that the term is ahistorical, asocial, and used far too broadly to have any concrete meaning.

That Collette and Cullen (2002) identify mass violence as the cause of mistrust neglects to recognise the mistrust that existed prior to 1994, as reflected in historical (Chrétien 2006, Lemarchand 1970) and ethnographic accounts (Lame 2005, Taylor 1992). Mistrust in Rwanda today is linked to ethnic divisions (further entrenched by genocide), but also to failures to meet relational expectations, including poisoning and witchcraft. Colletta and Cullen also fail to recognise that cooperation and collective action still occur even when mistrust is present; the fact that Rwanda is a functioning state and pursuing a great many apparently successful 'development' projects despite the reported mistrust in the country would suggest so (NURC 2008). Building trust as a solution to conflict is as idealistic as reconciliation. It cannot be mandated and it cannot be measured but secondarily. "National reconciliation does not mean forcing people to subscribe to an ideology or to obey a new form of authority unquestioningly" (Sibomana 1999: 139). Ross' notion of con-viviality (n.d.) speaks directly to the ways that people seek to pursue life while recognising discord. Reconciliation is an inspiring but abstract and intangible idea. On the other hand, con-viviality, pursuing life alongside one another whilst recognising the inevitability of conflict (Ross n.d.), provides a space for the restoration of the everyday and for addressing those conflicts.

I began this dissertation by arguing that re-establishing traditional ties of reciprocity, with its symbolic representation of flow, are critical to restoration of the everyday in Rwanda. The violence between neighbours in the genocide in 1994 damaged the interdependent nature of sociality. Responses to traumatic experiences can be understood as blocking (Hagengimana and Hinton 2009) and caused many people to withdraw from interaction not only with "the other side" but with family as well. Sibomana (1999: 140) partly explains this with the acknowledgement that "Our country is living in a state of terror. It would be simplistic to reduce this phenomenon to fear of Hutu for Tutsi and fear of Tutsi for Hutu." But forgiveness was expressed by all with whom I worked as a tool for beginning to re-establish reciprocity, a process that requires the conditionality that Derrida (2001) so hesitantly recognises as fostering historical change. For all those I interviewed, reconciliation is founded in their ideas around sharing and consists in restoring the social fabric and proper modes of interaction. One interviewee said "To reconcile means that you meet and start to share, first you forgive, then you must share."

The nature of the relationships being formed I describe as con-vivial in Ross's (n.d.: 14) sense of living alongside one another with the fragile "awareness of the contingency of everyday life." For many this necessitates a space for mourning. Das' description of the "descent into the ordinary" entails a recovery that does not "lie in enacting revenge against the world, but in inhabiting it in a gesture of mourning for it" (2007: 77). This can entail 'poisonous knowledge' which hovers in the present and informs present experience. The notion of healing in psychotherapy requires traumatic

experience be incorporated into one's life narrative and isolated as the past. But Das argues that "if one's way of being-with-others was brutally damaged, then the past enters the present not necessarily as traumatic memory but as poisonous knowledge" (*ibid*:76).

I rarely heard people make reference to their psyche when speaking about traumatic experiences. Rather, "when you have trauma (*ihungabana*) the heart (*umutima*) has a wound (*igikomere*)." The literal translation of *ihahamuka* (PTSD), "lungs without breath" reveals that the response to traumatic experience is somatic and linked to ideologies of flow and blockage. *Ihahamuka* was also translated for me as "to turn one's heart up-side-down" describing both the link between the heart and the flow of breath, and how the wounds of traumatic experience are understood to impact the subject. These words suggest that understanding the effects of genocide in Rwanda, as well as other traumatic experiences which people continue to face in the present, requires an awareness of the seat of consciousness, the heart. The title proverb, "If you keep your problems in your stomach, the dogs cannot steal them" reinforces the embodiment of knowledge, stored in the heart and the stomach, rather than the mind. Putting one's heart back "in one place" requires the restoration of relationships of reciprocity, which itself requires a balance between remembrance and forgetting.

"The altered everyday is marked by a new knowledge and memory of loss, but also a practical wisdom of negotiating this loss. It tells one that reparation cannot take the form of justice, co-existence is possible only if the past is deliberately *set aside*" (Das & Kleinman 2001: 19, emphasis mine). Sibomana (1999: 127) agrees, "the law is not enough and will never be enough to rebuild the social fabric." Although many people speak of the need to forget the past, "People really don't forget ... they transform the pain into a new relationship: instead of continued hatred and feelings of revenge, though they know someone has done wrong, they can still *live together*" (Theoneste, emphasis mine). Papa Samweri expressed similar notions (see chapter five), a difficult process that begins with an initial, hesitant, frightening task of simply sharing a space with "the other side". Sharing words, forgiveness, food, kin and resources, according to many informants, necessitates "forgetting (*kwibagira*) what happened" but, as Theoneste described, in daily conversation this is rendered more nuanced. Thus Das and Kleinman's point that "the past is deliberately set aside," not forgotten, and "Reconciliation is not a matter of a confession once and for all, but rather the building of relationships by performing the work of the everyday" (2001: 14). They also argue that through "reformulating their notions of 'normality' as a changing norm... communities can respond to the destruction of trust in their everyday lives" (*ibid*: 23). For my informants, rebuilding relationships and the everyday in Rwanda necessitates sharing and "living together in peace," which itself necessitates forgiveness and setting the past aside, but nonetheless recognising the problems that persist—such as the need for mourning, the fear of poisoning, and madness.

Although HROC has taken on the discourse of Western Psychology, the workshop and its participants are adapting those ideas to the local context and the present needs to transform interpersonal relationships. A sociotherapy workshop in Byumba, which intentionally dissociates from psychotherapy, looks very similar to the HROC workshops and is described as “socializing our people...a direct affect on the quality of togetherness” (Richters, Dekker, and Scholte 2008: 113). That workshop recognised “the social fabric had been damaged, meaning that there was a rupture of social bonds, disconnectedness, distrust in people and in institutions, and destruction of previous sources of support. Consequently, the misery had especially affected the population as a community, rather than only as individuals” (*ibid*: 104). Sibomana places emphasis on the heart in his reconciliatory work in Rwanda by speaking to “justice of hearts” (1999: 127) and “rebuilding of hearts” (1999: 131). By identifying trauma as a wound on the heart and recognising that restoration calls for drawing people back into the folds of sociality, HROC has adapted the discourse of Western Psychology it draws on in the workshop. This has significant impact on the how one understands the process of reconciliation. Prominent models of reconciliation (as discussed in chapter one) draw extensively on the concepts of Western Psychology, i.e. a narrative and the exchange of words. However, as this thesis shows, restoration processes in Gisenyi draw extensively on additional modes of exchange that seek to remake the everyday and do not necessarily isolate traumatic experiences to the past.

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